Expanding Perceptions of Identity in The U.S.: The Chinese Jamaican Immigrant Experience

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

EXPANDING PERCEPTIONS OF IDENTITY IN THE U.S.: THE CHINESE JAMAICAN IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE

By

Kimberly S. Ho Misiaszek

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of the University of Miami in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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the requirements for the degree of
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EXPANDING PERCEPTIONS OF IDENTITY IN THE U.S.: THE CHINESE JAMAICAN IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE

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This qualitative study aimed to understand the experience of Chinese Jamaican immigrants in the U.S. and how they construct their identity. Participants were 15 immigrants who self-identified as Chinese Jamaican or other variations of the term (e.g. Jamaican Chinese, Jamaican with Chinese heritage) who participated in qualitative interviews with this researcher. A grounded theory approach was used to conduct an inductive analysis of the interview data. Results revealed five themes: (1) Flourishing, but pushed and pulled to leave for various reasons, (2) Feeling safer and better off, but missing home, (3) Key community values influence us and our views on how to deal with common struggles we faced, (4) Assimilating an American identity, but needing our community too, and (5) Finding our identity unique and complex. Clinical implications and future research directions based on the findings were discussed.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all members of the Chinese Jamaican community around the world who have ever felt misunderstood, have been miscategorized or misperceived, and disbelieved when they state who they are. You are a unique and complex constellation of identities brought about at a particular time in history due to the convergence of unique political, social, and economic circumstances. Your history and culture are to be recognized, documented, and celebrated as the tides of migration and new social, political, and economic forces bring about change and transformation. As you have always done and will continue to do, hold onto the values and principles you identify as immutable and deeply care about, and extract what is good from the new experiences and situations you encounter. In this way, you maintain what has always been true about you, which is the capacity to adapt and evolve with the shifting landscapes of whichever continent you decide to enter into as the need or opportunity arises.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

It is important to document and understand immigrant stories—who they are, how they see themselves, and how they are faring in their host country of residence—not only for their health and well-being, but also for the host country’s overall development (Liu, 2015). America is rapidly becoming a “majority minority” country; indeed, by 2060, the minority population is expected to rise to 56% of the total population (Colby & Ortman, 2015). To facilitate the successful integration of immigrants, it is important for countries to understand their origins and cultures (Dettlaff & Fong, 2016), as doing so promotes their inclusion and integration into all aspects of community life—schools, colleges, churches, workplaces, recreation centers, hospitals etc.—in a culturally responsive way.

Correctly acknowledging and affirming how immigrants self-identify is one of the first steps in beginning this process of inclusion, as immigrants are often forced to “choose from unfamiliar or meaningless ethnoracial identities soon after they arrive on government forms or employment applications” (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2015, p.27) that often do not match with how they thought of themselves prior to immigrating. Furthermore, it is important to understand the values, beliefs, and other factors that comprise their ethnic identity, as we seek to employ a culturally sensitive counseling framework from which to conceptualize and treat ethnically diverse immigrants. Counseling theories, interventions, programs, and polices also benefit from a deeper understanding of how immigrants are acculturating to their new countries of residence, particularly in the domain of identity, as this has been found to influence their adjustment (Birman & Simon, 2014), self-esteem (Ai, Nicdao, Appel,
While there has been much scholarship focusing on a variety of ethnically diverse immigrant populations and the factors that affect their well-being in the U.S. (Smith & Trimble, 2016), Chinese Jamaican immigrants remain an overlooked population. To build on the large body of immigrant research, particularly the Asian/Asian American body of literature, this dissertation aims to understand Chinese Jamaicans’ experiences as immigrants in the U.S. and how they construct their identities.

Significance of the Problem

Asians represent one of the most diverse racial groups comprising individuals who not only come from the vast regions of Asia, but other parts of the world as well (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011). Asians are also one of the fastest-growing racial groups in the United States and are projected to become the largest immigrant group in the country by 2055 (Passel, 2013; Lopez, Ruiz, & Patten, 2017). However, the ethnic identity and well-being literatures have rarely focused on the cultural heterogeneity within this group (Ai, Nicdao, Appel, & Lee, 2015). One example of an ethnic subgroup rarely studied or recognized in the extant Asian/Asian American literature is the Caribbean Chinese. In fact, it is not currently known how the U.S. government would classify a Chinese Jamaican (e.g. a Chinese person born and raised in Jamaica). For example, if a Chinese Jamaican person identifies “Jamaica” as their country of birth, the dominant assumption in the U.S. would be that they are Black because Jamaica’s population is a predominantly African-descended country. Conversely, if that person selects “Asian” as their race, much information about their cultural identity will be elided, as they were born and raised on a Caribbean island and see that society as an
integral part of themselves. Misperceptions about what it means to be Black or Asian in America, as well as the cognitive dissonance evoked by the term “Chinese Jamaican”, can cause confusion and misunderstanding.

Frequently, Chinese Jamaicans are “creolized” (Ho, 1989, p.21), which is a term that refers to “the process of inculcating local traditions into non-creole settlers and their descendants in these societies” (Ho, 1989, p. 20). The best way for Chinese Jamaicans to be understood culturally is to check the “other” box and write in “Caribbean”. Even then, “Caribbean” is an amorphous term that encompasses an ethnically diverse region (multiculturally and multilingually) with influences from Europe, Africa, North America, and Asia. Thus, it would be challenging to accurately pinpoint, for example, what language the person speaks and with what cultural streams they identify.

Although there is a growing body of work on how Caribbean immigrants psychologically adjust to life in the U.S., it is largely devoid of acculturation theory (Ferguson, Iturbide, & Gordon, 2014) and mostly considers Black Caribbean immigrant experiences. Additionally, the current acculturation models “inadequately [describe] immigrants from multi-cultural sending societies” (Ferguson, Bornstein, & Pottinger, 2012, p. 239) and rarely takes context into account (Birman & Simon, 2014). We know very little about how Chinese Jamaican immigrants identify in America, the common stressors they face, and how these factors impact their mental health.

Given that the U.S. is the primary destination for Caribbean populations (Thomas-Hope, 2002), it is time that we developed an understanding of the ethnic complexities of Chinese Caribbean immigrants’ adjustment and acculturation in America and how this
impacts their well-being. This understanding holds theoretical and practical importance for the field of counseling psychology, as the need to understand how cultural identity is negotiated in a multicultural context, and its implications, has become a significant area of concern.

Who are Chinese Jamaicans?

As pointed out earlier, the monolithic term “Asian American” is ill-fitting for Chinese Jamaicans, as it overlooks the diverse histories and cultural backgrounds of the various Asian subgroups that comprise it. For instance, the category, "Asian" contains a wide range of religious, national, and geographic differences, to name a few. Nadal (2004) highlights an example of this religious difference by noting that many F/Pilipinos are predominantly Catholic, which gives them more in common with Latinos than Buddhist East Asians in this respect. Furthermore, many of these subgroup communities prefer to label themselves based on their own subgroup community, rather than using the generic Asian American label (Ai et al., 2015). Given that ethnic identity is fluid across cultural contexts and across time, with changes being particularly common following migration (Ferguson, Iturbide & Gordon, 2014; Phinney, 2003), it is important to explore this domain for Chinese Jamaican immigrants. Thus, one of the central questions of this dissertation is: Who is a Chinese Jamaican? Phinney and Ong (2007) note that the “measurement of ethnic identity must begin with verifying that the individuals being studied in fact self-identify as members of a particular group” (p. 272). It is also important to note that, depending on the situation, context, and how others view them, individuals may self-identify differently at different times (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Phinney & Ong, 2007).
Chinese Migration: From China to the Caribbean

While the Chinese can be found on almost every continent, with “more Chinese people living outside of China than French people living in France” (Economist, 2011, para. 1), Chinese Jamaican immigrants are a distinct population of the Jamaican diaspora. There is little in the psychological research literature about how Chinese Jamaican immigrants identify, their mental health status, how they cope with stressors, and their overall state of well-being. Chinese Jamaicans can be defined as Jamaican people of Chinese ancestry who came to Jamaica in three waves: first as indentured laborers between 1854 and 1886; second, primarily as businessmen between the 1900s and 1940s; and thirdly, during the 1980s (Bryan, 2004).

The majority of Chinese Jamaicans are primarily Hakka. Hakka people are Han Chinese people who speak the Hakka language, and are thought to originate near the lands bordering the Yellow River (Wilson, 2009). The most migratory and diasporic of Chinese ethnic groups, the Hakka have moved and settled in various regions throughout China, such as the Guangdong, Fujian, and Jiangxi provinces, as well as all over the world, in countries such as Australia, India, Canada, Malaysia, the Caribbean (in particular, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago), Central and South America, Great Britain, Austria, Italy, and Mauritius, to name a few. Some of the key conditions contributing to the out-migration of Hakka Chinese have included high taxes, civil war, poverty, and economic unrest (Lee-Loy, 2015).

Despite the presence of Chinese in the Caribbean and Latin America for over two hundred years, many people outside the region, particularly in North America, are still shocked when they learn that a person who looks Chinese is from Jamaica. To them, it is
an “anomaly” or a “contradiction,” and so they persist in asking the question, “Where are you really from?” As Ho (1989) states, “The Caribbean is not a part of the world in which the non-Caribbean person expects to find Chinese people” (p. 4). However, there have been fifty voyages from China to the British West Indies, which include Jamaica, British Guiana, Trinidad, and British Honduras (Look Lai, 1998), and also extensive voyages to Latin American countries such as Peru, Panama, Brazil, and Cuba.

As Nadal (2004) observes, “there is enough heterogeneity in the Asian/Pacific Islander community for researchers and mental health professionals to analyze specific ethnic subpopulations within the larger racial category, so that their experiences and identity development can be assessed more accurately” (p.45-46). As for Chinese Jamaicans, scholars such as Bohr (2004) note that identity and ethnicity developed and “emerged in the context of a strong interplay between Jamaican creole elements” (para. 7), having undergone a “segmentary creolization” involving “three cultural strains: the African creole society of the West Indies, the British culture of the colonial West Indies, and the Chinese culture of the West Indian Chinese” (para. 14). Additionally, the term, “Chinese,” has taken on a cultural, rather than a racial, understanding in Jamaica due to the great number of interracial liaisons and intermarriages (Bohr, 2004). As a result, Chinese Jamaicans are culturally homeless (Vivero & Jenkins, 1999) in the U.S. and do not fit into any of the available racial or ethnic boxes found on American registration forms, or even within the larger discourse on race and ethnicity.

**Chinese Migration: From the Caribbean to the U.S.**

Currently, there are no census figures documenting the number of Chinese Jamaican immigrants in the United States, but reports show that a large number of them
migrated to states such as Florida and New York, and to Canada during the 1960s and 1970s (Lee-Loy, 2015). This was a time period in which Jamaica experienced a large net out-migration, arguably due to its “sharp left turn in the Socialist politics of the Michael Manley regime” (Hu-Dehart, 2010, p. 82), civil unrest, and the loosening of immigration laws in receiving countries such as the U.S. (Cooper, 1985). However, there is some information on Caribbean migration to the U.S. that provides a general scope of the number of immigrants from the Caribbean.

In 2014, the U.S. was home to approximately four million Caribbean immigrants, and is the top destination for Caribbean emigrants, which make up 9% of the population of foreign-born Americans (Zong & Batalova, 2016). Large-scale voluntary migration to the US began in the early 20th century, with immigrants varying in racial backgrounds, skill levels, and migration pathways (Zong & Batalova, 2016). Florida is a particularly common destination state for many Caribbean immigrants due to its geographically close location and climatic similarity. In Florida, nearly four out of every 10 immigrants were born in the Caribbean, with about 69% of all Caribbean immigrants residing in Florida and New York.

Jamaicans comprise 33.4% of Caribbean Nationals who have been granted permanent residence in the US, being outranked only by Haitians who comprise 38% of the U.S.’s permanent residents (Zong & Batalova, 2016). Moreover, Caribbean immigrants are more likely to become naturalized US citizens, at 55.4% compared to 43.7% of the overall foreign-born population, with Jamaicans having the second highest naturalization rate among Caribbean countries at 62.4% (Zong & Batalova, 2016). Lastly, roughly 1.2 million children have at least one Caribbean-born parent, representing 7.8% of all children living in immigrant families.
With the growing numbers of Caribbeans immigrating to the U.S. and their high naturalization rates, it is important for psychologists to document and study their experiences in the country as it relate to their well-being, family lives, social and economic adjustment, and especially in the area of racial and ethnic identity (Yip & Fuligni, 2002; Birman, Persky, & Chan, 2010; Ai, Aisenberg, Weiss, & Salazar, 2014). In particular, it is important to understand how Chinese Jamaican immigrants’ new environmental context impacts their overall well-being, as they have gone from being an ethnic minority in their home country to being a “minority within a minority” in the U.S., so to speak. This question is especially salient because the U.S. tends to narrowly categorize individuals, placing them in pre-defined racial or ethnic categories that do not match how they see themselves (Mays, Ponce, Washington, & Cochran, 2003). Migration can thus play a defining role in the experience and identity of an immigrant due to the way in which they are categorized within their new society.

Ethnicity, Ethnic Identity, Race, and Racial Identity

“Ethnicity” refers to “the cultural practices of a group of people, but the group need not be the same ascribed racial group” (Helms, 2007, p. 236), while “ethnic identity” is a multidimensional construct that refers to “the degree of commitment to a cultural group and engagement in its cultural practices, irrespective of racial ascriptions” (Helms, 2007, p. 236). Ethnic identity is dynamic in nature because it is “subject to change along various dimensions: over time or across generations in a new culture, in different contexts, and with age or development” (Phinney, 2003, p. 63). Despite the research on the important role of ethnic identity in ethnic minorities’ and immigrants’ psychological well-being, there have been no studies that have explored this construct with Chinese Jamaican immigrants in the
In terms of self-identification, a few studies have examined ethnic identity in Jamaicans who identify with the Black diaspora. These studies found that first-generation immigrant adolescents tended to self-identify using a national-origin label such as “Jamaican,” while some used a bicultural hyphenated label (e.g. Jamaican-American), with others simply using the racial label, “Black” (Rumbaut, 1994). In terms of which cultural groups Jamaican immigrants identified with, Ferguson and colleagues (2012) found that most (40%) Jamaican American immigrant mothers were triculturally integrated (i.e. they scored highly on all three scales of a measure that looked at each of their cultures of identity affiliation: Jamaican, African American, and European American). Were such studies to be conducted with Chinese Jamaicans, it is possible that they would not only identify with Jamaican, African American, and European American ethnicities, but also with Chinese or Asian American ethnicities as well. The addition of this fourth cultural influence allows Chinese Jamaican immigrants to be described as more than triculturally integrated—perhaps multic culturally integrated. However, no research to date has examined this possibility with this population.

Race is another construct that plays a significant role in the experience of ethnically diverse individuals in the U.S. Indeed, there is arguably no term so contested and controversial in the U.S. as race. Historically, the term was used to assign biological differences to specific groups of people in order to create a racial order where Whites held higher status than non-Whites (Smedley & Smedley, 2005; Carter & Perez, 2016). Although some academic disciplines have re-conceptualized race as a social construct (Morning, 2011), such biological-essentialist conceptions still persist and confine
individuals to certain racial groups based on arbitrary physical characteristics (Helms, 1990).

Therefore, racial identity is an individual’s ascribed racial group or their internalization of racial socialization pertaining to their group (Helms, 2007). There are currently many racial identity theories and measures (Cross, 1971; Helms & Parham, 1996; Sellers et al., 1997, Phinney, 1992) that assess the impact of racial dynamics on an individual’s psychological development. Studies have found, particularly for Black Americans, that strong racial identification and racial pride can serve as a buffer against discrimination and distress (Lee & Ahn, 2013; Neblett et al., 2008) and is connected to positive mental and physical health outcomes (Kaholokula, 2016; Graham & Roemer, 2012).

Given that this dissertation focuses on how Chinese Jamaicans construct their identity and their experiences in the U.S., racial identity becomes a very salient construct to examine alongside ethnic identity, particularly for mixed-race individuals, who are very common in the Caribbean (Bohr, 2004). However, because this study is interested in how Chinese Jamaicans view their own identity, taking into particular account their culture, values, and beliefs, ethnic identity will be the construct of focus. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, Chinese Jamaicans’ understandings of their identity is more cultural than racial, which makes ethnic identity the more appropriate construct to study. Cokley (2005) further supports such denotation and offers the following guidelines for selecting the most appropriate construct when designing a study:

When researchers are interested in how individuals see themselves relative to their cultural beliefs, values, and behaviors, ethnic identity is the more appropriate
construct to study. However, when researchers are more interested in how individuals construct their identities in response to an oppressive and highly racialized society, racial identity is the more appropriate construct to study. (Cokley, 2005, p. 225)

However, an understanding of the concepts of “mixed-race or multiracial” and “multicultural” needs to be developed because of their relevance to this population and their origins in race and racial-identity theories. As used in this study, the term, “mixed race,” denotes people who identify with two or more races (Greig, 2015), while the term, “multicultural,” denotes a person who internalizes more than one culture (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005; LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993). In addition to being racially mixed and having multiple cultural heritages, the experience of moving to another country where racial categories, culture, and values may be dissimilar from their home countries may also have implications for Chinese Jamaican immigrants’ identities. Consequently, a look at some of the challenges they encounter in the U.S. will be described next.

**Challenges Associated with Identifying as a Chinese Jamaican in the U.S.**

It is said that immigrants tend to be identified by their country of origin (Phinney, 2003), particularly if they are from a visibly different group in terms of ethnicity (Tsang et al., 2003). However, as pointed out earlier, Chinese Jamaicans do not phenotypically match how an American would expect a Jamaican to look. Trimble and Dickson (in press) note that, “when outward physical appearances do not mesh with the standard physical criteria or there is a sense that others doubt the identity claim, ethnic actors will tend to exaggerate and give emphasis to mannerisms and speech idiosyncrasies known to
be particular to the reference group” (para 7). Having to prove one’s identity due to racial invalidation (Franco, Katz, & O’Brien, 2016) or conform to identity stereotypes, however, is a very reactive way of living (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996; Cheryan & Monin, 2005). Furthermore, individuals in America tend to narrowly categorize these immigrants as monocultural Chinese, which glosses over their unique lived experience and complex multicultural backgrounds.

As Ang (2014) points out, subsuming the entire Chinese diaspora (e.g. those found in Australia, Brazil, Jamaica, and Africa) under one category is not appropriate because the “meanings attached to their ‘Chinese’ identities may fluctuate wildly” (p.1188). Ang (2014) further argues that “there is no clarity or consensus on whom the Chinese are, as it is an ambiguous term with very varied and contested meanings” (p. 1193). His qualitative research with Chinese Australians has found that participants express a feeling of always being labeled based on race, no matter what ethnic or national label they ascribed to themselves. This, he argues, hampers the integration of Chinese immigrants into mainstream society, making it difficult for them to move from an ethnic minority status to having a full “Australian national identity” (p. 1191), for example. Questions relating to how Chinese Jamaicans—particularly those who were not born in China, or who do not speak the language, or whose “life history is far from the territorial nation state of China” (Ang, 2014, p. 1191)—ethnically identify, how others ethnically identify them, and how they identify nationally and racially once in the U.S. are contentious and warrant further exploration.

**Identity, Immigrants, and Acculturation**

As Schwartz, Montgomery, and Briones (2006) note, an identity can simply be
thought of as “a synthesis of personal, social, and cultural self-conceptions” (p. 6). They elaborate on this definition, defining personal identity as the “goals, values and beliefs, that an individual has” (p. 6), social identity as “the group with which one identifies, including its ideals and conventions, and the extent to which this identification leads one to favor the ingroup and distance oneself from outgroups” (p. 6), and cultural identity as a “sense of solidarity with the ideals of a given cultural group, and to the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors manifested towards one’s own (and other) cultural groups” (p. 6).

An immigrant’s racial and ethnic identity (REI) is important because it can impact their mental and physical health, as well as their self-esteem, and self-concept (Ai, Nicdao, Appel, & Lee, 2015; Nguyen, Wong, Juang, & Park, 2015). When an immigrant settles in a new country, they continuously negotiate their identity as they strive to maintain and pass on their original culture to their children, but also learn and adapt to the culture of their new country. Thus, immigrant identity tends to be emergent (Benton & Gomez, 2014; Heilbrunn, Gorodzeisky, & Glikman, 2016). As such, it is necessary to understand immigrant identity using frameworks that recognize this emergent state of identity, particularly for Chinese Jamaican immigrants, whose identity can be defined as “transnational (national with a diasporic dimension), continental (Asian, European, African, pan-American) or post-national (internationalist, cosmopolitan)” (Benton & Gomez, 2014, p.1160). Collectively, these processes can significantly impact an individual’s acculturation process.

Acculturation, which is often an inevitable process that many immigrants experience, can be defined as the “changes following contact between culturally different people in contexts impacted by contemporary or historical migration, or modern
globalization” (Ferguson, Iturbide, & Gordon, 2014, p. 239). Acculturation is a multifaceted construct, with language, behavior, identity, and psychological adjustment being just a few of its measures (Ferguson, Iturbide, & Gordon, 2014; Trickett, Persky, & Espino, 2002). Further, some scholars have advanced models that discount a unidimensional view of acculturation (i.e. moving from unacculturated to fully acculturated). One example of such a model is Benet-Martinez and Haritatos’ (2005) bicultural identity integration (BII) model, which offers a “theoretical construct that provides a framework for investigating individual differences in bicultural identity organization” (p. 1019). In other words, Benet-Martinez and Haritatos’ (2005) model provides researchers and clinicians with a framework that can help them understand the degree to which individuals view their two cultural identities as being compatible (i.e. their ethnic cultural identity and the mainstream culture). Cultural distance and cultural conflict are the two dimensions or independent constructs that comprise this model, which posits that the negotiation of multiple cultural identities is an individualized phenomenon that is complex and multidimensional. However, given the fact that Chinese Jamaican immigrants already ascribe to more than two cultural identities in their home country, more complex models are needed to understand their acculturation experience in the U.S.

A framework that more closely approximates acculturation for Chinese Jamaican immigrants is described by Ferguson and colleagues (2014), who can be viewed as pioneers in researching the acculturation process for immigrants from multicultural societies. They proposed a tridimensional acculturation model for Jamaican Americans, which may be a more useful model for Chinese Jamaicans given their multiracial and
multicultural backgrounds.

Many constructs and concepts have thus far been presented, which may have different definitions depending upon the discipline of the reader (e.g. sociology, anthropology, psychology) and the voice of the author (i.e. participant voice or researcher). Thus, for clarity and ease of understanding, a reference table of concepts relevant to the study is presented below:

Table 1

*Definition of Key Terms*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Terms</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Cultural practices of a group of people, but group need not be same ascribed racial group (Helms, 2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>Multidimensional and dynamic construct referring to degree of commitment to a cultural group and engagement in its practices, irrespective of racial ascriptions (Helms, 2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>The socially constructed meaning that connotes group differences based on ostensible biological characteristics (Helms, 1990)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Identity</td>
<td>Individual’s ascribed racial group or internalization of racial socialization that pertains to their group (Helms, 2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Belief systems and value orientations that influence customs, norms, practices, and social institutions, including psychological processes and organizations; the embodiment of a worldview through learned and transmitted beliefs, values, and practices, including religious and spiritual traditions (Fiske, Kitayama, Markus &amp; Nerbitt, 1998; APA, 2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial or Mixed Race</td>
<td>People who identify with two or more races (Greig, 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural</td>
<td>Anyone who is a member of, or has lineage from more than one cultural group (Benet-Martinez &amp; Hong, 2014)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key Terms | Definition
--- | ---
Cultural Homelessness | Unique experiences and feelings reported by some multicultural individuals that arise as a result of not having a cultural home i.e. a sense of belonging to an ethnic or geographic community with consistent socialization themes and traditions (Vivero & Jenkins, 1999)
National Identity/Nationality | Person’s sense of belonging to one state or one nation. In the study, some participants understood it to simply mean what country’s passport they held which could differ from their ethnic and/or racial identity, as well as country of their birth. Thus, while researchers see “American identity” and “nationality” as synonymous, it is not the case for these immigrants.
Acculturation | Phenomena that occur as a result of contact between culturally different people in contexts impacted by historical or contemporary migration (Redfield, Linton & Herskovits, 1936)
Assimilation | One of four possible acculturation strategies proposed by Berry (1990) in which an individual adopts the culture of the host culture and does not maintain their own culture. In the study, however, participants used the word “assimilating” to mean something different. It was referenced as a term that meant they were beginning to adopt characteristics of the “American culture”; not necessarily trying to forget or dismiss their own culture.

**Purpose of the Study**

Research has documented the important and protective role that ethnic and racial identity play in the acculturation and psychological well-being of immigrants and ethnically diverse groups in the U.S. (Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2007; Birman, Persky, & Chan, 2010; Schwartz et al., 2013). While this relationship has been established in ethnic groups such as African Americans (Smith & Silva, 2011), Asian Americans (Gartner, Kiang, & Supple, 2014), Hispanic Americans (Finch, Hummer, Kol, & Vega, 2001), and, to some extent, Black Caribbeans (Murphy & Mahalingam, 2004), it has yet to be explored in Chinese Jamaican immigrants. Furthermore, it is not known how Chinese Jamaican immigrants identify, and what this identity means to them. They are
an ethnic group that is almost “invisible,” having yet to be assigned a racial or ethnic label in the psychological literature, and perhaps remain hidden in studies that use nationality or forced choice racial/ethnic categories as a basis for grouping participants. Given Chinese Jamaicans’ racial minority status in their own country, as well as their unique cultural status in the U.S., (given their differences from the heterogeneity of Asians who migrate from Asia), it is important to understand how this transnational, multi-ethnic subgroup constructs its identity. Thus, the purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate the experience of Chinese Jamaican immigrants in the U.S., and to understand how they construct their identity within their new cultural and social context.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Given the growing immigrant population in the U.S., it is important to study and explore constructs and phenomena that have been found to impact immigrants and play a role in their post-migration adjustment – ethnic identity, acculturation, and psychological well-being (Cheryan & Tsai, 2006; Chae & Foley, 2010). While these constructs have been heavily researched in diverse immigrant groups, including Asian Americans (Birman, Persky, & Chan, 2010; Ferguson et al., 2016; Chae & Foley), to date, no studies have examined these constructs as it relates to Chinese Jamaican immigrants. This chapter will review the literature on ethnic identity, acculturation, and psychological well-being, particularly as it relates to Asians as a starting point for the study given this is the ethnic group Chinese Jamaicans tend to be classified under. Because the ethnic identity development literature has roots in identity development theories, this too will be reviewed.

Overview of Ethnic Identity

Ethnic Identity Conceptualizations

Given the fact that ethnic minorities do not live as “closed cultural entities” (Liebkind, 2006, p. 80), Liebkind’s definition captures the complexity of ethnic identity best, stating, “what can be said therefore, is only that most members of an ethnic group usually identify themselves with a group they have, or think they have a common ancestry, and they display some distinctive cultural patterns” (p. 80). Regardless of the definition espoused of ethnicity, in the U.S. society, ethnic identity has important implications for mental, physical, emotional, and social well-being.
Erik Erikson’s (1968) ego identity model can be thought of as the basis from which the psychological study of ethnic identity emerged. According to Erikson, identity gives individuals a stable sense of self, begins in childhood and develops over time due to a process of reflection and observation. He posits that these processes heighten during adolescence and that by adulthood, one is expected to have reached an achieved identity (Phinney & Ong, 2007). However, for Chinese Jamaican immigrants who, like other immigrants, come from a cultural context that may not place much emphasis on categorizing individuals into ethnic/racial categories as in the U.S. (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2015), does this exploration occur? If it does, is adolescence the stage this exploration occurs, or is it later in life? Erikson’s model also states that individuals fare better when they have reached an achieved identity or unified self-structure. Further, it is proffered that if identity achievement does not occur, role confusion results and an inability to make progress towards meaningful commitments (Phinney & Ong, 2007). Might this theory apply to immigrant groups from countries with limited need for identity exploration?

Phinney and Ong (2007) identified eight components relevant to the study of ethnic identity. The first one is self-categorization or labeling which is simply the identification of oneself with a particular social group. Commitment and attachment, another component, refers to the sense of belonging one has with their ethnic identity. Sometimes this commitment is entered into without much exploration, which is known as foreclosure, due to “identification with one’s parents or role models even though one does not have a clear understanding of the meaning and implications of their commitment” (Phinney & Ong, 2007, p. 272). The third component is exploration,
which occurs when one actively looks for information about their ethnicity and aids the process of ethnic identity formation (Phinney & Ong, 2007). *Ethnic behaviors* are another component used by some researchers to study ethnic identity, and this includes actions such as speaking the language and eating certain foods that are associated with the ethnic identity. Phinney and Ong (2007) note, however, that an ethnic identity can exist without behavior, as it is an internal structure.

The fifth component is *evaluation and ingroup attitudes*, which refer to the attitudes one has about the ethnic group and one’s group membership. Research has indicated that one can be committed to one’s group and at the same time harbor negative feelings about the group while wishing to belong to another group, thus positing the notion that evaluation of one’s group is a distinct component of ethnic identity (Umana-Taylor, Yazedjian, & Bamaca-Gomez, 2004; Phinney & Ong, 2007). *Values and beliefs* are another component central to the study of ethnic identity and “are important indicators of one’s closeness to the group” (Phinney & Ong, 2007, p. 273) but may not always be representative of the entire group because members may not all adopt the exact same values and beliefs. The last two components are *importance and salience* and *ethnic identity and national (or American) identity*. Importance and salience refer to the degree of importance one attributes to their ethnic identity, which can vary over time (Phinney & Ong, 2007), while ethnic identity and national identity refer to how individuals identify as part of their national culture, or in terms of the U.S., as part of their American identity (Phinney & Ong, 2007).

These components of ethnic identity have all been used in various studies that examine ethnic identity in various ethnic groups. Part of the problem in the current
literature in ethnic identity is that researchers pick and choose one component of ethnic identity to understand the ethnic identity of a particular group (Yip, Douglas, & Sellers, 2014). Complicating the problem is how researchers have classified ethnic groups in their research, such that most of the time, overgeneralized or simplistic categories are used to refer to ethnocultural groups, when in fact there are more differences within cultural groups themselves (Santos & Umana-Taylor, 2015; Schwartz et al., 2014). Therefore, examining as many components of ethnic identity as possible when studying immigrant ethnic identity, is necessary to gather a comprehensive view of the construct.

Identity Development Theories

The question of how an individual comes to ethnically identify with a particular social group has been linked to several theories that seek to explain and understand how ethnic identity unfolds over time. However, given the fact that many ethnic identity models have a theoretical anchor in certain identity development theories, it will be useful to delineate these first. Erikson’s Stages of Development (1968), Marcia’s Identity Status Model (1966), Tajfel & Turner’s Social Identity Theory (1974, 1981), and Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model (1979, 1989) will therefore be described briefly below.

Erikson’s Stages of Development. As previously mentioned, the study of identity can be credited to Erikson (1968) who proposed that as individuals age, they face several conflicts that need to be resolved. His theory details eight stages of psychosocial development beginning in infancy and ending in late adulthood. Most central to the discussion of identity development is the fifth stage, which describes the conflict of “identity vs. role confusion” and is said to occur during adolescence. If this conflict is
not resolved, and a person is unable to find his or her identity (usually based on an affiliation to particular ideals, morals, values, friends etc.), they may experience role confusion and an inability to find their place in society (Erikson, 1968).

**Marcia’s Identity Status Model.** Furthering Erikson’s work, particularly on the identity crisis or conflict stage, was James Marcia (1966). He posited that this stage consisted of four possible identity statuses that looked at the degree to which a person explored and committed to an identity, rather than identity resolution or confusion. The four possible statuses are: diffused, foreclosed, moratorium, and achieved.

A diffused identity describes someone who does not have a clear identity, while a foreclosed identity, is thought to occur when one commits to a particular ethnic identity without any exploration. The moratorium stage is a period where one is engaged in the process of exploring their ethnic identity, but still has not committed to a particular one, while ethnic identity achievement describes someone who has a clear and confident understanding of their ethnicity and is firmly committed to it (Phinney & Ong, 2007). An achieved identity has been said to facilitate positive psychological well-being (Lieber, Chin, Nihira & Mink, 2001) whilst, failure to reach this stage has been found to result in issues such as confusion in the role one will occupy as an adult, and one’s place in society.

Both of these theories can be thought of as stage-based models, where people must progress to the next. A failure to develop or an inability to reach the “ultimate” form of identity development is assumed when the next stage is not met. For immigrants, particularly those facing the challenges outlined for a Chinese Jamaican in the U.S., does this stage-based model apply? Further, what if they do not progress neatly through the
stages or do not achieve resolution of the various conflicts by a certain age? Are they said to be developing too slowly? These models are also based on the idea of individuation (Mahler, 1968; Cheng & Berman, 2012), a very Western approach to growth and development where individuals, particularly in the adolescent stage, are expected to form their own identity, seek independence and freedom, and assert a separate identity (Lam, 1997).

Individuation and autonomy run contrary to the culture of many immigrant families, particularly those that come from a collectivistic culture, or value obedience and conformity. As such, these families may not necessarily provide an environment that promotes and facilitates separation, self-expression, and independence (Lam, 1997). With this in mind, how immigrants such as Chinese Jamaicans fit into these models of identity development may need to be examined, given their cultural values may be at odds with the values of the country they migrated to, and their identities may suddenly be a source of contention based on how individuals in the U.S. classify and perceive them.

**Tajfel and Turner’s Social Identity Theory.** This leads us to a consideration of Tajfel and Turner’s (1986) Social Identity Theory (SIT), which maintains that one’s identity is strongly based on their group membership. A group from their perspective is:

> A collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group and of their membership of this. (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p. 40).

This theory, thus considers, an individual’s understanding of their position in their social world, and how they self-reference. Further, it considers the value and emotional significance attached to that social group membership. This indicates that various groups that individuals affiliate with can be a great sense of pride and give them a sense of
belonging. Conversely, if the group is not socially accepted or acceptable in mainstream society, it can cause shame and low self-esteem. This theory provides a valuable framework to understand immigrants, who are in new cultural, political, and social contexts, and need to make sense of their identities within a new sphere of life. It is particularly relevant to an understanding of Chinese Jamaican immigrants living in the U.S. since it is unknown what social categorization in the existing society they identify with, if any, what value connotation they have about their membership in their chosen social group membership, and how they self-reference based on their membership in this new society.

**Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory.** Along with this theory, which considers social categorization, identification, and comparison, Bronfenbrenner’s (1979, 1989) Ecological Systems Theory is another useful framework to understand the ethnic identity development of immigrants because it takes a contextual view of the individual. This theory proposes that environments are contexts of development and conceives the environment as “a set of nested structures, each inside the other like a set of Russian dolls” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 39). The structures, or systems, start with the innermost level known as the microsystem, and moves further out to encompass the mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem.

The microsystem is best described as “a pattern of activities, social roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a face-to face setting” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 39) such as the family, school, workplace, or peer group, while the mesosystem is made up of the link between two or more settings of which the developing person is a part of (e.g. home and school). The exosystem is an
environmental system that the developing person is not directly involved with, but still has an impact on their development (e.g. a child’s parents’ workplace or their neighborhood). The macrosystem is the largest system that can be thought of as “a societal blueprint for a particular culture or subculture” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40) and includes the economy, political systems, national customs etc. Lastly, the chronosystem refers to change over time, not only for the developing person, but also in the environment in which the person lives. Issues such as changes in family structure, pace of life, war, famine and other historical events, are examples of changes in the chronosystem.

This theory is very valuable in understanding human development as it considers the entire system within which growth and experience occurs, and can shed a realistic light into how and why the developing person develops the way they do. For Chinese Jamaican immigrants living in the U.S., it will be helpful to understand how these systems shape and influence their ethnic identification, acculturation, and psychological well-being over time. Taken together, all these models can contribute to an understanding of the development of identity, from an individual, social, and systemic perspective, which can aid us in understanding the Chinese Jamaican immigrant in the U.S.

**Ethnic Identity Models and Measures**

There are many ethnic identity models and measures (Helms, 1995; Marcia 1966; Cross, 1991; Umana-Taylor, 2004; Tsai, Ying & Lee, 1999; Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, & Broadnax, 1994) however, the stage model of ethnic identity posited by Jean Phinney (1996) has been predominantly used in research on ethnic identity (Trimble, 2007).
Phinney’s model states that individuals progress in their ethnic identity from a state of diffusion to foreclosure, to moratorium, and finally, ethnic identity achievement. Diffusion is described as when a person lacks a clear identity, while foreclosure denotes a person who makes an ethnic identity commitment without having conducted any research or exploration into the choice (Phinney & Ong, 2007). Moratorium, in the model, is described as when a person is in a period of exploration and has made no commitment to any particular ethnic identity, while the final stage of ethnic identity achievement, is when a person makes a firm commitment to an ethnic identity based on extensive exploration (Phinney & Ong, 2007).

Phinney (1992) then developed the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) to assess her model of ethnic identity development. It is based on an individual’s degree of (a) exploration and commitment (b) participation in cultural activities, and (c) positive feelings toward their ethnic group. However, scholars such as Umana-Taylor, Yazedjian, Bamaca-Gomez (2004) argue that this measure is incongruent with the theory because the measurement tool assumes the person is positively committed to their ethnic identity when the theory does not. As a result, they put forth a new typology for examining ethnic identity statuses that are also consistent with Marcia’s, Erkison’s, and Tajfel’s theories. Their measure, known as the Ethnic Identity Scale (EIS), independently assesses three distinct components of ethnic identity: “(a) the degree to which individuals have explored their ethnicity, (b) the degree to which they have resolved what their ethnic identity means to them, and (c) the affect (positive or negative) that they associate with that resolution” (Umana-Taylor et al., 2004, p. 14).

The MEIM and EIS, however, have their limitations as they have been developed on adolescent and emerging adult samples, and researchers in the field have used them
mainly with similar samples within a positivist and postpositivist research paradigm (Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2007). It is not clear how they would hold for community samples or with adult and older adult immigrants. Further, scholars of ethnic identity note that the field is hampered by the confusion between racial and ethnic identity, and the fact that most studies need to incorporate all domains of ethnic identity in order to capture its complexity (Yip, Douglass, & Sellers, 2014). They also note that a bulk of research has relied mainly on the process of ethnic identity (such as the MEIM measure) and not so much on the content. Content refers to “factors such as the behaviors individuals may practice” (Santos & Umana-Taylor, 2015, p. 19) whereas process is defined as “the mechanisms involved in learning about one’s identity and forming and maintaining the identity’ (Santos & Umana-Taylor, 2015, p. 19) Thus, they argue that studies need to start including measures of both in order to have a holistic view of ethnic identity (see Syed & Azmitia, 2008 for an example of a study that uses both process and content).

To this end, Trimble (2005) provides an overview of domains of empirical measures that have been used to study ethnic identity that can lead further provide a holistic view of ethnic identity: behavioral measures, situation-context measures, natal measures, and subjective measures. Further, scholars call for constructivist qualitative research with regard to the investigation of ethnic identity’s role in terms of health, adjustment, and quality of life in ethnically diverse populations (Morrow, Rakhsha and Castañeda, 2001; Burkard, Knox, Groen, Perez, & Hess, 2006). It is thus important for researchers to heed these appeals and begin to design studies with such recommendations in mind.
Ethnic Identity of Asian Americans: Definitions and Theories

Ethnic identity research with Asians has been obfuscated by the use of monolithic term “Asian American”, making it unclear who (Japanese, Koreans, East Indians, Chinese?) is being referred to under that heading (Schwartz et al., 2014). As such, despite meaningful ethnic differences amongst the groups within this term, there are few cohesive narratives on ethnic identity (see Nadal, 2004 for one on P/Filipino Identity) for even one sub-ethnic group within the Asian American category. This leads us to the question: What is the Asian American ethnic identity? Currently, the term has been used to describe “the degree to which individuals’ identity with their country of ancestral origin” (Cheryan & Tsai, 2006, p. 125), however, this focus has masked the ways in which Asian Americans can be understood ethnically. Cheryan & Tsai (2006) therefore note that research on three ethnic identities: Asian, American, and Asian American (and how they relate to each other) need to be considered in order to have a richer understanding of the Asian American ethnic identity.

An Asian identity has been conceptualized as the “degree to which individuals view themselves as members of a particular Asian cultural group and incorporate Asian cultural ideas and practices into their self-concept (Cheryan & Tsai, 2006, p. 126). Cheryan and Tsai’s (2006) research has demonstrated that the Asian ethnic identity was important to Asian Americans, relative to White Americans. In terms of ethnic identity levels, Yip, Gee, & Takeuchi (2008) found that Asian immigrants, in contrast to Asians born in the U.S., had higher levels of ethnic identity. Further, research has shown that for foreign-born Asians, the Asian ethnic identity is more protective (i.e. better mental health, self esteem, and well-being) than for American born Asian Americans.
Nevertheless, both groups showed no difference to the extent in which they embraced their ethnic identity (Yip et al., 2008). However, it is suggested that U.S. born Asian Americans may just be “more oriented to other ethnic identities such as their American and Asian American identities” (Cheryan & Tsai, 2006, p. 126).

An American identity for Asian Americans has, however, also been found to be important to both foreign born and U.S. born Asians. The meaning of an American identity, however, differs from how White Americans define the term such that Asian Americans related customs and traditions to being American more than White Americans did (Tsai, Mortensen, Wong, & Hess, 2002). However, despite seeing themselves as American, Asian Americans are sometimes not viewed as American by others, which has had important political (Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 for example), social, and economic, consequences (Cheryan & Tsai, 2006). Further, in comparison to other ethnic groups (i.e. African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and White Americans), Asian Americans are perceived as the least American (Cheryan & Monin, 2005), lending credence to the perpetual foreigner stereotype of Asian Americans (Wu, 2001: Yellow: Race in America Book). Despite the offensiveness of having to prove their identity, studies have found that, as a reaction, Asians increased their reports of their engagement in American practices (e.g. watching American TV shows) (Cheryan & Monin, 2005), which in turn, led to feelings of increased efficacy and competence (Ying et al., 2000). Thus, having both a strong Asian and American ethnic identity, seems to promote psychological adjustment for both US born and foreign-born Asians.

However, where does this definition (i.e. Asian American) place a Chinese Jamaican immigrant to the U.S. who espouses an identity comprised of three or more
cultural worlds, and what is their level of attachment to each? Which cultural values, and behaviors do they internalize and enact, and under what circumstances? The answers are unknown given the virtual void of scholarship on this population, bolstering the need for this current study. However, there are several theories and measures that have been created to understand the identity of Asians in the US, which are expanded upon below.

**Asian /Asian American Identity Theories and Measures**

Okazaki, Lee, & Sue (2007) summarized the theoretical and conceptual scholarship on Asian American psychology and called for a reformulation of its conceptual approach. They found that Asian American researchers have contributed theories and models mostly in the areas of applied psychology, including: “acculturation, identity development, career development and academic achievement, parenting and family dynamics, multicultural psychology, psychopathology, and cultural competence in psychotherapy and mental health” (Okazaki et al., 2007, p. 30). They deduced that the constructs of (a) race, culture, and ethnicity; (b) acculturation, and (c) ethnicity and identity form the theoretical bases of most Asian American psychology (Okazaki et al., 2007). Solely Asian American culture will be reviewed in this section because race and ethnicity in relation to Asian Americans have already been discussed earlier. The elements that have been used to differentiate an Asian American psychology have typically been individualism-collectivism, independent-interdependent self-construal, Confucianism, and face. Such concepts have been utilized in understanding theories of Asian American psychopathology, academic achievement, and parenting to name a few (Okazaki et al., 2007). In addition, Kim, Li, and Ng (2005) identified collectivism, conformity to norms, emotional self-control, family recognition through achievement,
and humility as values salient to Asian Americans. This body of scholarship led to the development of the Asian American Values Scale (AAVS) which aspired to produce specific Asian cultural values that were able to be separate dimensions, in order to associate it with various psychological phenomena (Okazaki et al., 2007).

Critics of the measure, however, note that it is still rooted in a Western paradigm that may make Asian American behaviors and the culture at large, appear pathological, ill-developed, and reifies Asian Americans primarily as a static and largely East Asian culture (Okazaki et al., 2007). The nature of Asian American culture however, as mentioned earlier, is much more fluid, diasporic in nature, and hybridized in many forms (Okazaki et al., 2007). Chinese Jamaicans are one such hybridized example that may challenge the current Asian American cultural paradigms depicted in theories today.

There are three other measures used to measure Asian American ethnic identity (MEIM, Phinney, 1992; Internal and External Measure, Chae & Torres, 2010; East Asian Ethnic Identity Scale, Barry, 2002), but a major criticism of them all are their failure to capture culture-specific information and measurement of incomparable components of ethnic identity. Thus, confusion over which constructs, concepts, and definitions to use has hampered theory development. Justifying the chosen scale, as well as providing clear definitions of terms in studies is recommended in future studies (Chae & Torres, 2010) as well as the supplementation of a culture-specific measure when using the MEIM due to its generic content.

As a result, studies which rely on these three measures, tend to perpetuate the essentialized manner in which Asian Americans are portrayed. Stated otherwise, factors that influence values and behaviors such as religion, place of residence (urban or rural)
and globalization, are not considered (Okazaki et al., 2007). Instead, Asians are “portrayed as a group largely characterized by Confucianism and its derivatives (e.g. filial piety and obligations, role prescription etc.)” (Okazaki et al., 2007, p. 31). Such a view contradicts an emerging theme seen in the literature on Asian American ethnic identity that it is “contextual and dynamic” (Cheryan & Tsai, 2006 p. 125) as well as developmental in nature.

One study by Yeh and Huang (1996) found that the present theories and models of ethnic identification were “inappropriate for Asians and Asian Americans as they describe a linear, intrapersonal, and individualistic process” (para. 40). They found that ethnic identification was a dynamic process that emphasized collectivism, and that shame, rather than anger, was a motivating force in ethnic identity development (Yeh & Huang, 1996). Cheng and Berman (2012) have also criticized the available ethnic identity theories, noting that the stages are rooted in Western conceptions of independence, which contradict Asian cultures of collectivism and interdependence. As a result, the authors posit that a foreclosed identity status (i.e. having a high degree of commitment to an identity status without engaging in any exploration beforehand) may be more adaptive in the US for Asians (Cheng & Berman, 2012). This is consistent with Waterman (1982) who stated that most minorities may not ever have an achieved identity, because of the Eurocentric values of most measures of ethnic identity.

Compounding the problem of the ancient and stale presentation of Asians in the U.S., is that there are no concrete models on ethnic identity development and most are oversimplified or overgeneralized and based mostly on children, adolescents, and college-students (Iwamasa & Yamada, 2001; Schwartz et al., 2013). The vast majorities
of studies do not include contextual determinants of identity such as migration, nor make the link between ethnic identity and acculturation to psychological variables (Iwamasa & Yamada, 2001; Schwartz et al., 2014). Therefore, we cannot assume that other ethnic identity minority models and measures apply to the Chinese Jamaican immigrant population. Moreover, the majority of ethnic identity research has primarily been conducted using quantitative methods (Umana-Taylor, 2015). There is therefore the need to capture a more nuanced examination of the construct with in-depth qualitative approaches or by also examining an individual’s social and community environment (Umana-Taylor, 2015).

Benton and Gomez (2014) point out, “multi-ethnic countries in the developed and developing world offer rich contexts in which to explore the evolutions and reconfigurations of ethnic and national identity” (p. 1158). Jamaica is a multi-ethnic developing country (World Bank, 2018) that Chinese Jamaican immigrants hail from, and arguably provide us with such an opportunity. This perspective is needed to broaden the literature on Asians and ethnic identity in the U.S. Currently, the consensus is that ethnic minorities act collectively to protect vested interests (Benton & Gomez, 2014) and pass through stages of conformity, dissonance, resistance and immersion, introspection, and finally integrative awareness (Atkinson, Morten & Sue, 1989, 1993) as outlined in the Racial and Cultural Identity Development Model (R/CID). Before further addressing this point, the R/CID will be described.

**R/CID.** As mentioned, the R/CID is a stage model consisting of the stages of conformity, dissonance, resistance and immersion. Conformity refers to identifying mainly with White culture and the tendency to have negative attitudes about one’s own
cultural background, while dissonance describes confusion about one’s racial-cultural identity (Sue & Sue, 2008). Resistance and immersion are characterized by the devaluation of White culture, and the idealization of one’s own culture (Sue & Sue, 2008). Finally, the integrative awareness stage is marked by an appreciation of all cultural groups, a secure sense of self that is positive, and a genuine respect for all individuals, including those in the dominant racial/cultural group (Sue & Sue, 2008).

We do not know, however, if these stages apply to Chinese Jamaican immigrants who have come from a social background where Black culture is the majority. Further, even though they were racial minorities in the country, they enjoyed relatively higher economic and social status than the majority, though this was not always the case (see Bryan, 2004 for a description on the history and settlement of the Chinese in Jamaica). This was due to an amalgamation of factors such as their hard work ethic, their tendency to support each other (financially, socially, medically, academically, and more), and their establishment as shopkeepers and the grocery retail trade in Jamaica (Bryan, 2004). Therefore, one could argue that even though they may fall under the Asian category, the R/CID model may not apply to their experience in Jamaica. However, because they are now in the U.S. context, they may share certain experiences that are common to Asians as a whole. Moreover, the R/CID is criticized for its “assumed linear unidirectional progression of identity development, its questionable applicability to immigrants, and its conceptual origin (during the civil rights movement)” (Okazaki et al., 2007, p. 35).

Gender differences in Asian ethnic identity have also been noted. For example, female Asians have found to have a higher orientation to their ethnicity than male Asians (Yip & Fulgini, 2002). Further, over the lifespan, ethnic identity has shown to develop in
phases. Ying and Lee (1999), for example, found that half of Asian–American adolescents reached an achieved ethnic identity, while a third were foreclosed, 18.7% were in moratorium, and 1% were diffuse, supporting Phinney’s model of ethnic identity status development. The authors also examined ethnic identity outcome and found that the majority of adolescents were “integrated (41.8%), followed by separated (32.4%), unintegrated (19.6%), assimilated (4.4%) and marginal (1.8%)” (Ying & Lee, 1999, p. 204), with older adolescents more likely to be integrated than younger adolescents. Given this finding, we cannot assume that ethnic identity status and outcome remains static across the lifespan, particularly for immigrants who have moved to a new country with a new dominant host culture that differs from their own. Therefore, it is imperative that these studies be carried out carefully on adult immigrant groups such as Chinese Jamaicans.

Studies that have looked at this construct in aging Chinese immigrants in Canada, for example, have found that ethnic identity is not a single-dimension construct, but rather “one with multiple dimensions that is manifested through observable behaviors and internal aspects such as feelings, self-perceived images, and attitudes that people hold” (Lai, 2012, p. 113). As such, it is important that studies looking at the ethnic identity of Asian immigrants in the U.S., particularly adults, employ measurements that consider more than just ethnic self-identification, and include an examination of behaviors, social milieu/microsystems, and lived experiences. Thus, it is incorrect to think of Asian identity as a whole, as static and ancestral, rather than emergent (Benton & Gomez, 2014; Yeh & Huang, 1996).

Again, it is important to reiterate the veracious words of Benton and Gomez (2014), that the Chinese are “further scattered than other non-white ethnic groups across more
countries of different sorts, and from different colonial regimes...and have a wider spread of social classes than many ethnic minorities” (p. 1158). These authors, and most other studies in the literature, take the stance that despite the fact that overseas Chinese may share an ethnic label, they are divided by class, sub-ethnic variation, place of origin, reason for migrating, and period of arrival, that make their identity “not a fixity, but a protean construct’’ (Benton and Gomez, 2014, p. 1169) and influenced by social interactions and context (Yeh & Huang, 1996). Further, Tsai, Ying, and Lee (2000) note that “despite being one of the largest ethnic groups in the U.S., relatively little research has been conducted with Chinese Americans” (p. 303). The examination of all components of the construct of ethnic identity with Chinese Jamaican immigrants in the U.S. is thus even more crucial.

**Chinese Jamaicans.** For now, the most promising study from which inferences can be drawn for Chinese Jamaican immigrants in terms of ethnic self-identification, is one by Rumbaut (1994), which looked at the ethnic identity of Jamaican immigrant adolescents living in Miami. The results indicated that most self-identified using a national-origin label (i.e. Jamaican), the next majority used a bicultural hyphenated label (i.e. Jamaican-American), followed by an American national identity label (i.e. American), and then a racial label (i.e. Black). Perhaps Chinese Jamaicans would follow a similar pattern of identification. However, because they are a minority within their country of origin and then their identity is subjected to narrowly defined categories and identity prescription in the U.S., it is unclear how they will self-identify, and under what particular contexts.

Lastly, Chinese Jamaicans may internalize multiple ethnic cultures, and then have the task to define themselves within a context that sees them racially only as Chinese.
This makes them a fascinating group from which to understand identity construction. Additionally, how they navigate and integrate multiple cultural identities in the U.S. context could have implications for ethnic minority resiliency frameworks, internal identity processes, and provide an understanding of the benefits and challenges of a multiethnic and racial identity. As scholars call for a comprehensive understanding of Chinese identity and “a strong theoretical framework and empirical research that takes into account culturally relevant constructs” (Cheng & Berman, 2012, p.118), the research on Chinese Jamaican immigrant ethnic identity becomes ever more pressing and warranted. Furthermore, scholars suggest that Asian American studies needs to embrace its transnational, global, and diasporic realities in order to shift the field toward a more heterogeneous, hybridized understanding of the Asian American experience (Okazai et al., 2007).

**Ethnic Identity and Acculturation**

Most researchers support the view that acculturation and ethnic identity should be considered in conjunction in order to understand the adjustment of immigrants to the U.S. context (Lieber et al., 2001; Cheryan & Tsai, 2006). This is because ethnic identity and acculturation, although distinct constructs, are “both parts of a common reconciliation process” (Lieber et al., 2006, p. 248). For example, one can identify ethnically as Chinese, but be integrated into the U.S., or conversely, due to participation in the American cultural context, experience a change in ethnic identification (Lieber et al., 2001). Furthermore, how immigrants ethnically identify can influence their acculturation to the host country (Cheryan & Tsai, 2006). Thus, acculturation is vital to the study of immigrants and in understanding their ethnic identity.
Defined as the phenomena that occur as a result of contact between culturally different people in contexts impacted by historical or contemporary migration (Redfield, Linton & Herskovits, 1936; Ferguson 2013), acculturation is a psychological process that immigrants find themselves entangled in. The prevailing theoretical model of acculturation currently is Berry’s 2D acculturation model (BAM; Berry, 1990) that classifies immigrants within four potential acculturation strategies, based on two continua: (1) contact and participation, and (2) cultural maintenance. Accordingly, four acculturation strategies follow: (1) integration, (2) assimilation, (3) separation, and (4) marginalization.

Integration describes an individual who is able to maintain their cultural identity and become part of the host culture, while assimilation describes an individual who only adopts the culture of the host culture and does not wish to maintain their own culture (Berry, 1994; 2001). Separation on the other hand is when an individual seeks to withhold contact from the host culture and only maintain their own cultural identity. Finally, marginalization is when an individual neither identifies with their own culture or the host culture (Berry, 1994; 2001). Research suggests that integration is related to better psychological adaptation and lower levels of stress, and is often the preferred mode of acculturation—whereas marginalization is related to poorer adaptation—(Kim, 2007; Chen, Benet-Martinez, & Bond, 2008).

Also relevant to acculturation theory and research are the concepts of “directionality” (i.e. which direction does change take place) and “dimensionality” (i.e. does change take place along a single dimension or two independent dimensions)” (Sam, 2006, p. 17). According to the unidirectional model of acculturation, individuals were theorized “to move from one end of a continuum, reflecting involvement in the culture of
origin, to the end of the same continuum, reflecting involvement in the host culture” (Kim, 2007, p. 144). A shortcoming of this theory was that it represented an assimilationist theory where one group becomes more like the other, when in fact, both groups in contact can change (Sam, 2006). Thus, acculturation is thought to occur bidirectionally, rather than unidirectionally. Similarly, from a bidimensional perspective, which is the prevailing paradigm today, “it is possible to identify with or acquire the new culture independently without necessarily losing the original culture” (Sam, 2006, p.17).

A related but separate concept to acculturation is enculturation, which “refers to all the learning that occurs in human life without any deliberate effort on the part of someone to impart that learning” (Sam, 2006, p. 19). Otherwise stated, the acquisition of culture due to the opportunities and possibilities present in the individual’s context that occurs mostly through observation. Thus, it is different from acculturation in that it refers to learning of the individual’s own culture rather than a new culture. It is also distinguished from socialization, which also utilizes observation, since it does not require imitation (Sam, 2006). For example, for Asian Americans, “enculturation concerns the process of (re)socializing and maintaining the norms of indigenous culture, while acculturation describes the process of adapting to the norms of the dominant culture” (Kim, 2007, p. 143). It is important to distinguish between this term and acculturation so that researchers are clear and specific about which phenomenon they are studying, despite the subtle distinctions between the two terms. In essence, acculturation encompasses “all the changes that arise following contact between individuals and groups of different cultural backgrounds” (Sam, 2006, p. 11).

What is common to understanding both acculturation and ethnic identity is change. However, change can be challenging to capture, particularly in constructs so
complex and multidimensional (Phinney, 1990). Most studies tend to rely on
generational status as a marker of acculturation which has found to be a “poor measure of
acculturation” (Phinney, 1990, p. 64). Namely, it does not look at factors that themselves
change as a result of living in a new country, and at differing rates – language, values,
and social networks, to name a few (Phinney, 1990). Generational status however, plays
an important part in the changes in identity that occur over time as research has found
that “first generation immigrants tend to hold strongly to their culture of origin, and may
or may not develop an “American” identity” (Phinney, 1990, p. 78). Second generation
immigrants tend to incorporate “American” as part of their identity likely due to
citizenship status and their ability (e.g. ability to speak the language) to participate in the
culture. Phinney (1990) however, surmises that for ethnic immigrants (i.e. non-
European immigrants) ethnic identity has been shown to play an important role in their
lives regardless of acculturation level due to racism and discrimination.

Despite the complexity of acculturation and ethnic identity, Phinney (1990)
recommends, “the relationship between specific components and processes of change needs to
be specified” (p. 64) as opposed to simply examining the relationship between the two, “in
order to see which aspects of acculturation are related to which components of ethnic identity”
(Phinney, 1990, p. 65). Identifying the differences between ethnic identity and acculturation
has not been a simple task, however, due to the confounding of the constructs in measures of
ethnic identity and acculturation, and disagreement on what constitutes each construct
(Phinney, 1990). As mentioned in a previous section, ethnic identity has many components
such as self-identification, the sense of attachment one has to their ethnic group, and level of
ethnic identity development among others. Changes in these components are likely to occur,
along with the acculturative changes that happen over time in a new culture (Phinney, 1990). The acculturative changes, for example, in “behavior, attitudes, and values, are better predictors of modifications in an individual’s ethnic identity” (Phinney, 1990, p. 78), and so it is imperative that studies begin expanding measurement of acculturation beyond generational status in their studies. They should also consider immigrants’ identification with the new society and contextual factors as these factors have received much less attention in the literature thus far (Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001). Next, literature on ethnic identity and acculturation of Asians will be discussed.

**Ethnic Identity and Acculturation of Asians**

A review of the acculturation literature for Asian Americans in the U.S. reveals that further studies are needed to understand this experience, as well as to improve the instrumentation for assessing acculturation (Kim, 2007). Measures of behaviors and values tend to predominate most studies, while knowledge and cultural identity remain relatively untapped (Kim, 2007). Also, research on Asian American acculturation parallels that of Asian American ethnic identity research, in that much of it has been conducted with college students.

Additionally, research that examines the relationship between acculturation and ethnic identity in terms of areas of similarity and distinction (Kim, 2007) have been called for. One study by Leong and Chou (1994) aimed to provide an integrated conceptual model of ethnic identity and acculturation. They paralleled the assimilation stage with a person who is in the initial stage of identity development, such as the unexamined or pre-encounter stage, while the second stage characterizes a person in moratorium, and as such, separated from the society. Ethnic identity achievement is
likened to the integration stage, given individuals are able to take the positives from both cultural streams and live comfortably in the larger society. The marginalized stage was left on its own and not likened to the other models, however, and only one study to date has followed up on this model to provide support for it (Leong & Lau 2001).

Regarding the link between ethnic identity and acculturation for Asians, it is said that Asian immigrants who are more recent arrivals to the U.S. will adhere to Asian norms more strongly than Asian Americans who are several generations removed from Asia (Kim, 2007). This is because Asian Americans “may never have been fully enculturated to the Asian ethnic group’s cultural norms by their parents and family who also may be U.S. born” (Kim, 2007, p. 142). This notion of enculturation can be extended to Chinese Jamaicans, however their migration entails more than one “arrival” to a dominant culture story. Like recently arrived Asians to the U.S., and Asian Americans several generations removed, there are Chinese who recently immigrated to Jamaica as well as Chinese Jamaicans who are several generations removed. For the ones who are several generations removed, they may never have fully enculturated to an Asian cultural norm, but rather, the Jamaican cultural norm. Thus, when they move to the U.S., they have already been exposed and enculturated with multiple cultural strands.

Fortunately, there is scholarship that now recognizes the possibility of acculturation occurring in more than two dimensions that posits the need for theories that highlight the complexity of immigrants with several migration histories or immigrants who internalize more than two cultures, such as those from multicultural sending societies. These scholars, Ferguson et al., (2014) have demonstrated that it is possible for acculturation to occur in three dimensions (i.e. 3D). So rather than acculturation taking
place in two dimensions (i.e. dimension 1 = participation in an immigrant’s own ethnic culture; dimension 2 = participation in the culture of the new country), they have found that for some immigrants, acculturation can actually take place in three dimensions (3D) (Ferguson, et al., 2014). As mentioned, this tends to occur in immigrants who are already minorities in their home country, such as Chinese Jamaicans, and ethnically Russian Jews from the Former Soviet Union (Persky & Birman, 2005), or when an immigrant becomes an ethnic minority in a multicultural receiving society.

In terms of Asian-specific models of ethnic identity and acculturation, Sue and Sue (1971) put forth a theory that categorizes Asians under three typologies: traditionalists, marginal, and Asian-American (Sue and Sue, 1971). Foreign-born individuals who typically identify with members of their own ethnic group characterize traditionalists, while an individual who rejects their Asian values and culture, describe those under the marginal category (Yeh & Huang, 1996). Finally, the Asian American category is someone who is able to balance his or her Asian values with Western values. Critics, however, find these labels demeaning and limiting, and not reflective of the complexity and malleability of the Asian ethnic identity (Yeh & Huang, 1996).

To illustrate, Tsai, Ying and Lee (2000) found that for “Chinese American young adults, a Chinese identity and American identity are independent constructs for American Born Chinese, and dependent constructs for Chinese immigrants” (p. 321). They also found that these two groups attached different meanings to being Chinese and being American, and that after increased time in the U.S., the meaning of being Chinese and American tended to change for immigrants (Tsai et al., 2000). Thus, “even within cultural groups, individuals varied in the meanings they attached to being of a particular culture”
(Tsai et al., 2000, p. 327). They thus call for other researchers to conduct similar research on the process of acculturation with other members of Asian cultures, as results may only be applicable to Chinese Americans. Moreover, results were found to be context-driven, as Asians tend to be particularly attuned to changes in the social context (Tsai et al., 2000).

Arguably, Chinese Jamaican immigrant acculturation can be captured best by the previously referenced by the 3D model proposed by Ferguson, et al., (2014). Their study found that Black Jamaican immigrants who came to the U.S. drew from three cultural worlds: Jamaican, European American mainstream, and African American. In their study, they also examined the ethnic identity and psychological functioning of these immigrants, whom they referred to as tricultural. Their results supported a 3D acculturation framework for Jamaican immigrants, as most of them had high mean level orientation to each of the three cultural worlds (46% were tricultural; 31% were bicultural and 21% were monocultural). The authors note, however, that although they may be tricultural, their ethnic self-label did not necessarily reflect that. For example, some opted for a country-of-origin self-label. Further, immigrants could also be tricultural in terms of behaviors as opposed to identity. They also found that ethnic identity search, rather than ethnic identity commitment, had stronger associations with acculturation and psychological functioning (Ferguson et al., 2014).

The state of the literature thus underscores the desperate need for the study of Chinese Jamaican immigrants who, by virtue of their distinct, dynamic, and multicultural background, can fill much of the gaps identified in the literature pertaining to Asian American ethnic identity acculturation.
Ethnic Identity, Acculturation and Psychological Well-Being

To then understand how immigrants are adapting, acculturation and ethnic identity need to be examined with psychological well-being. However, researchers have rarely examined ethnic identity, acculturation, and psychological well-being all together in one study (Chae & Foley, 2010) or used consistent measures for each construct. As a result, findings have been mixed as to whether ethnic identity and acculturation are positively or negatively related to psychological well-being (Phinney, 1990). Further, it is unknown which component of ethnic identity plays a key role in positive psychological well-being, and if this relationship is moderated by certain types of acculturation statuses.

Currently, only four studies (two published and two dissertations) have examined all three variables. Two dissertations looked at Albanian immigrants (Balidemaj, 2016) and African-Caribbean immigrants (Wright, 2013), while two published articles examined these constructs in Asian American and Asian international students (Yasuda & Duan, 2002) and Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Americans (Chae & Foley, 2010).

With regard to the relationship of acculturation and ethnic identity with emotional well-being, Yasuda and Duan (2002) found that ethnic identity, but not acculturation level, predicted Asian American students’ emotional well-being. With regard to the relationship between acculturation and ethnic identity, they found that acculturation and ethnic identity were negatively correlated for Asian American students and Asian international students. However, because this study grouped all Asians (e.g. Chinese, Japanese etc.) together as one population, important differences between the groups have been lost.

Chae and Foley’s (2010) study remedied this limitation, however, and looked at three different Asian ethnic groups: Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Americans. They
found that for their entire sample, ethnic identity was positively associated with psychological well-being, while acculturation was negatively associated with psychological well-being. To examine within-group differences, they used simultaneous multiple regression and found that for their Chinese American sample, only ethnic identity was positively associated with well-being. With their Korean sample, both ethnic identity and acculturation was associated with psychological well-being. For their Japanese American sample, only ethnic identity was positively related to psychological well-being. They also found that bicultural acculturation status individuals had significantly higher psychological well-being scores than low acculturated and high acculturated participants (Chae & Foley, 2010). Their results provide support for the fact within-group differences between Asian Americans exist when it comes to these three variables, and that ethnic identity and acculturation are indeed two unique constructs.

However, acculturation in this study is measured unidimensionally, a framework that is not suitable for Chinese Jamaicans, and most other immigrant groups.

Branching outside the Asian ethnic group, two dissertations looked at these three constructs together. One focused on Albanian immigrants (Balidemaj, 2016) and the other, on Afro-Caribbean immigrants (Wright, 2013). Balidemaj’s (2016) study had a number of research aims, but one specifically examined if acculturation and ethnic identity affect psychological well-being. In this population, higher acculturation and ethnic identity were associated with higher scores of psychological well-being. These results are in contrast to Chae and Foley’s (2010) finding of acculturation being negatively associated with psychological well-being. In Wright’s (2013) study, a mediation model examined the relationship between acculturation, ethnic identity and
psychological well-being such that acculturation would lead to changes in ethnic identity, which would then lead to changes in psychological outcomes. Ethnic identity was not found to mediate the relationship, however. A supplemental moderation analysis found that when ethnic identity ranges from moderate to high, mainstream orientation led to greater perceived life satisfaction (Wright, 2013).

An explanation for these inconsistent outcomes is the generational status of the individual (e.g. foreign born vs. US-born), as well as how researchers measured Asian ethnic identification (e.g. ethnic pride vs. ethnic commitment) (Cheryan & Tsai, 2006). Also, age of the participant and level of acculturation has been found to moderate this relationship (Yip et al., 2014). Further, measurement instruments and the conceptualization of psychological well-being have been found to differ across the studies. For example, the Yasuda and Duan (2002) study used the Depression Happiness Scale, while Wright (2013) used a combination of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the Satisfaction with Life Scale, and the Center for Epidemiological Studies-Depression Scale (CES-D). In particular, Kim (2007) notes that the relationship between biculturalism and psychological outcomes needs to be better understood. Therefore, an exploration of Chinese Jamaicans’ immigrant experience with regard to psychological well-being, in addition to their racial-ethnic identity and acculturation, is warranted due to the limited number of studies available with these three variables, the varied measurement instruments, and the mixed results.

Ethnic Identity, Acculturation and Psychological Well-Being in Asians

As noted in the previous section above, while some studies have found that higher Asian ethnic identification is associated with positive psychological outcomes such as well-
being, and self-esteem, others have found that this higher level of ethnic identification does not have a positive effect on mental health outcomes or self-esteem (Yip & Cross, 2004). Further, the majority of studies on Chinese immigrant adjustment have been researched from a sociological viewpoint rather than a psychological one (Lieber et. al., 2001).

Lieber et al.’s, (2001) study, one of the few that examines this viewpoint, has found that both ethnic identity and acculturation “contribute independently to, as well as interact in, the prediction of satisfaction with life” (Lieber et al., 2001, p. 258), and beyond the effect of SES or time lived in the U.S. To elaborate further, in their study, bicultural and separated groups reported higher satisfaction with life than marginalized individuals. Biculturals also tended to feel more positive about their immigration experience and showed greater harmony in the household than marginalized individuals (Lieber et al., 2001). Interestingly, separated households were found to have greater spousal support than assimilated households. Overall, results show that Asian identity can thus impact greatly the quality of life and other contextual variables such as household harmony.

Lieber et al.’s (2001) study also took a qualitative approach to examine what characterized the varying groups and found that they differed in how they understood or appreciated cultural differences in the U.S. and on the strategies they used to manage challenges. The marginalized group felt that the differences between them and the dominant culture were unresolvable, while the assimilated group had a more matter-of-fact approach to differences. Specifically, the latter group accepted that cultural differences would be encountered but adjustment would just be necessary (Lieber et al., 2001). The separated group expressed the most confusion and difficulty in understanding
the U.S. culture, and tended to use compartmentalization as a way to manage the difficulties. Lastly, although the bicultural group also used this strategy, they expressed mostly positive views about their immigration.

As such, qualitative results from this study show that Asians’ acculturation status should be considered in the adjustment of immigrants to the U.S. and that low-identity acculturation statuses tended to cause immigrants greater struggle in their adjustment. However, Asians ability to adapt does not make them immune from discrimination and hardship as ethnic minorities. Lee, Falbo, Doh, and Park (2001) found that most Korean Americans, although bicultural, tended to experience acculturative stress. A strong Asian ethnic identity, however, served as a buffer from the negative emotions due to the acculturative stress (Lieber et al., 2001). This study is one of the few that were able to find what characterizes the varying acculturative statuses.

From a values standpoint, adherence to European American values has also been found to be beneficial (in terms of collective self-esteem, self-efficacy and cognitive flexibility) for Asian Americans, in conjunction with their Asian values (Omizo, Kim & Abel, 2008). In terms of ethnic identity, Costigan, Koryzma, Hua and Chance (2010) found that for Chinese adolescents in Canada, higher ethnic identity was associated with lower levels of depressive symptoms. These results however, are not generalizable to adults nor samples in the U.S. given adolescents in Canada may have not only a different social context, but also are in the early stages of ethnic identity exploration.

A study whereby closer inferences may be drawn is one by Yip (2005) that examined the association between context, ethnic salience and psychological well-being, ethnic centrality and ethnic private regard among Chinese American university students.
using an experience sampling method. She found that ethnic identity was fluid across environments, and that the salience of ethnic identity fluctuated, which was associated with positive mental health when heightened. This was due to not only a “bolstering of positive feelings, but also a reduction of negative feelings” (Yip, 2005, p. 1613). This finding was consistent with Yip & Fulgini’s (2002) study where they also found that positive psychological outcomes were also related to ethnic salience. Finally, Yip (2005) found that private regard moderated the negative association between ethnic salience and depressive symptoms, however, for those whom ethnic identity was not of central importance, their self-worth was generally unaffected. This lends support to the theory that ethnic identity is only important to mental health insofar as much as it is important to the individual.

Furthermore, this finding showed that centrality and regard served two different functions such that regard was an affective component, while centrality was a cognitive component, and that the affective component is what predicted psychological well-being (Yip, 2005). Taken together, these findings show that separate components of ethnic identity can be related to different outcomes and it is important to examine them separately in order to examine how they influence outcomes such as psychological well-being.

In a study on acculturation and self-rated health in Asian and Latino immigrants in the U.S., Bulut and Gayman (2016) found that mental health varied across acculturation classes. Specifically, bicultural in both groups reported the best mental health outcomes, while recent immigrants and those under the separated status, had the poorest mental health. In comparing the two groups to each other, however, the researchers found that less
acculturated Asian immigrants reported even worse mental health than Latinos. Despite the finding that perceived discrimination and SES did impact psychological health, they arrived at a similar finding to Lieber’s (2001) study, in that these two variables did not fully explain why the separated and recent arrivals had poorer mental health. This finding alludes to the fact that acculturation is still not fully captured based on how it was measured in the study. The field still has a far way to go in how acculturation is defined and operationalized, because it has important implications for acculturation research and theory (Sam, 2006), as well as its impact on other psychological variables such as well-being.

In regards to ethnic identity and psychological well-being, Juang & Nguyen (2010) looked at how family obligation and community factors (defined as ethnic density, cultural resources, and perceived discrimination) related to various factors of ethnic identity in Chinese American youth. Indeed, they found that family obligation and community variables were related to various components of ethnic identity, specifically, higher levels of ethnic engagement and pride (Juang & Nguyen, 2010). Also, the youth in their study had higher ethnic pride if they lived in a community with a larger number of individuals from a similar ethnic-group, while availability of cultural resources led to more ethnic engagement (Juang & Nguyen, 2010). Lastly, perceived discrimination was found to have a positive relationship to ethnic engagement, but was negatively related to ethnic pride. This study supported the notion that it is important to examine how certain factors relate to the components of ethnic identity in Asians, because not all factors lead to the same ethnic identity outcome. Given the correlational nature of the study, however, the direction of the effects cannot be determined, and once again, the sample were youth, and are therefore not generalizable to a non-college sample.
Psychological well-being of Chinese Jamaican immigrants in relation to their ethnic identity and acculturation status can perhaps be most accurately speculated about through Ferguson, Iturbide and Gordon’s (2014) study, which also examined triculturals’ psychological distress. Despite the cosmopolitan-sounding term of being tricultural, they were not better off than monoculturals, as they reported more symptoms of anxiety and depression than their counterparts. Thus, the task of reconciling three worlds on a daily basis can be quite challenging, perhaps due to “limited social support and feeling isolated despite having several cultural groups with which to identify with” (Ferguson et al., 2014, p. 247), as well as the experience of identity denial and prescription. For Chinese Jamaican immigrants who may ascribe to and navigate more than three cultural worlds, the relationship is yet to be examined. Findings may differ given this sample looked at Black Jamaican immigrants who may differ based on access to resources, place of residence/neighborhoods, strength of ethnic identity, as well as experiences with discrimination and racism, which may all influence well-being. Given the dearth of research in this area for Chinese Jamaican immigrants, but more importantly, the exciting prospect of examining these issues in a group with a very complex ethno-racial-cultural background, it is warranted to first open-endedly explore the experience of these immigrants, probing for well-being which can then generate appropriate research questions that may need to be pursued quantitatively.

**Summary**

Psychological research with Asian Americans, to date, has failed to consider the differences between the more than 40 ethnic groups that comprise this category and essentializes and reifies the group as if it were a largely East Asian culture. Further,
many theories perpetuate the ethnic identity of the group as static, without considering the effects of migration, globalization, context, and the multiplicity of identities one person may feel attached to. As a result, current theories and models of ethnic identity and acculturation are inadequate for Chinese Jamaican immigrants. The interchangeable use of the terms ethnic identity and acculturation and the overreliance on adolescents and college samples have also rendered much of the theories very tenuous at best.

Methodologically speaking, most studies have relied on quantitative studies that fail to capture the complexities and lived experience of its participants. The overreliance on measures that capture only one aspect of ethnic identity (i.e. mainly the process of ethnic identity) and have not been established as equivalent, in terms of its measurement properties for specific racial and ethnic groups (Brown et al., 2014) is an issue the field needs to address. Acculturation theories have also largely relied on a bidimensional framework to describe immigrants, whereas cutting-edge research has shown that tridimensional frameworks (Ferguson, Bornstein, & Pottinger, 2012) and contextualized perspectives (Birman & Simon, 2014) are needed to more accurately understand the experience of immigrant groups. As such, the present study seeks to qualitatively explore and understand the experience of Chinese Jamaican immigrants living in the United States and how they construct their ethnic identity.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

This study aimed to qualitatively investigate the experience of Chinese Jamaican immigrants in the United States and how they construct their ethnic identity. A grounded theory approach to data collection and analysis was thus used, which ultimately led to a summative statement. The data was gathered from 15 individual interviews with self-identified Chinese Jamaican, Jamaican Chinese, or any other variation of that term (e.g. Jamaican of Chinese descent), had been living in the U.S. for at least 5 years, and lived for at least 5-7 years in Jamaica during their formative years (i.e. age 5 to 15). The current study builds upon a preliminary pilot study which was conducted in the Spring of 2016 which will be discussed further below, followed by the methodology for the current study.

Preliminary Study

The preliminary study aimed to investigate the experiences of Chinese Jamaican immigrants living in South Florida in terms of their identity, migration, and adjustment strategies. Three individual interviews and one participant observation was conducted and used for subsequent data analysis. Using a grounded theory framework, over 291 codes were analyzed, leading to 45 families/groups, eight themes, and three categories which are listed below:

Category 1: Interwoven Family and Community Concerns Pre and Post Migration. Three themes comprised this category: 1) family concerns pre-migration, 2) family concerns post migration, and 3) communal difficulties post migration to South Florida.
Category 2: *Chinese Jamaican Identity: A Tapestry That is Continuously Being Woven.* Two themes comprised this category: 1) threads that weave the Chinese Jamaican tapestry and 2) adding new threads to the tapestry post migration.

Category 3: *A Tapestry of Strategies Used to Adjust to Life in South Florida.*

Three themes comprised the third category: 1) community supports, 2) optimistic statements, and 2) self-reliance.

Based on the findings, the tentative theory that was found was as follows:

In South Florida, the Chinese Jamaican identity and family dynamic is dependent on interrelated factors that themselves change in different environments. That is, their identity is constantly being woven, due to exposure to a system that is politically, geographically, socially, demographically, linguistically, and educationally different from their country or countries of origin. To adjust to their new life in South Florida, strategies such as self-reliance, optimistic statements, and community supports are activated. Overall, there is no static set of criteria for the Chinese Jamaican identity or experience in South Florida. The set of challenges they face in their new country and how they cope with it, influence their identity, which is best described as a tapestry that is continuously being woven.

This was the first known study conducted on this immigrant population, and results reflect, firstly, that the existing ethnic identity categories found in the U.S. are not truly captive of who these individuals are. Secondly, it provided insight on the struggles they face due to migration, and the strategies and resources they used to adapt or cope with these issues. It also highlighted the contextual and multidimensional (i.e. identifying with more than one culture) nature of their identity (Wong, Wang & Farmer, 2018). Despite some preliminary understanding into the acculturation challenges Chinese Jamaicans immigrants faced, how they coped with it, and establishing that their identity was complex and changing, the questions as to the content and meaning of the Chinese Jamaican ethnic identity, remained. Further, it was unknown what factors motivated their migration, and what potential mental health challenges they faced. Thus,
this preliminary study served as the foundation for this dissertation study, which aimed at address some of these unknowns.

**Methodology for the Current Study**

This exploratory study used qualitative research methods, especially suited to understand the meanings people assign to their experiences and provides a more contextual understanding of lived experience from which and culturally relevant frameworks can be drawn. First, an outline of the criteria used to establish quality in qualitative research will be discussed, followed by researcher stance and positionality. An overview of grounded theory, followed by a section on the participants, procedures, and data analytic strategy will then concluded this section.

**Establishing Criteria for Quality in Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research methods adhere to the following criteria for rigor and trustworthiness, including: credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility is perhaps one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness, and simply refers to confidence in the “truth” of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability and dependability refer to the findings’ application in other contexts and ability to be repeated, whereas confirmability refers to the degree to which the results are shaped by a researcher’s bias, motivation or interest (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

There are several ways to ensure these criteria are met, including prolonged engagement, debriefing, negative case analysis, member-checking, thick description, reflexivity, and an audit trail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I ensured the study included these key criteria in order to develop confidence in the quality and trustworthiness of the data gathered as outlined below:
**Prolonged Engagement.** This entails spending sufficient time in the field to learn about, understand, and observe the phenomenon being studied, and developing rapport and trust with members of the culture being studied. One could argue I have been engaged in prolonged engagement all my life since I identify as a Chinese Jamaican who then immigrated to the U.S. These experiences contributed to my heightened sensitivity to several of the concepts presented by the participants. In qualitative research this effect is referred to as “sensitizing concepts” which enhance the researcher’s understanding of the meaning of events or statements in the data. For example, I was frequently called “Miss Chin” growing up because I looked Chinese, and knew of the term, however, did not want to prematurely use that as a code unless the data truly confirmed it i.e. was a central idea that occurred frequently in the interviews (which, in this case, it did). Thus, if used too early, my attention to it could have made me miss other important concepts or aspects of the study. Essentially, these sensitizing concepts are just starting points that need to be tested and improved or used as a conceptual framework in the formulation of a study (Bowen, 2006).

The explicit study of the experience of Chinese Jamaican immigrants did not occur until I became aware of my own experiences of identity denial and misperception since coming to the U.S. in 2006 and resided at least five years, and made a conscious choice with my dissertation chair to explore this topic as a dissertation. I then engaged in informal conversations with family members and friends, and decided there were enough instances of similar experiences to do a pilot study. The pilot study began in Spring of 2016 in which I engaged in in-depth interviewing and observational work and presented the results at a conference in South Florida. Having engaged in these processes, I feel
confident that the criteria for prolonged engagement has been, having been engaged in the field adequately enough to have developed rapport and trust with the population of study, appreciate the context, and rise above my own preconceptions.

**Debriefing.** This process entails the extent to which the researcher engages in dialogue and discussion with supervisors and peers who are familiar with the research methodology but not directly involved in the study in order to make the implicit explicit, be aware of the researcher’s posture toward the data, and test emergent hypotheses (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Manning, 1997). In this study, there were periodic debriefings between peers of mine who were not involved in the study but knowledgeable about my topic and research methods. I had also presented the preliminary study at a Caribbean and Latin American research conference in which participants discussed a similar experience of being inaccurately identified or having assumptions being made about their identity after migrating to the U.S. due to sociopolitical happenings in the region.

**Negative Case Analysis.** This is a process of searching for and discussing data that do not support or contradicts the explanations emerging from data analysis. In this study, it emerged that there were contradicting views on participants’ level of identification with America, desire to move back to Jamaica, and affective views about Jamaica, which were then followed upon and refined, until it was able to be explained.

**Member-Checking.** This occurs when data, interpretations and/or conclusions are tested with the members from which the data were originally obtained. It can be done formally or informally, and is viewed as one of the most crucial techniques for establishing credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, I used member-checking both formally and informally. In terms of informal member checking, I asked
participants clarifying questions during the interview and at the end of interviews some participants and I would summarize the preliminary findings from interview together. I also formally conducted member checks by emailing all 15 participants a copy of the themes derived from the analysis, as well as the summative statement, and a longer reflective memo that summarized the findings and elicited their feedback as to whether the results fit with their experience and was valid for them. I received five formal responses which stated that the results were accurate, resonated with them and surprised them that their experience and journey was not as unique as they thought.

**Thick-Description.** This refers to describing a phenomenon with sufficient detail such that one can begin to demonstrate that an actual inquiry was conducted, and the conclusions are transferable to other settings, situations, and people (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Geertz, 1973). It is a way of achieving external validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Thick description is evident in this study from the sheer amount of data generated from the present study, as well as the previous pilot study. In my results section I provide readers with quotes and narratives that demonstrate the occurrence of the phenomena in other spheres outside of this researcher’s imagination that are credible and convincing, and goes beyond a superficial account.

**Reflexivity.** This entails an attitude of attending to the researcher’s background and position in choosing the topic of investigation, biases about the topic, how data is analyzed, and framing of the results and conclusions (Malterud, 2001). As mentioned, I made my background explicit in the study under the section of researcher role and positionality, and frequently wrote reflective memos about the dynamics of each interview, the emerging findings, and the research process (i.e. methodological decisions, reasons for
the study, who to interview etc.). I also discussed these topics orally with peers and my dissertation advisor. By making these explicit, the reader will be able to understand how the study was constructed, and thereby meet the confirmability criteria which is the extent to which the findings were shaped by respondents, rather than researcher bias.

**Audit Trail.** Along similar lines, an audit trail is a record of what was carried out in a study, and includes the raw data, summaries of the data, process notes/memos, data reconstruction and synthesis products, pilot forms, and interview protocols. All of these were kept and included in this dissertation document as much as possible in order to make clear the description of the research path from start to finish.

**Grounded Theory**

To analyze the data, this study used a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and a constructivist framework (Charmaz, 2006) was adopted. This analytic approach is inductive in nature and relies on the constant comparison method to analyze the data. Thus, research analysis and data collection are interrelated in an ongoing cycle throughout the research process (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Grounded theory gives priority to the “studied phenomenon or process rather than to a description of a setting” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 38) in comparison to ethnography, and aims to provide an explanation for why or how such phenomena occurs. Given the aim of the study is to understand the process of how Chinese Jamaican immigrants construct their identity, as well as understand their experience in the U.S., this methodology was determined to be highly suitable.

A constructivist framework acknowledges knowledge as “local, provisional, and situation dependent” (Madill, Jordan & Shirley, 2000, p. 9). According to this
framework, four dimensions are thought to influence the production of knowledge: “(1) participants’ own understandings, (2) researchers’ interpretations, (3) cultural meaning systems which inform both participants’ and researchers’ interpretations, and (4) acts of judging particular interpretations as valid by scientific communities” (Pidgeon & Henwood, 1997, p. 250). Constructivism also recognizes that a researcher’s personal and cultural perspectives influence the research projects. Thus, it is important for researchers to “articulate the perspective from which they approached their material and include details such as gender, ethnicity, age” (Madill, Jordan & Shirley, 2000, p. 10) and other factors that influence the analysis. This perspective is thus articulated next.

**Researcher Stance and Positionality**

Qualitative research from a constructivist epistemology requires researcher reflexivity. Reflexivity is simply the process of examining both oneself as the researcher and the research relationship (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). To be reflexive, it is important to understand your positionality as an insider, outsider, knower, and learner, as well as other social identity dimensions that can influence the research process and how data is interpreted (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). I am a mixed race (Chinese and Black) female in my late-twenties, raised in Kingston, Jamaica and immigrated to Florida when I was 17 years old for higher education. I identify as Jamaican and/or Chinese Jamaican and as cisgender. I speak English and am from a middle to upper class socioeconomic status. I have an interest in the ethnic and racial identity of ethnic minorities in the U.S. and of ethnically diverse immigrants given my own migration experiences. I have had experience providing mental health services to this population, in addition to conducting focus-groups and interviews with ethnically diverse
populations. Additionally, I have had formal training in qualitative and community-based participatory action research and served as a program coordinator for a community-based prevention program for ethnically diverse parents and children.

All these factors influenced how the participants saw me, the level of trust that was engendered, and thereby, their level of disclosure, as well as any bonding ploys the participants or I engaged in. For example, being part insider as someone who identified as a Chinese Jamaican immigrant, rapport seemed to be built quickly and naturally between the participants and myself and created a positive atmosphere from which to begin the interview. My academic status seemed to also garner admiration as well as curiosity about the nature of the study and my motivations, as many asked about my degree and wished me luck and offered to help in any way they could. Some asked what sorts of results I expected to find as well as why this topic was worth pursuing. My background also influenced how I made sense of the data, as I proffered earlier that interviews are socially constructed social encounters (Atkinson, Coffey, and Delamont, 2003) and that our experiences can color how data is interpreted. Thus, I bracketed these topics (e.g., my own experience of identity denial and disbelief in America) and debriefed with colleagues and dissertation committee members to challenge myself about my ideas about constructs such as race, ethnicity, well-being, nationality, migration, and identity development, in an attempt to keep preconceived notions and experiences from unintentionally biasing the study and analytic process. In sum, this is yet another way of enhancing the quality and trustworthiness of the study, in addition to the other methodological strategies, discussed earlier.
Participants

Selection Criteria and Recruitment. The target population of the study were adult individuals (age 18 and over) who self-identified as Chinese Jamaican or some other variation of the term such as Jamaican Chinese, Jamaican of Chinese descent etc. and currently resided in the United States. All participants needed to speak and read English fluently, but it did not have to be their dominant or first language, lived in the United States for at least 5 years, and have lived in Jamaica for at least 5 to 7 years, during their formative years (i.e. from birth up to age 18). Upon IRB approval, the primary investigator posted a description of the study on four Facebook groups (see Appendix A) that Chinese Jamaicans were members of, called “Chinese Jamaicans” “IRIE Asian Jamaicans” “Hakka United” and the “Chinese Cultural Association-Miami”. Snowball sampling was also used in recruiting more participants to the project.

Selection. While participants were gathered based on convenience sampling, purposive and theoretical sampling were used to select from those who elected to participate in order to capture a variety of age ranges, genders and migration histories, among other demographic factors to achieve representativeness, also known as maximum variation (List, 2004). Creswell (2007) suggested between 12-15 participants in order to meet saturation. This study recruited 15 participants (eight females and seven males) who identified as Chinese Jamaican, or Jamaican Chinese or variations of those terms, participated in the study and were between the ages of 25 and 70, with a mean age of 52.86. All participants reported English as their first language. The age they came to the United States ranged from 5 years to 51 years old, and length of time living in the United States ranged from 12 years to 46 years. Education level varied and participants reported
living in Florida, Arizona, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania and Maine. The majority of the participants and their parents were born in Jamaica, while the country of birth of their grandparents were roughly split in half between Jamaica and China (see Table B1 for all participant demographics)

Procedure

Data collection. Participants contacted this researcher via Facebook messenger, e-mail, or phone if interested, and a date and time for either an in-person interview at a location convenient and comfortable for the participant, or video or phone interview was arranged with this researcher if they were not located in South Florida or not able to meet in person. Five interviews were conducted in-person, three were conducted over the phone, and seven were conducted using video conferencing. Before beginning their interviews, participants were requested to complete a consent form (see Appendix C), which included a brief description of the study, potential benefits and risks of participation, limits of confidentiality, and permission for audio recording of the interviews. Participants then completed a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix D) that assessed participant’s age, sex, educational level, marital status, work status, country of birth, race, ethnicity, nationality, parent’s country of birth, grandparent’s country of birth, time of arrival to the United States, language and other languages spoken, and highest level of education completed. A total of five in-person interviews, five video interviews, and five phone interviews were conducted beginning in April and ending in June of 2018.

Interviews. In-depth or qualitative interviewing is a type of interview which researchers used to explore areas in need of further study. Patton (1987) suggests three
basic approaches to conducting qualitative interviews, including the guided interview, which was used in this study. Therefore, participants were asked open-ended questions based on a guided interview (see Appendix E) that aimed to capture their experience as immigrants, beginning with reasons that brought them to the U.S., and probing for constructs such as race/ethnicity, health, stressors, acculturation, family, and social support. The remaining questions sought to understand how they constructed their identity and on content they believed characterized their identity, in addition to their feelings about their future. Throughout the interview, participants were asked clarifying questions to avoid misinterpretation as well as questions that extended the meaning of their statements (Kvale, 1996). As mentioned earlier, participants were briefed as to the nature of the study and the purpose of the interview in an attempt to make the participant feel at ease (Tuckman, 1972), as well as obtained consent for audio recording. There were no risks or discomforts noted to the individuals during the interviews and prior to the start of all interviews, individuals were told that they could terminate participation in the study at any time without needing a rationale, as well as refrain from answering any questions that made them uncomfortable. Rapport was also established through sharing about myself and my background as well as the motivation for the study. Clarification was also provided around their participation in the study such that it was not a psychological evaluation or evaluation of their experience, but rather, explained that they were the expert and there were no right or wrong answers. Identification numbers were assigned to all individuals in this study to maintain confidentiality and none of the identities of the individuals were revealed to anyone participating in the study.
**Interviewer.** This researcher (late-twenties female doctoral student of mixed races—Chinese and Black—and of Chinese Jamaican ethnicity) conducted the interviews using, constructivist interviewing practices by Charmaz (2014). Constructivist interviewers “attend to the situation and construction of the interview, the construction of the research participant’s story and silences, and the interviewer-participant relationship as well as the explicit content of the interview” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 91). As such, reflective and analytic memos were written after each interview that described my reactions to the interview, the interpersonal dynamics between the interviewee and myself, salient themes that initially jumped out from the interview, as well as how each interview compared to previous interviews. I also wrote memos about concepts I was sensitive to prior to the interviews in an attempt to make explicit my biases which could influence the direction of the interview and later interpretation of the data.

In keeping in line with constructivist interviewing practices, there was space to be open-ended while being directive, and it allowed the in-depth exploration of what a participant said that lead to content other than what was set out to be discovered. In order to build rapport, trust, and comfort, the order of the questions varied as well as the format. I needed to find points of entry with which to ask the questions I set out to ask at times, by listening carefully to the stories they told, and finding a way to tie it back to the aims of the research. My training in counseling psychology and my own cultural background thus played a vital role in the facilitation of the interviews.

**Data Analysis**

All interviews were audiotaped for accuracy and integrity, and the researcher prepared transcripts following standard qualitative research techniques (Miles &
Huberman, 1994). Once all the audiotapes were transcribed, they were entered into the ATLAS.ti.8.3.0 software for coding. The data was analyzed using the constant comparative method throughout. This called for an initial open coding stage where categories of incidents were identified, staying very close to the data in order to find the central properties of each code (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Invivo coding was used to capture participant voice and resist interpretation. Action phrases and processes were used to label codes whenever possible, rather than invoking concepts (Charmaz, 2014).

Initial open codes were then merged into condensed codes. The most significant ideas as well as frequency of codes were used to create condensed codes (Morrow & Smith, 2004). In the process of creating condensed codes, one essentially “imputes meaning on behavior” (Harry & Klinger, 2014, p.208), and engages in the construction of knowledge. It was therefore helpful to identify and recognize how my part-insider status as a mixed-race Chinese Jamaican and as a counseling psychologist played a role in how I would instinctively want to categorize chunks of data and what words I would use. Thus, I engaged in analytic memoing and stayed as close to the language of the participant as possible. In short, I actively avoided using any sensitizing concepts, which are “background ideas that inform the overall research problem” (Charmaz, 2003, p. 259), as condensed code names.

In order to reach the categorical level, I surmised the underlying importance and connections between condensed codes, and based on that, an interpretive category was designated. This process did not occur linearly and took many trial and error in arranging condensed codes and open codes, and sometimes required going back to the data and renaming initial codes and condensed codes that were too broad. It was helpful to approach the task by
grouping condensed codes that shared commonalities around the main research questions. This level was more abstract than the previous and contained both positivist and interpretivist elements. Although participant’s meanings and actions were interpreted, empirical observations and interviews were analyzed in an emergent process. Thus, I engaged in a balancing act of using the empirical information given, while interpreting the meaning and values underlying the statements in the interviews (Charmaz, 2014). Finally, in order to develop the summative statement, cross-cutting categories were condensed into themes. These themes were then examined to see how they interacted and related with each other in order to understand the individuals’ experiences and how they constructed their ethnic identity.

Overall, this process was highly inductive in nature as it began “from the ground up”, particularly for the open and condensed codes. I then looked horizontally to find interrelationships between and among the condensed codes in order to create the categories. Following a vertical process, categories were linked into themes and themes resulted in an summative statement that aimed to capture and explain the story of the Chinese Jamaican immigrant experience and identity construction. A table displaying all levels of coding and a data analysis chart was created (See Table F1)
A grounded theory approach was applied to the data analysis process in order to answer the two foci of this study: (a) to understand the experience of Chinese Jamaican immigrants living in the United States, and (b) to understand how they construct their identity. In grounded theory methodology, the inductive nature of the analysis may lead to outcomes that do not necessarily map onto the research questions posited at the outset; however, in this case, there was high consonance between the results and the research questions. In addition, the analysis produced additional findings that were not directly sought, but that related to both research questions nonetheless. To frame the results, I first report on the five major themes that emerged and provide a summative statement that pulls them together. I also depict the inductive analytic process visually (see Figure 1). Finally, I detail the themes and categories that emerged during this research. These themes and categories are illustrated using participant quotes and organized based on the study aim to which they relate. A table containing all the data (i.e. condensed codes, categories, themes, and summative statement) is also provided (see Table F1), along with a figure that shows the conceptual relationship among the five themes (see Figure 2).

**Major Findings**

The 15 in-depth interviews resulted in 345 pages of transcription for analysis. This analysis produced 1,537 initial codes, 259 condensed codes, 16 categories, and five themes. The five themes were as follows:

1. **Flourishing, but pushed and pulled to leave for various reasons:** We
worked hard and flourished in Jamaica, but fled during the 1970s in response to social targeting during the socialist government of Manley; later groups emigrated for higher education or better opportunities.

2. **Feeling safer and better off, but missing home:** It took us some time to get on our feet in America and while we feel safer and better off, we find ourselves comparing life here to Jamaica and the way we grew up.

3. **Key community values influence us and our views on how to deal with common struggles we faced:** Growing up Chinese Jamaican and in a Chinese Jamaican family involves diversity, multiple generations and migrations, and an emphasis on hard work, respect, faith, family, education, and self-reliance, all of which interact to influence our attitudes towards mental and physical health services in America.

4. **Finding our identity unique and complex:** Our identity is unique, multifaceted, and complex, and Americans find it hard to grasp and misperceive us to be something we aren’t, which leaves us with an internal antagonism at times, and feeling isolated and scrutinized.

5. **“Assimilating” an American identity, but needing our community too:**

   We see ourselves assimilating and identifying as American over time, as well as beginning to envision a future in America, while trying to find ways to stay connected to our Chinese Jamaican community.

**Summative Statement**

The following overarching summative statement was constructed to capture the views that cut across the five themes:

Chinese Jamaican immigrants in America fled Jamaica in response to feeling
targeted by a socialist government in the 1970s, while those who were born after that era, usually migrated to America for higher education and/or better opportunities. These immigrants express feeling safer and better off in America despite different cultural perspectives and an initial struggle to get established in America. Culturally, they report being reared in diverse multigenerational households with multiple migration histories that interact to influence the degree to which Chinese traditions are passed on. They also identify key community values such as respect, education, faith, self-reliance, hard work, conservatism, and optimism which affect the degree to which they decide to utilize mental and physical health services in America for commonly reported struggles such as exposure to violence, addiction, and divorce. They see their identity as unique, multifaceted, complex, and difficult for Americans to grasp, which can result in an internal antagonism and isolation for some, as well as a feeling of being scrutinized or misunderstood by everyone. Over time, they see themselves as assimilating and identifying as American, while simultaneously trying to find ways to hold onto their customs and practices in Jamaica, particularly through maintaining ties to their Chinese Jamaican community. Identity is thus constantly being negotiated and influenced by contextual experience, making the two inextricably linked.

A visual is also provided to depict the inductive analytic process (see below):
Figure 1. Inductive Data Analytic Process

Study Aim 1: Investigate the experience of Chinese Jamaican Immigrants in the U.S.

This study aim is primarily captured by theme two “Feeling safer and better off, but missing home.” However, themes one and three also related to this study aim because it describes the factors that led them to migrate to the U.S. and what their experience was like living in and growing up in Jamaica, which in turn was found to influence how they
made sense of their experience in America. Thus, the first three themes were found to answer study aim one and will be presented below.

**Theme One: Flourishing but pushed and pulled to leave for various reasons.**

This theme reflected two waves of Chinese-Jamaican migration – one during the era of Manley’s socialism (as mentioned in Chapter 1) and the other during subsequent governments mainly for higher education and better opportunities. As immigrants, it was difficult for Chinese Jamaicans to speak about their experience and identity in the United States without first beginning their story in Jamaica. Thus, this theme captured what life was like in Jamaica for them, why they felt the need to migrate, and to which countries. Three categories comprised this theme, which are found in Table 2 below. Below the table, each category is flushed out further with sample quotations from participants to provide a descriptive account:

Table 2

**Theme One and Associated Categories**

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<th>Theme/Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flourishing, but pushed and pull to leave for various reasons:</td>
<td>We worked hard and flourished in Jamaica, but fled during the 1970s in response to social targeting during the socialist government of Manley. Later groups emigrated for higher education or better opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 1</td>
<td>Having a good life in Jamaica, except for the violence and resentment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 2</td>
<td>We felt we had to leave and left for more opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 3</td>
<td>Having contact with the U.S. and other countries prior to moving.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Having a good life in Jamaica, except for the violence and resentment.* In reflecting back on their life in Jamaica, most participants reported that life was good in
Jamaica and identified having help with housework, being able to work their way out of poverty through being shopkeepers, attending good schools, and finding their upbringing in Jamaica well-rounded and grounded as contributing to a middle-class lifestyle that was free of stress for the most part. As one participant put it, “Well, you know, we grew up in Jamaica, middle class, had a good education, our families were shopkeepers, and we were never in want of anything.” whilst another said, “I’m thankful I grew up there and not here [in America]”.

However, despite the positive statements regarding life in Jamaica, many participants frequently brought up the level of violence and resentment in the country, which increased particularly during the 1970’s, a time when democratic socialism threatened the country under Prime Minister Michael Manley’s rule. Many participants reported owning guns, feeling targeted for not being Black in Jamaica, being called names such as “Mr. or Ms. Chin” and feeling cautious and worrying about physical safety due to being actual targets of violence, or being witness to or knowing people who experienced violence in Jamaica. As one participant explained:

Always have to lock up yuh grill, mek sure nobody nuh rob you, make sure nobody nuh spend time look in yuh yaad. Same thing, yuh just a target. Even though you might not have any money, the person coming to rob you don’t think that. Them think yuh Chinese, yuh have money.

We felt we had to leave and left for more opportunities. This fear, along with statements made by the Prime Minister telling people not to hesitate to leave (“There are 5 flights to Miami leaving Jamaica daily” (French, 1992) if they did not like what was going on in the country, interacted to influence Chinese Jamaicans’ decision to leave. Many participants thus reported feeling forced to leave, and had many friends and family who were migrating to other countries (U.S.A., Canada, and England) for safety reasons
and for better opportunities. However, participants born after that time period, had a
different experience in Jamaica when a different Prime Minister took over, and so, left
the country motivated by other reasons. These immigrants usually came for tertiary
education, “I left when I was 18 to go to the University of Miami” or, as one participant
put it, to “try something different”. Many attended colleges in Florida such as Florida
International University (FIU), University of Miami (UM), and Miami Dade College
(MDC), but also in other states such as New York, Ohio, and Georgia. Some would go
back and forth to Jamaica for business, while some visited once a year for vacation or to
visit family who stayed behind. A participant highlighted this:

Basically, we went back probably for the first 10 years, we probably went back at
least every year. I think maybe not my parents, but all of us kids would go back.
We’d look forward to going back every summer. Yeah, we went back pretty
much every summer and Christmas if we could. Whilst they missed their home
country, these immigrants largely found the crime a significant reason to not
move back to Jamaica.

Other participants’ quotes highlighted fear of crime if they were to move back,
saying:

That’s a worry I have, most of my friends have one parent because of the crime.
That’s my hesitation pretty much. I think the education is amazing...I really want to
move back...but crime is just really scary”, and “Jamaica is really, without the crime,
it really is a wonderful place, that’s the only thing that keeps me from going back
and,

I don’t think the crime has changed. It might be a little bit more sophisticated, but
for the most part, there’s still all sorts of robbery and rape that people don’t talk
about. I don’t think they will ever get that under control, because at first it was
political, and then the politicians lost control of those guys and now it’s strictly
racial and economic. The police know, and they know it’s a vicious cycle.

Finally, another participant gave the example of a friend who decided to move
back to Jamaica and then left again due to the violence, stating, “We’ve had many friends
that have gone back [to Jamaica] to retire, and they’ve packed up and left because of the
state of Jamaica...they go down there and with the violence, they just move back.”

**Having contact with the U.S. and other countries prior to moving.** These immigrants reported having relatives already living in places all over the world (England, Australia, and Canada), including the United States, and would frequently visit these family members on holidays. This connectedness across borders lends credence to the transnationalism of the group. Many had family in Florida, which is where most of them settled during the Manley era, or choosing to come to attend college, while some went to live in New York and Toronto, Canada where they also had family members living, or for higher education. For example, participants stated:

So, prior to coming to school, we would visit friends and my aunt and uncle lived here [Florida], so you would come and visit them.” and “I think by the time I was one, I traveled to Miami about 10 times, and then from what I remember, I used to travel to Miami at least around three times a year. Every school holiday I went to Miami to visit family.

Some participants also described having first moved to another country besides the United States prior to moving there such as Puerto Rico and Bermuda and described varying experiences there. One participant talked about her struggle with assimilating to Puerto Rico:

I moved with my family to Puerto Rico and it was difficult to navigate because they speak Spanish. I wish I had learned Spanish, not excessively, but well enough to move around. I had a really hard time assimilating in Puerto Rico” whilst another described living in Bermuda as a vacation, “When my wife and I left Jamaica, our first stop was not in the U.S. it was Bermuda...Bermuda was a vacation. It’s a beautiful place and what was going to be maybe a year, maybe two, possibly three, ended up being 13.

These participants also talked about still having family living all over the world in countries such as Panama, French Guiana, Brazil, Hong Kong, Belize, England, New Zealand, Canada and Australia, and in U.S. cities such as Los Angeles, Phoenix, Atlanta, District of Columbia. One participant’s wide-reaching family illustrates this:
Of course, as you well know, there are Chinese everywhere in the world. I have relatives in French Guiana and Brazil. My mother had sisters who migrated. She migrated to Jamaica, but one sister went to Panama, one went to French Guiana, and one who went to Brazil and another one stayed in Hong Kong.

Another participant with a similar family tree that spread across the globe stated:

My dad’s brother joined the Royal Navy back in the 50’s, and he ended up in New Zealand, so he stayed in New Zealand and had family in Canada. We have family all over in England so yeah Jamaica, New Zealand, England, and Belize. His sister lived in Belize before she passed.

Overall, this theme highlights these immigrants’ experience in Jamaica, which was marked by hard work and economic success, but also experiences of being targeted violently and/or verbally, experiences of being resented by the masses, and feeling forced to flee particularly when a socialist government took power. Those born in post the Manley era reported mainly having a good experience in Jamaica in which they were never deprived, and whose families were able to send them away for tertiary education in the U.S. and other countries such as Canada and England. Some immigrants had family members living around the world which made the transition to the new country a bit more manageable. Some even lived with family while attending college or at least had family living nearby which was reported to be helpful in terms of their adjustment to the U.S.

**Theme Two: Feeling Safer and Better Off But Missing Home.** An initial move to a new country, despite having familial ties can still be challenging and these immigrants reported experiencing some struggles when they first came, and even reports of feeling like they had to start over. Over time, they reported feeling better off economically and socially in America and expressed appreciation for the opportunities America offered them. As with most immigrants who leave their homeland, in order to make sense of their new environment, these immigrants expressed engaging in comparing
and contrasting America with life in Jamaica. Three categories also comprised this theme and are found in the table below.

### Table 3

*Theme Two and Associated Categories*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme/Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 2: Feeling Safer and Better Off,</td>
<td>It took us some time to get on our feet in America and while we feel safer and better off, we find ourselves comparing life here to Jamaica and the way we grew up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But Missing Home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 1</td>
<td>Struggling and Starting Over In America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 2</td>
<td>Appreciating and Feeling Better Off In America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 3</td>
<td>Contrasting Jamaica and America</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Struggling and starting over in America.** Going back to school as an adult, managing full time work and school or two or more jobs, having to change careers, having a decline in standard of living, feeling lonely, crying and being depressed when they first came, were a few issues that emerged for these participants when they first moved to America. For example, one participant stated, “When I just got here, of course I’m living with family, so my standard of living and independence was drastically reduced. I used to cry and wonder, why did I leave Jamaica.” While another stated:

> It took us a few years to get on our feet. We didn’t buy our first home until we were living here 17 years, and while we had two cars in Jamaica, here we had one. I worked as a secretary and went to cosmetology school at night. My husband would go to work in the morning. Then coming home, I’d pick him up and I would drive to the daycare to pick up the kids, too. It was a constant rush, rush, rush, you know?

In a similar vein, they also mentioned struggling with the pace of America despite
having learned it. One participant noted, “I just think here, everything is always on the go, there is no downtime, so to me, like in Jamaica, I don’t think I ever felt like this constant rush. Even when I was working, I don’t think I felt like that” and continued, “I’ve learned the way of life, but I’m still struggling, if that makes sense.” While another participant highlighted struggles in terms of being a minority in the U.S. as well as in Jamaica, and as a result, working harder and being sharper than everyone else:

Anyway, you come to the U.S....you make the opportunity for yourself, because you stand alone. You’re not Black. You’re not White. You’re not Chinese, but Asian people from Asia, don’t like us cause we mix with Black. You’re not really anything. You’re on your own basically. Even when I was in the police department I was basically on my own. I didn’t identify with White, Black or Latino and there’s not many Asian cops to begin with, so you’re kind on your own. You gotta work harder than everybody else and nobody is going to cover up for your mistakes. I always had to be sharper than everybody else. Study a little harder and work a little bit harder than everybody else.

_Appreciating and feeling safer and better off in America._ The participants reported appreciating the conveniences, feeling like they have more freedom and opportunities in the US, feeling grateful for the privilege to live, go to graduate schools, and being better off financially in the US. Some stated they loved America, felt at home here, and did not want to go back to Jamaica to live. Similar sentiments were expressed in statements such as:

The good side is that I have lived a life of convenience so that I’m used to the instant gratification that the United States gives you, like if you want something, I can just get in my car right now and even if it’s midnight, I can definitely find it.” or “I love it here. Call me a capitalist, but I like...in Jamaica, there’s certain things you can’t-- like personal freedom, I mean if I want to go to Walmart at 1 or 2 in the morning, I don’t feel any fear, sure you have to be careful and watch your back but you could never do that in Jamaica.

Another participant’s gratitude for his ability to get an education here was expressed, “I was very fortunate to be able to go to college, finish, and go on for a graduate degree” whilst another participant expressed happiness at the financial security
America afforded her and her family:

I could see where financially, we are growing. We were able to save and buy our first home. It’s wonderful I think. Back in Jamaica, I don’t know the prices, my salary and my husband’s salary were not that financially...growing fast enough to buy a home. We would still live with our parents. Coming here has had a lot of benefits, the education is free for the children. We didn’t have to pay that expense unless you went to private school.

**Contrasting Jamaica and America.** The contrasts and comparisons between Jamaica and America overall, depicted what aspects the participants struggled with and what aspects they appreciated in their new home. Participants reported seeing differences between how they grew up compared with Americans and how that influenced values, as well as reported being confronted with the race and racial identity of themselves and their children for the first time here. They also reported not agreeing with some of the values in the U.S. and juxtaposed the school system to the one they had back home.

For example, one participant reported feeling that life in America was more of a transitional one, stating:

It’s hard to find someone that stays in one place here, whereas Jamaica, the road we grew up on, everybody grew up on that road. We all grew up together, and nobody moved, and a lot of them, even like the children, who became adults, all we did was built on additions to the home. That aspect of it was missed just because now it’s a different time. Up here, you make friends with somebody and all of a sudden they’re moved on to another place, their parents got transferred with their job or whatever. They’d moved on and it’s just not as stable.

Participants also compared the school systems, finding the one in America much larger and harder to navigate sharing:

I guess it was just different because it was so bigger going to a university than going to a high school where you knew people from first form. When you come here college is so much bigger, the whole system is different, and you don’t know anybody so you have a lot to figure out and my parents weren’t here, not that they would have been able to help me but they wouldn’t have any idea either.

Others talked about being confronted with having to talk and think about their
racial identity and finding the U.S. very race-based in comparison to Jamaica, in addition to worrying about their children’s racial identity. For example, one participant shared:

Even at school, just socially, people come up and want to know if I’m Black or White, and actually feel my hair and say ‘Oh I’ve never seen a Black person with straight hair!’ It was just different in that you’re just associated by race, where growing up in Jamaica, it was just never...we never looked at each other by skin or color...you just grow up with that just not being an issue.

Concerning their children, another stated:

Here’s the thing, it’s been so distressing because we live in Weston, and it’s primarily Spanish, and my daughter, she’s five, and all her friends that go to that school are Spanish and there are not a lot of mixed and African American kids so she is already saying, ‘I don’t look like them. I wish I looked like them. My hair doesn’t look like that. Mommy I don’t look like you, I wish I was your color.’ Stuff like that.

This theme overall captures the challenging aspects of integrating in America for these immigrants, but also highlights the opportunities and benefits they appreciate about America, as well as the comparisons made between their homeland and America that center around race and racial identity, their religious values, school systems, pace of life, and their children’s integration into society.

**Theme Three: Key community values influence us and our views on how to address common challenges identified.** This theme highlights how participants view their interactions with people of other races and the experience that went along with it, characteristics that they reported describe the Chinese Jamaican identity, and what it means to grow up in a Chinese Jamaican family. It also included struggles commonly reported in their community and attitudes towards mental and physical health services in America. Four categories comprised this theme, found in the table below:
Table 4

Theme Three and Associated Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme/Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key community values influence us and our views on how to address challenges</td>
<td>Growing up Chinese Jamaican and in a Chinese Jamaican family involves diversity, multiple generations and migrations, an emphasis on hard work, respect, faith, family, education, and self-reliance, all of which interact to influence the degree to which we decide to seek mental and physical health services in America.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 1</td>
<td>Mixing well with other races for the most part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 2</td>
<td>Growing up in a Chinese Jamaican family means...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 3</td>
<td>Having the carefree mentality of an islander but valuing self-reliance and conservatism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 4</td>
<td>Common struggles and varying views on how to address them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mixing well with other races, for the most part.** This category captures participants experiences in interracial relationships in America and Jamaica, as well as their views on how they fit in Jamaica, despite being an ethnic minority. Their views were diverse such that some participants reported feeling that they never encountered any racism or prejudice or did not attribute racism to the behaviors observed, while others felt ridiculed and/or ostracized by their own community for being a mixed-race Chinese Jamaican or being in an interracial relationship. For example, this quote depicts the feeling of never having encountered any racism or prejudice in America or Jamaica:

> Chinese are very widely accepted. I have no problem, they never look at me in stores and there [in America] I’m so very accepted, even amongst Jamaica, I see racism amongst Jamaicans like some of the Jamaican Blacks who have money and they are prejudiced to other Blacks, but I am quite well treated everywhere I
go. I can fit in with all colors of Jamaica.

This one also depicts a similar sentiment, “Fortunately for me, I would say no [have you had any experiences of racism?] I’ve never had any bad experiences. I would say I’ve never really had any incidents geared toward me as a Chinese.”

On the other hand, this quote depicts a different experience in America by one participant who married a White woman:

Here, I’ve had some Whites that saw me and my ex-wife and they didn’t like it, especially in Georgia, but they got over it. Then the other time, we were in a little town called Dallas, Georgia and we stopped in one of the barbecue restaurants there. You ever seen those old Westerns when the cowboy walks into the bar and the music stops? And people stopped talking? That’s exactly what happened to us. Then my wife was like, ‘I hope you have your gun on you.’ And then all of a sudden, this guy’s head just kind of pokes out the back and he’s like ‘Are you going to sit those folks down or not?’ Then everyone starts talking again and he’s like ‘I’m sorry, we don’t get a lot of mixed folks here and I really do apologize.’

In Jamaica, participants reported trouble with interracial marriages as well. This quote describes the ostracism this participant’s parent experienced for marrying outside her Chinese race in Jamaica:

The older Chinese generations were very prejudice also, like my grandfather, when my dad started to date my mom, and got married to her, because he wasn’t Chinese, my grandfather disowned my mom for a number of years before they actually reconciled...and he was very upset that my mom didn’t marry Chinese and married a White person but then he ended up being best friends with my dad and everything.

Similarly, this quote illustrates the ridicule some participants experienced for being mixed with Black from their own Chinese Jamaican community as well as from the Black Jamaican community:

Well it’s kind of hard because everywhere I go [in Jamaica] they say, ‘Oh look at the little Chinese boy. Look at the little China.’ I mean growing up I mean because I wasn’t full Chinese, I had cousins and uncles and aunts who would ridicule me like, ‘You’re not full Chinese.’ And my grandmother would get so mad and say ‘Don’t listen to them, you’re Chinese.’

However, other participants noted that in Jamaica, they got along well with Black
Jamaicans and had friends who loved the Chinese Jamaican culture, as evidenced by this quote:

Well I know a lot of Jamaicans that want to classify themselves as Chinese Jamaicans, because, I don’t know, there just seems to be a draw to Chinese Jamaicans right? Like I have a lot of friends that are making the comments, oh they just want to be Chinese, they love the food!

and this one, “People like Chinese people in Jamaica so have to take that to your advantage too.”

**Growing up in a Chinese Jamaican family means.** This category detailed what growing up in a Chinese Jamaican family was like. Commonalities reported included, growing up in a large family with lots of extended family and people who were not necessarily related by blood, growing up with both parents and grandparents, and helping and working in the family business. It also entailed having grandparents who had a strong cultural identity to China, and in some cases, having a parent or grandparent who was born in Jamaica then sent back to China to live (to learn the culture) and back to Jamaica. Participants share that they were also exposed to habits of Chinese culture in the home, and most had either a parent, grandparent, or great-grandparent who was driven out of or left China and ended up in Jamaica, seeking better opportunities. For many, growing up in a Chinese Jamaican family also meant being raised and identifying as Catholic or Christian, an emphasis on respect, education, family, and hard work.

To illustrate the large family, and some of the other reported characteristics, one participant was quoted to say:

One of the things that I got from my family was, and I was raised by a village, a huge, humongous Chinese village, is that I did not believe that I was in any way inferior or not quite up to scratch, and that I’m smart and very intuitive, so I don’t think I fumbled in any of the social department. I’m kind of shy, but I’m not afraid of people.

Referencing the Catholic faith, another participant stated, “I grew up in a Catholic family. I went to Catholic school. My parents are eucharistic ministers of the church. I
got married in the Catholic church, that’s kind of a major theme that’s been growing up.”

Lastly, a quote that illustrates the emphasis on education was, “I noticed as a child, since I moved here at 13, the fact that it was stricter on academics for us, and definitely to know how to play an instrument, and all the Asian kinds of stereotypes I’m guessing.”

**Having the carefree mentality of an islander, but holding conservative values.**

This category captured much of the nuances from the interviews that described what participants thought it meant to be a Chinese Jamaican. Characteristics such as optimism, a reliance on their faith, being resilient and tough, fending for yourself, and not letting things bother you too much and trusting things will work out, emerged. Participants also stated that they believed Chinese Jamaicans valued empathy, honesty, awareness, and discipline. They also mentioned feeling that Chinese Jamaicans set high standards for themselves, made the most out of life, were smart, conservative, realistic, and speculated that as a group, they were politically mixed. Some also reported being shy and preferring to keep to themselves while others shared being more social and outgoing. In short, it highlights the concept of blended biculturals from the BII theory of Benet-Martinez & Haritatos (2005).

As one participant put it:

Being Chinese Jamaican is being a bit from both worlds, you know I think we have the mentality of an islander, very carefree, very happy go lucky, and then America as well to have access to a lot of personal freedom and some material goods, and I think it’s a very happy medium. I mean the Chinese part of it also helps, of course, in some of the discipline that you have, the work ethic, the dedication to the family and of course, also education.

Another participant referenced their faith as something that was important and helped them get through challenging times, “When challenging times come, I look to my faith to get me through whatever the situation is.”

Others spoke more directly to religious values and political conservatism stating:
Like you can’t say Merry Christmas in America, so you have to say Happy Holidays which is fine, but I don’t think anybody should get offended if somebody does say Merry Christmas. I mean if somebody says to me Happy Hanukah, I would just return the same thing to them.

or:

I have different views politically how the country’s doing, this and that, but I’m afraid of what life is coming for my children and grandchildren, just the lack of faith that’s going on in the country, the lack of respect, just the moral compass of the whole country and basically how people are just taking God out of everyday life.

**Common struggles and varying views on how to address it.** This category captured common mental and physical health challenges reported, as well as attitudes toward mental health, and ways of coping. Addiction was a topic that frequently came up as well as witnessing, being a target of, and hearing about violence growing up in Jamaica. Divorce, and having a less active lifestyle since migrating to the US was also voiced. With reference to the addiction, one participant mentioned that her grandfather was “a heroine addict” and another stated:

One thing in life I learn is that my father was an addict. A drug addict. Alcohol. Weed. I remember he always drink and smoke. He shoot heroin and he smoke crack and snort cocaine. My family had an addictive personality. Some of us got addicted to drugs, some of us didn’t, some of us got addicted to other things like video games, sex, OCD, gambling. My father always tell me, ‘Don’t get addicted to anything. Only woman, but certain woman (laughs). So I take my father advice, I don’t drink, I don’t smoke. I’m addicted to video games. Addiction is a mental illness and it’s hereditary. That’s all I know.

Participants reported seeing shooting growing up, having many close calls with death, and being present during a historic massacre that occurred during election season in Jamaica in 1980. They also reported being told they would be robbed and killed. A quote which illustrates:

Some people came to my parents that night and said ‘Ms. Chin, Ms. Chin them a go come for you tonight. Them a go come to rob and kill unno tonight. They already done the betting shop and drycleaner.’ So we locked up the shop and pulled the doors early that evening and they said they were warned because the
people said Mista Chin good to us and we don’t want nothing happen to them. Shortly after that my parents sold the grocery store and opened a flower shop.

In terms of mental health treatment, participants expressed varying views on whether they sought therapy, and why, and what their experience was like. Some pointed out that seeking mental health services was not a part of their Jamaican culture and that initially they did not pay attention to mental health but then sought counseling and felt helped by it. Others shared that they sought therapy and did not feel helped by it and therefore preferred to rely on themselves or the internet to address their mental health. This quote illustrates, the latter:

Because of my family dynamic and the dynamic of growing up, like I said, in a country where even though you belong people would tell you you don’t belong, I learned to compartmentalize a lot of things. That’s how I coped with it. I just compartmentalize everything. It wasn’t until maybe six, seven, years ago I realized I was like oh my God. I have PTSD. I self-diagnosed myself. It’s funny. I did go to a therapist one time, but she was more interested in my adventures than helping me. I’m not perfect or whatever but I’ve journaled a lot of things and it helped me reading stuff back to myself. I was like, oh, that’s really not normal. How do I deal with that? Just do a lot of research online and stuff like that.

Four participants in the study reported being divorced, and cited getting married and having kids young, as well as being in a cross-cultural relationship as factors that led to the breakdown of marriage. Others weren’t so clear as to the reason why divorce occurred. Some sought therapy for their divorce while others did not. One participant stated, “We did [seek therapy] but it wasn’t really helpful. Neither one of us were willing to change anything.” Some participants also reported having a less active lifestyle since moving to the U.S. and not going to the doctor or listening to the doctor’s advice. Views around medication were mixed, as some participants advocated for medication and other stated feeling mistrustful of medication and not believing in taking a pill for problems. For example, this participant stated, “I was adamant to find a doctor that doesn’t push
medication because in Jamaica we don’t do that.”

Overall this theme highlighted the mixed experiences these immigrants had in America and in their home country of Jamaica in terms of acceptance and belonging, and the price some paid for marrying outside their race. In addition, it reflected the difficulties of being a mixed-race Chinese Jamaican. It also reflected the variety of characteristics that participants used to describe Chinese Jamaicans, and the commonalities across their family upbringing. Lastly, it highlighted common mental and physical health issues they faced, which included an exposure to violence, addiction, divorce, and having a less active lifestyle since moving to the U.S. and how they decided to deal with these challenges.

**Study Aim Two: Understand How They Construct Their Identity in the U.S.**

This aim is captured by themes four and five, namely, “Finding our Identity Unique, but Complex” and “Assimilating an American Identity, But Needing Our Community Too” which are presented next. As was found in study aim one, to understand how they constructed their identity in the U.S., it was important to understand how they viewed their identity in Jamaica, as well as how their fellow Jamaicans viewed them. As such, the following two themes were found to answer study aim two:

**Theme Four: Finding our identity unique and complex.** This theme reflects aspects of the Chinese Jamaican identity and its associated challenges socially, both in the American and Jamaican context, as well as intrapersonally. It is comprised of three categories, which are found in the table below.
Table 5

*Theme Four and Associated Categories*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme/Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finding Our Identity Unique and Complex</td>
<td>Our identity is unique, multi-faceted, and complex and Americans find it hard to grasp and misperceive us to be something we aren’t, which leaves us with an internal antagonism at times, and feeling isolated and scrutinized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 1</td>
<td>Having the best of many cultures in one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 2</td>
<td>Having to fight for or prove our identity everywhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 3</td>
<td>Feeling conflicted or confused</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Having the best of many cultures in one.* Many Chinese Jamaicans reported finding the ethnic identity to be unique, and having the best of many cultures (Jamaican, Chinese, British, and American) in one, and not really differentiating among them. To highlight, one participant stated:

First, if you ask me who am I, I would say Jamaican Chinese I guess, because I was born in Jamaica, we have a culture from Jamaica. Growing up, also, in the home with Chinese parents, we have the Chinese background too. We feel strongly about that as well. You can’t separate the two. You know? We bring up our children in certain ways that we think is Chinese custom like discipline. And at the same time, we have our Jamaican language. You just can’t get that out of a person either way. The Catholic influence is also a big part of my life. Oh, don’t forget, the British is another part of my life. I just love everything about being British. Growing up in Jamaica, everything was British until 1962. Truly the British was a good influence on us, somehow we have that proper upbringing, you think of ah, manners!

They report having been socialized to the Jamaican culture, and in fact, many of their grandparents were born in Jamaica, establishing them in the country for at least three generations. They report having grandparents who were not only Chinese, but also mixed race. For example:
So on my mother’s side, her father, so my maternal grandfather is, his mom was half Chinese half black and his father was full Chinese. My mother’s mother or my maternal grandmother is mixed with Guyanese, Chinese, and Japanese. On my dad’s side, my dad’s mom, she is mixed with White, Black and Chinese. So she is half White, not half White. I think quarter White because her mom, she used to call her Black mama because she was dark. Dark, dark, dark, dark, dark, dark as you can get.

Some identify as mixed race, and report being racially ambiguous to people, while others put Black on the racial forms they have to fill out in America. However, most report that Chinese Jamaican isn’t a race, so, as this participant put it:

I think if you have 1% Chinese and you’re a Jamaican, you’re a Chinese Jamaican, it doesn’t matter even if you have no percent [Chinese] and you grew up in the house, it don’t matter, you’re still Chinese Jamaican. I think it’s the food that you relate to, the customs, the family customs, and the family structure that you relate to.

Lastly, in terms of identification, many identified as Chinese Jamaican or Jamaican Chinese and in terms of how they are seen by others, they report being seen as “Chinese but from a Black country” or seen as “Jamaican, but Chinese.” Some report seeing differences between themselves and other Jamaicans but not thinking there should be any, while others could not find any differences between themselves and other Jamaicans. To illustrate the former, one participant stated:

There should not be a difference but there is. I remember early in the 1960’s there was a riot. I would always take the bus to go home from school, to and from school. I remember getting on the bus going into Kingston and catching the other bus and I look through the window and I see gangs of Jamaicans going back and forth, running back and forth and I knew they were anti-Chinese. I remember someone sitting next to me who said, “Aren’t you afraid?” I said no. It didn’t bother me. The unusual thing is I had that peace, I knew I was not in danger even though I was Chinese. It could be my Christian faith, it could be that I felt I was protected. Although we are out of many one people there is a little unrest there. There is a difference in that way although it shouldn’t be but deep down there is something.

*Having to fight for or prove our identity everywhere.* A frequent experience reported by almost every participant was being told by others that they did not look
Jamaican, and to varying degrees, did not sound Jamaican or could not distinguish their accent. For example, one participant stated:

I would always tell them I’m Jamaican and one of the things they say is ‘You don’t look Jamaican, you don’t sound Jamaican’, so I would have to explain that Jamaican is not a look. Jamaican is a nationality, just like being a U.S. citizen, an American is a nationality and then you have a million and one different races, and they would say but you don’t sound Jamaican. And how’s a Jamaican supposed to sound? I would say to them we are from a British, former British colony, and so we have our own dialect, but our mother tongue is English and our official language is English.

Further, they shared that people often expressed shock, surprise, and confusion when they said they were from Jamaica and were told that they could not be from Jamaica because they were not Black. Illustrated by this participant:

And of course, when the Black thing comes up, I say yes, I am Chinese and I am from Jamaica. It would always start another conversation or go off into why there were so many types of people from Jamaica, that we looked different, that would then continue on the conversation. They thought Jamaican people were only Black. But a lot of people don’t realize there were Chinese people in Jamaica at all.

They also reported being incorrectly categorized ethnically and racially on a frequent basis. One mixed race Chinese Jamaican who was mixed with White, recalled an experience in which someone changed the race he marked down on his driver’s license application:

The one memory I’ll never forget is first of all going for my temporary driver’s license and on the application, it had White, Black, Other, and I just associated myself as being White [on the form], and the lady that took the application felt otherwise and erased my check mark and put down Black.

Ironically, in Jamaica, people would reportedly refer to him as White or Chinese. This was also commonly reported with other participants, such that in Jamaica they were seen as Chinese and referred to as Mr. or Ms. Chin, but when they came to America, they were identified as something else they didn’t quite identify with. Commonly reported ethnicities or races these immigrants reported being misidentified as Black, Filipino, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Indian and Native American or Black Hispanic.
They also reported facing scrutiny in Jamaica from other Jamaicans and their own Chinese Jamaican group, in addition to America. For example, in Jamaica, one participant said, “There was no question I am Chinese [in Jamaica]” whilst another eloquently explained:

There is an antagonism that you encounter especially as a mixed Chinese person that I have become accustomed to because right away majority are Jamaican Chinese coming from poverty, and dem work them way up so dem kids can get an education; be professionals, but at least get an education, and they resent you for that. And at the same time, we have to be patriotic Jamaicans. But they don’t see us as, they see us differently...like we Jamaicans but unno a Chiney, and then you come to America, unno Black....so you’ll find that a lot of my friends are mixed Chinese, and me and the full Chinese them don’t get along either, cause them don’t see us as part of them.

**Feeling conflicted or confused.** Despite finding their identity unique and beneficial to have many cultures in one participants reported that it creates some conflict, having and managing all these identities. To illustrate, one participant stated:

Sometimes I really wonder, where the hell I’m from. It’s difficult because I did the DNA test, and it says I’m so much Asian from that side, and I know where my father is from, I see it on paper, but I’ve never experienced it. I was born in Taiwan but I don’t know where that is except on a map. I grew up in Jamaica and I don’t consider myself Jamaican because I’m supposed to be Chinese? So, it does create some conflict, a big one, but they’re in harmony and none is taking the forefront. None is leading so it’s easier to leave it there. I try not to worry about it too much, but just keep a harmonious relationship between the different ethnicities, cultures, and whatever to make it work.

Further, they find it difficult to choose from the race/ethnicity boxes asked on forms, and struggle with what to put. Some report checking the box for “two or more” and one woman recalled the forms having nothing with which she identified as she stated, “Most of my life in the United States, forms always had Negro, Caucasian, and Other, and I always checked Other because I’m neither of the others, but also because I identify as being mixed.” They also expressed a feeling of being stuck in the middle of two or more worlds and constantly feeling foreign. This quote beautifully highlights this
sentiment:

Some days I feel very American especially when I talk to my friends who still live in Jamaica, and then I realize that there are certain things where me living here for so long has changed how I look at things. They are some days where I talk to American friends and I’m like oh my God I’m not like that at all (laughs). Like I can’t relate. So it’s kind of like being stuck in this limbo of being too foreign for home and then being too foreign for where you are now.

**Theme Five: Assimilating an American identity, but needing our community too.**

Despite the challenges and struggles associated with any new encounter, over time, these immigrants appear to embrace an American identity to varying degrees, have begun settling into America, and see a future for themselves here, while simultaneously remaining active and keeping ties with the Chinese Jamaican community or Caribbean community at large. Three categories comprised this theme:

Table 6

*Theme Five and Associated Categories*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme/Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assimilating an American Identity, but needing our community too</td>
<td>We see ourselves assimilating and identifying as American over time, as well as beginning to envision a future in America, while trying to find ways to stay connected to our Chinese Jamaican community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 1</td>
<td>Identifying with America: Becoming or Not Becoming American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 2</td>
<td>Continuing to Move Forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 3</td>
<td>Finding Ways to Get Our Old Life Back is Something We Need</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Identifying with America: Becoming or not Becoming American.**

Unsurprisingly, there have been varying degrees to which these immigrants embrace an American identity. Some clearly stated they identify as American, others report
identifying somewhat as an American (i.e. part Jamaican, part American), while some did not identify as American. The children of these immigrants who were born in the U.S., for the most part, identified as American or Chinese Jamaican American. Some reported seeing an evolution or shift in their mindset and ways of thinking having lived in America for many years and assimilating over time to the U.S. To illustrate the last point, one participant was quoted saying:

I’m thinking to rent a room in my house because that will bring me income. I’m optimistic that’s not something I would have done before but I feel like X is a very communal kind of state, so people do that more and that’s acceptable. In Jamaica, you can’t just rent a room in your house for economic reasons. I don’t know that I would have done it anywhere else up until now”

while another stated, “I’ve assimilated into society very well here.”

*Continuing to move forward.* Despite the differences they articulated between Jamaica and America, some express wanting to retire in America, while some are already retired here, and others, mostly the younger participants, were still unsure of where to retire and raise their children. Further, most of these immigrants reported visiting Jamaica less as time goes on and highlighted a sense of optimism regarding their future in America, despite feeling unsure of all the answers to the questions coming up around their future.

To illustrate the desire to live and retire in America, one participant stated:

I think I’ll definitely be living here until I die. I like living in the U.S. and I wouldn’t want to go back to Jamaica I don’t think. I don’t feel like there is any security there, especially for a single woman. And my family’s here. I definitely will be living here.

Counter narratives to this was expressed by another participant who felt unsure about where she wanted to retire:

I don’t know, it depends. I’d love to go back home and retire cause life is easier there. But, you know, the crime and stuff, you have to watch that.” and “I’m open to living anywhere to be honest. I’m not opposed to moving back to Jamaica either. I really like where Jamaica is moving environmental wise. If my partner
was open to it, I wouldn’t mind raising my kids at home.

**Finding ways to get our old life back is something we need.** It was commonly expressed, however, that it was important for these immigrants to be around other Jamaicans and Caribbean people. This allowed them to access their culture (e.g. through eating the food and hearing the accent) and surround themselves with people who looked like and could relate to their experience. They expressed finding organizations in college that catered to the Caribbean community as helpful, in addition to the Chinese Cultural Association found in Miami, FL.

To illustrate, one participant responded “Probably meeting other Jamaicans” to the question of what she found was helpful in her adjustment and make it to where she was today, while another participant stated, “I think the community is something we need along with the food”. Another shared how she “banded together in the Caribbean association” of her college which was her support system “because we all supported each other and would help each other with class, and it was a common theme or thing between us at school.” Others cited the Chinese Cultural Association which is located in Miami, Florida that was founded by Chinese Jamaicans and hosts a yearly Chinese New Year Festival which is attended by many Chinese Jamaicans, “I still belong to the Chinese Cultural Association that’s mostly Jamaican Chinese. We have events, we have picnics, we have Christmas dinner dances and we have a summer event coming up now in June.”

Overall this theme captures the variation in these immigrants’ identification with America, how the number of years spent in the US influenced their decision regarding returning home, and their ways of thinking. It also reflected the importance of being connected to the Chinese Jamaican community for them, regardless of what age and setting they were in. The spaces created by organizations such as the Caribbean
Student’s Association and Chinese Cultural Association, for example, allowed them to socialize with each other and be immersed in aspects of their home culture, allowing them to thus, retain their identity.

**Conceptual Diagram**

The following diagram (Figure 2) is offered below to depict the relationship amongst the themes, notably that of experience (themes 1-3 found in the green box) and identity (themes 4 and 5, found in the yellow box), which are influenced by a temporal dimension (arrow above the diagram showing pre-migration to post migration). This dynamic interplay between experience and identity beginning in Jamaica and continuing in the U.S. is found to characterize the Chinese Jamaican immigrant identity and experience, which was found to be evolving, complex, and contextually dependent.

*Figure 2. Conceptual diagram of Chinese Jamaican Immigrant Identity and Experience.*
Summary

The study aimed to understand the experience of Chinese Jamaican immigrants in the U.S. and how they constructed their identity. In doing so, it also captured the factors that led to their migration to the U.S. and their experiences in Jamaica and what it meant to be Chinese Jamaican to them. Finally, it captured common struggles reported in the community, and how participants managed these challenges.

Regarding the first aim of the study, results show that they felt grateful to be in America, due to the sense of safety and convenience it provided, as well as better financial/career or educational opportunities. Factors that contributed to their migration from Jamaica were thus highlighted, as well as how they decided to choose the U.S. as a destination country. At the same time, life in America was reportedly an initial struggle which evoked a nostalgia for Jamaica. Thus, results in this aim also depicted a contextual view of life in Jamaica and how it compared to the one in America. Chinese Jamaican immigrants described the family as a vehicle through which Chinese habits and customs were learned and passed on, particularly from grandparents, and reported being raised in large households with multiple generations under one roof. Values that emerged as important were respect, hard work, optimism, family, education, faith, and self-reliance. Across the interviews, common experiences reported were witnessing and/or experiencing violence, divorce, and addiction. Further, they reported mixed views on mental and physical health services in America given it was at odds with their cultural beliefs around ways of dealing with challenges.

Regarding the second aim of the study, results show an identity in flux. Specifically, incorporating an American identity into their self-identification was still a
decision to be made by some and embraced to varying degrees. They also drew from multiple cultural worlds in constructing their identity, and thus found that their identity was unique. Having to prove and defend their identity was also a common experience, as well as an internal struggle of managing multiple worldviews. As an immigrant, feeling caught in the middle of two or more worlds and feeling like they didn’t belong in either place was also expressed. They voiced the need to find ways to engage with their Chinese Jamaican community in order to maintain their identity and well-being, while proceeding with optimism around their future life in America. The results of this section will next be discussed in-depth in the next chapter.
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Using a grounded theory approach, this study aimed to understand the experiences of Chinese Jamaican immigrants in the U.S. and how they constructed their identity. To summarize, five major themes were identified that addressed the two aims of the study. The first three themes spoke to the experience of Chinese Jamaican immigrants from pre-migration to post-migration, namely: (1) flourishing, but pushed and pulled to leave for various reasons; (2) feeling safer and better off, but missing home; (3) key community values influence us and our views on how to address common challenges identified. The last two themes described how they constructed their identity: (4) finding our identity unique and complex; and (5) assimilating an American identity, but needing our community too.

The following results will be discussed in relation to existing literature and will be organized based on this study’s two research aims and their related themes.

Study Aim 1: Understand the Experience of Chinese Jamaican Immigrants in the U.S.

Theme One: Flourishing, but pushed and pulled to leave for various reasons.
This theme revealed that Chinese Jamaicans migrated to the United States due to fears about Jamaica’s social and political conditions, as well as the desire to seek better educational and occupational opportunities. This finding implies that some immigrants came here not by choice, but were compelled to leave Jamaica, which aligns with the findings of studies on other immigrant groups in the U.S. (e.g. David & Nadal, 2013; Li, 2016). This theme also highlighted the global interconnectedness of these immigrants, as many had relatives already living in not only the United States, but also in Canada,
England, Australia, and parts of Central and South America. Furthermore, it appeared as though the participants had chosen to go to countries in which they already had relatives living, or to countries that provided better educational and career opportunities (Dettlaff, Fong, & O’Grady, 2016).

The results of this study, and this theme in particular, provide a contextualized and nuanced picture of the Chinese Jamaican immigrant population that cannot be captured when this sub-group is subsumed under the umbrella term, “Asian.” Rightly, there has been a call to include migration histories and internal processes to help expand Asian American psychology and shift the field toward a more heterogeneous, hybridized understanding of the Asian American experience (Nadal, 2004; Cheng & Berman, 2012). This dissertation begins to do exactly that, as it provides a contextualized understanding of the lived experience of these immigrants in Jamaica and how it influences their immigrant experience in the U.S., inclusive of their ethnic identity conceptualizations, meaning, and construction.

Notably, the literature review revealed that the theoretical scholarship on Asians only dealt with acculturation, identity, career development, multicultural psychology, cultural competence, parenting, and family dynamics (Okazaki et al., 2007). Theme one highlights the importance of understanding contextual factors such as the immigrant’s country of origin and its conditions, as well as the reasons that motivated their decision to migrate. Theories pertaining to Asian immigrants must account for these factors and how this impacts their experience in the host country, which in turn, should be linked to ethnic identity and acculturation theories (Takeuchi, Gong, & Gee, 2012).

Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory (1989) has proven to be a highly
useful framework for capturing some of the proximal and distal factors that influence immigrants, particularly in relation to identity, acculturation, and well-being over time in the host country (Lui, 2015; Birman & Simon, 2014). In this study, the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem were all captured to varying degrees. Theme one speaks to the macrosystem, which refers to the societal blueprint, including the political and economic systems, in which a person resides. From the interviews, it appeared that the macrosystem factors that influenced Chinese Jamaicans’ migration experience—both in relation to their decision to migrate and how they viewed life in their host country—consisted of a political and social environment characterized by violence, resentment, fear, and lack of opportunity.

**Theme Two: Feeling safer and better off, but missing home.** This theme highlighted three key notions: (a) the struggle to become established in the U.S. and its effects on standard of living and emotional well-being; (b) a feeling of gratitude and feeling better off by being in America; and (c) engagement in comparisons of all aspects between their home country and America, particularly a new racialized identity that was dissimilar to how they and others saw themselves at home.

Regarding the struggle to become established, Bronfenbrenner’s (1989) ecological systems model is once again highly relevant as it provides a context in which to describe factors within the exosystem (i.e. the environmental system) that relate to their initial struggle. For example, the neighborhoods these immigrants lived in and the job opportunities that were made available to them when they first came to the country, improved, once they become established over a longer period of time. It also goes to show that, for this group, assessment of material needs varies as a function of how long
they have lived in the country given they reported a better standard of living over the long run in terms of concrete needs. However, some still struggled with the more cognitive and emotional aspects of American life. Nevertheless, for some of these immigrants, the reduced standard of living, as well as the attempt to juggle school and work or multiple jobs, have implications for their families and children. As such, it is critical to explore these domains (concrete, social, emotional etc.) when examining immigrants’ experiences in a host country.

Building on this notion, there is a pressing need to continue research on the immigration and mental health needs of ethnically diverse immigrants in the U.S. (Takeuchi, Alegria, Jackson, & Williams, 2007). This study showed that adjusting to the U.S. was an initial struggle for these immigrants, particularly with regard to pace and standard of life. In addition, they were also tasked with navigating a racial landscape that was dissimilar from the one they knew in Jamaica. Ultimately, this had implications for the way they identified and could identify. This process, known as reactive identification (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996), has been documented in other immigrant groups as well (Birman & Simon, 2014; Tran & Birman, 2010). With the exception of the National Latino and Asian American Study (NLAAS) (Alegria et al., 2009), there is a dearth of research exploring this experience that is both qualitative in nature and sensitive to context (Takeuchi, Gong, & Gee, 2012). There may be many reasons for this lack of research, beginning with the fact that Asian Americans’ health and mental health needs often tend to go unrecognized and, as such, they remain an underserved population (Garland, Landsverk, & Lau, 2003; Kataoka, Zhang, & Wells, 2002). Another possible explanation may be related to the model minority stereotype that shapes perceptions
about Asian mental health needs (Miller, Yang, Hui, Choi, & Lim, 2011; Cheng, Chang, O'Brien, Budgazad, & Tsai, 2017), while in the population itself, attitudes towards health and mental health could lead to low help-seeking behavior (Gudiño, Lau, & Hough, 2008; Leong & Lau, 2001; Abe-Kim et al., 2007).

Despite this struggle, this theme also highlighted how immigrants felt grateful for the privileges of living in America—for example, the personal freedoms and safety that the country’s laws allowed—which were not available to them in Jamaica. Although Tsai, Mortensen, Wong, and Hess (2002) acknowledged that an American identity was important to both foreign-born and U.S.-born Asians, none of the reviewed literature quite captured these immigrants’ sense of gratitude for the opportunities, both financial and educational, and relative safety that living in the U.S. afforded them. This highlights the importance of open-endedly capturing immigrant experiences without a necessary focus on maladaptation or negative sentiment.

**Theme Three: Key community values influence us and our views on how to address common challenges identified.** This theme described the experiences of Chinese Jamaicans in Jamaica and in the U.S., as well as highlighted what it meant to them to grow up in a Chinese Jamaican household and family. It also captured common challenges these immigrants faced, and their diverging views on mental and physical health service use in America.

Specifically, they believed that, for the most part, they mixed well with other races in Jamaica and America, despite being an ethnic minority. Life in a Chinese Jamaican family was characterized by being raised in a large and racially diverse extended family, helping in the family business, having grandparents or older relatives
who had a strong cultural identity rooted in China, and being raised as Christian or Catholic. This theme also highlighted values that were found to be central to the group, such as resourcefulness, optimism, self-reliance, hard work, discipline, faith, and an emphasis on family and education. The respondents also noted that, while they held what seemed to be conservative values, they had a carefree “islander” mentality.

There were variations in attitudes towards seeking help for mental and physical health issues stemming from common experiences such as exposure to violence, forced migration, divorce, and addiction. Similar to previous literature cited (Leong & Lau, 2001), some immigrants reported being anti-medication and reported that seeing a psychologist was out of the question due to the stigma of mental health in Jamaica. Others, however, positively embraced seeing a psychologist and acknowledged the importance of mental health care.

The findings of this theme are very similar to the themes of emotional self-control, collectivism, conformity to norms, family recognition through achievement, and humility that Kim, Li, and Ng (2005) identified for Asian Americans. This group, however, identified faith and religion as important to them, in addition to holding a carefreeness that they attribute to growing up on an island. Thus, as recommended by Chae and Torres (2010), it is important to supplement more generic measures, such as the MEIM, with culture-specific measures or other questionnaires that capture ethnic content, and to not assume that all Asians hold the same values.

This theme also showed that participants had mixed experiences regarding racism and prejudice. Some had the experience of being ostracized by their own communities in Jamaica, and by U.S. society in general, for entering into mixed-race relationships, while
others reported not ever encountering any racism or prejudice, or even attributing racist intent to any behaviors towards them. This finding is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, not many studies have identified, reported on, and discussed intra-racial discrimination for Asians (Tyson (2004) provides a look at this concept in African-Americans), and secondly, most studies focus on Asians’ experiences of overt and implicit racism in the U.S. (e.g. microaggressions, perpetual foreigner stereotype) (Sue et al., 2007).

Since it was not one of this study’s formal aims, it remains unclear why some immigrants did not perceive any racism or discrimination towards them, or why they did not attribute any injustice or unfairness they encountered to racial discrimination. One potential explanation for this finding could be the fact that individuals in this study tended to have high levels of national and ethnic identity, which have both been demonstrated to be related to lower levels of perceived racism (Kim & Ozimo, 2005; LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993). This hypothesis supports more recent scholarship, which notes that acculturation and enculturation status, as well as generational status, can moderate psychological symptoms (Almailla, Kim, & Lam, 2010; Liu & Suyemoto, 2016; Birman & Simon, 2014).

Given that a bicultural acculturation strategy tends to result in better mental health outcomes than immigrants who fall under the separated status, as well as recent immigrants (Bulut & Gayman, 2016), it would be warranted for future studies to examine whether acculturation status moderates attitudes towards mental health and mental health status in general, in this population. This theme showed that many individuals experienced addiction in their families, experienced and witnessed violence growing up, and almost a third of the individuals interviewed were divorced. It is thus crucial to
further examine the physical and mental health status of these immigrants, to what degree they seek services, and what types of interventions would be most helpful for them and why. Given the level of exposure to violence and addiction reported in this study, screening for levels of trauma and incorporating faith-based techniques into the counseling process may be warranted when working with individuals from this group. Facilitating a re-connection to community and cultural values of import also emerged as an important topic for the participants, which is not surprising given the existing literature on culturally-relevant counseling approaches with ethnically diverse individuals (Lowe, 2005; Helms, 1999; Sue, 1994; Li & Kim, 2004).

**Study Aim 2: Understand how they construct their identity in the U.S.**

**Theme Four: Finding our identity unique and complex.** This theme reflects aspects of Chinese Jamaican identity construction, as well as their attitudes and perceptions of their own identity. It also captures their experience of being a Chinese Jamaican immigrant in the U.S., as well as in Jamaica, and how it has impacted them internally. Specifically, Theme Four showed that the participants viewed their identity as unique in that it consisted of many cultural influences, most notably an intermingling of the culture of their family’s Chinese heritage with the Caribbean culture of an island that was once a British colony with a legacy of slavery. Despite this unique status, they described an experience of identity denial and prescription by people in the U.S. that impacted them in a variety of ways. Interestingly, in Jamaica as well, they reported experiencing scrutiny within their own Chinese Jamaican group, as well as from Jamaicans of other races. As a result, the participants reported a feeling of internal conflict and confusion. Theme Four has many implications and relates in several ways to
many of the bodies of literature reviewed in Chapter Two; thus, sub-headings based on these various bodies of literature will be used to organize and discuss the findings for this theme.

*Ethnic identity conceptualizations and components.* The findings of Theme Four aligned with Helms’ definition of ethnicity, namely, that “ethnicity is the cultural practices of a group of people, but the group need not be the same ascribed racial group” (Helms, 2007, p. 236). While the Chinese Jamaican ethnicity was found to be associated with certain community values and cultural practices, as discussed in Theme Two, these values and practices were not confined to the same racial group (i.e. Chinese). Some participants identified their race as Chinese or Asian, but others reported being mixed race, with reported racial mixtures of Black, White, and Indian. They also self-identified using varying ethnic labels. For example, some identified as Chinese Jamaican, some stated they were Jamaican Chinese, while others identified as Jamaican only. This relates to Ferguson et al.’s (2014) finding that Black Jamaican immigrants’ ethnic self-labels do not necessarily reflect their tricultural acculturation status (i.e. high mean-level orientation to three cultural worlds), as the participants in their study used a variety of self-labels to categorize themselves, with some simply opting for a country-of-origin label. The use of a variety of labels also relates to being multiracial, as such individuals have more freedom to use and create a variety of terms to define themselves in different situations (Root, 1996).

Chinese Jamaican immigrants identified a variety of ethnic behaviors, which are a component of ethnic identity, that had influenced their values, attitudes, and beliefs, such as eating a variety of cuisines, specifically, Chinese, Jamaican, and American, speaking
both English and Jamaican Patois, and growing up in a Chinese Jamaican family. As previously noted, evaluation and ingroup attitudes tended to be positive for Chinese Jamaicans, largely due to their perceived uniqueness and having “the best of many cultures in one.” Furthermore, this group's willingness to continually defend and assert their identity in social situations where identity denial and prescription took place, indicated a high level of ethnic identity importance (e.g. “If you ask me, first and foremost I say I’m Jamaican”).

**Erikson’s stages of development.** This theory states that as individuals age, they face several conflicts that require resolution. Of particular significance is Erikson’s thesis that the conflict between identity and role confusion takes place during adolescence. However, the Chinese Jamaican immigrants in this study appeared to have been tasked with redefining their identity in adulthood. Many reported being confronted with questions about their race, being incorrectly categorized racially and ethnically, and facing the question of whether to integrate an American identity or not (into the already three cultural worlds that they identify with) despite having lived in the country for an extended period of time, holding American citizenship, having children, and retiring in the country. In articulating these questions, the participants expressed their role confusion and feelings of isolation from being in society where they did not necessarily fit in with Black Americans, Asian Americans, White Americans, Jamaicans back in Jamaica, and, in some cases, their own Chinese Jamaican group. Thus, these findings challenge Erikson’s theory, suggesting that identity exploration can continue into adulthood, particularly for Chinese Jamaican immigrants. Similarly, Cohen and Kassan (2018) recently observed this process of identity exploration taking place in their sample
of emerging adult immigrants (i.e. 19-28) in Canada. The findings of the present research also support the notions of racial invalidation and identity denial, in addition to underscoring the potential difficulties in reconciling two or more worlds in biracial and multiracial individuals, as outlined in the bicultural identity (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005) and tridimensional acculturation models (Ferguson et al., 2014). The participants’ feelings of not fitting in with any of the existing social groups in the U.S. and not being represented on forms that ask for racial/ethnic categories also relate to the notion of this group’s cultural homelessness.

**Tajfel and Turner’s social identity theory.** In regards to this theory, Chinese Jamaicans seemed to not identify with the existing category of “Asian American,” and instead preferred to self-reference based on the identity they felt strongest about, which was reported to be Jamaican and/or Chinese Jamaican. In the U.S., there are five dominant social group memberships on registration forms and in social discourse: White, Black, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Chinese Jamaicans interviewed for this research reported that these categories do not adequately capture who they are, as they felt that they do not fit in with any of the five groups. Rather, in their interviews the participants discussed the great sense of pride and belonging they felt in relation to their Chinese Jamaican or Jamaican Chinese ethnic identity. However, some reported that they found “it easier to contribute and operate in the Black community given [they] grew up in a predominantly Black country.” These individuals noted that they would often be identified as Black by others at times, and that they self-identified as Black on forms. This finding further supports the notion that the
Chinese Jamaican ethnic identity is more cultural than racial, and that it is comprised of multiple cultures.

**Ethnic identity models and measures.** Phinney (1996) posited a stage-based model of ethnic identity that begins with ethnic identity diffusion, and then proceeds through foreclosure, moratorium, and, finally, ethnic identity achievement. This model provided the basis for a measure called the MEIM, which evaluates an individual’s degree of exploration and commitment, participation in cultural activities, and positive feelings towards their ethnic group. While the MEIM was not used in this study due to its focus on ethnic identity content, meaning, and construction, it would be interesting to understand the process of identity development for these immigrants after moving to the U.S., given that they are essentially confronted with the task of redefining themselves in a society that views them as either monocultural Chinese or an incongruent racial/ethnic group.

It is also unclear what stage of identity development the participants achieved while still in Jamaica (or whether they went through this process at all); however, based on their statements, it appears that some could have been in foreclosure or diffusion, as they did not discuss why they had decided to identify as Jamaican or Jamaican Chinese/Chinese Jamaican in their narratives. As Cheng & Berman (2012) point out, this model assumes a notion of movement towards independence, whereas collectivism and interdependence tend to be emphasized in Asian cultures. As such, a foreclosed identity status may be more adaptive in the U.S. for Asians. Based on the analyzed narratives, it appears that this may be the case for Chinese Jamaicans, although this hypothesis would need to be formally explored in future studies.
This theme also captured a similar experience that emerged in both countries (Jamaica and the U.S.) that involved identity prescription and, to a certain extent, denial. The participants often referenced how, in Jamaica, it was “taken for granted that they were Chinese,” as people would say they are “Jamaican, but unno a Chiney,” or refer to all Chinese Jamaicans as “Miss Chin.” Similarly, people in the U.S. would state that “they could not be from Jamaica because they were not Black” (identity denial) or would mistake them for other races such as Mexican or Filipino (not Chinese), even going so far as to erase the participants’ self-identifications on forms. It is unclear how identity denial and prescription influence Chinese Jamaican immigrants’ ethnic identity development, which is largely predicated on individual behaviors and decisions. Nonetheless, for this immigrant group, how others view and relate to them could play a crucial role in how they identify, as well as in the degree of positive or negative affect they assign to their identity, which all influence well-being.

In line with Wong’s (2011) study of racial identity construction among Chinese American and Filipina/o American undergraduates, this theme found that identity was a complex matter for the participants, as it was the product of the internalization of more than one ethnic culture (British, West Indian, Chinese, and American) and was in constant flux (given their migration to the U.S. and entrance into a new racial/ethnic landscape). While the participants viewed their identity as something that was unique and worth being proud of, they also found it to be isolating and that it often left them feeling scrutinized. Such experiences were not observed in any of the reviewed literature on Asian immigrants or Asian Americans. The closest finding with regards to this experience was in Ferguson’s (2014) study, which found that individuals who identified
strongly with three cultural worlds reported more symptoms of anxiety and depression. As such, an important next step would be to examine the degree of psychological distress generated from internalizing multiple cultural identities among members of this group. Factors such as ethnic pride and engagement should also be examined as mediating factors, given the participants’ reported feelings of pride in their unique identity. However, it would be important to take contextual factors into consideration, such as the immigrant’s city or state of residence, as previous studies have found that youth had higher ethnic pride when living in communities with larger numbers of individuals from a similar ethnic-group (i.e. higher ethnic density). Significantly, this heightened level of ethnic pride was found to lead to more ethnic engagement due to the availability of cultural resources (Juang & Nugyen, 2010).

This theme clearly illustrates that the Chinese Jamaican immigrant identity exemplifies “the evolution and reconfiguration of ethnic and national identity” noted by Benton and Gomez (2014, p.1158), as their identity experience in Jamaica stands in contrast to that of Asian immigrants and Asians born in the U.S and is further complicated by the fact that some are mixed-race. Specific experiential and influential differences include the legacy of slavery and indentured servitude in the Caribbean, colonization, Christianity, and Afro-creole and British culture, combined with the Chinese traditions passed on in their families. Certain aspects of American culture compounded this identity and seemed to become incorporated into their psyche over time. Finally, it would be worthwhile to explore how the R/CID model applies to Chinese Jamaican immigrants to the U.S., as they are tasked with acculturating to a country that is majority White (although changing) after coming from their home
country, which is majority Black.

**Ethnic identity, acculturation, and psychological well-being.** The 2D acculturation model (Berry, 1990) and Ferguson et al.’s (2014) tridimensional (3D) acculturation model were found to be highly relevant to this theme. Given the apparent internalization of multiple cultural strands by Chinese Jamaican immigrants, an adequate understanding of their acculturation experiences would most effectively be captured by a theoretical framework capable of demonstrating not only the occurrence of acculturation in three or more dimensions, but also the relative salience and relationships among the different identities (such as in Persky & Birman’s (2005) study). Persky and Birman’s (2005) study also examined the relative role of the different identities in psychological adjustment. They found that the Jewish identity was most salient for Jews from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) and was related to feeling more comfortable in American society, while their Russian and American identity played different roles in feelings of alienation; specifically, identifying more strongly with a Russian identity was predictive of greater alienation in the new society, while identifying more strongly with an American identity was predictive of less alienation. Persky and Birman (2005) concluded that it was important to assess acculturation with respect to each separate ethnocultural group of relevance for the target population. Research of this nature would be an important next step for Chinese Jamaican immigrants, as it would be interesting to see which identities predicted the least and most alienation in the U.S. context, as well as which identity was the most salient for them and what role it has played in aspects of psychological adjustment.
Theme Five: “Assimilating” an American identity, but needing our community too. Theme Five highlighted the internal processes involved in acquiring an “American identity,” as well as the importance of a temporal dimension that served to influence the degree to which Chinese Jamaican immigrants identified as American and their decision to envision a future in America. This theme also highlighted the importance of remaining connected to the Jamaican and Chinese Jamaican community and culture for these immigrants.

In addition to relating to Phinney and Ong’s (2007) component of national (or American) identity, Theme Five touches upon the components of exploration, commitment, and attachment. When asked about their nationality, many of these immigrants identified as American, as they associated that identity with the type of passport one had (which was U.S. in most cases). However, this theme also highlights the varying degrees to which immigrants identified as American and the process of exploration, commitment, and attachment that they go through over the years. For the participants, this process involved comparing and contrasting life in Jamaica with life in America with regards to aspects of race, schooling, sense of community, pace of life, politics, and religion as mentioned in Theme Two. While it was evident that most of the participants felt a strong level of attachment and commitment to their Chinese Jamaican ethnic group, exploratory behaviors were also evident, as some had contemplated the question of “Where they were really from,” while looking to associations like the Chinese Cultural Association to gain more information about their ethnic identity.

This theme also highlighted that an American identity, outside of the nationality, is not immediately integrated in the way the participants identify, and that it evolved as
their values and behaviors changed in the host country. This further implies that asking immigrants about their nationality may fail to capture how they see themselves ethnically, which suggests that these are two separate constructs that must be examined separately. Indeed, this theme reveals that identifying as American is a complex, dynamic, and temporal process that can change with participation in American culture (Lieber et al., 2001). As the interviews revealed, some of the participants identified as Chinese Jamaican American or American. Thus, there is a need for longitudinal studies that examine immigrants’ identification as American, and that perhaps also qualitatively explore what an American identity means for these immigrants, with specific inquiry into a variety of domains, such as values, behaviors, and identity.

Along these lines, studies have noted that the perpetual foreigner stereotype has motivated Asian Americans to increase their engagement in American practices, which has in turn led to increased feelings of efficacy and competence (Tsai, Ying, & Lee, 2000). While such behaviors have reportedly led to strong psychological adjustment, the pitfalls of identifying with this identity should also be explored. Thus, it would be worthwhile to explore how Chinese Jamaicans react to the perpetual foreigner stereotype, as well as which behaviors associated with their many internalized identities they engage in and when. It is interesting to note that some participants reported eating more “junk foods” and exercising less, compared to their life in Jamaica. Similarly, they also noted that they had adopted a lifestyle of more convenience, which had led to less patience and tolerance, and more overall laziness. It would be useful to gain a better understanding of the risks associated with adopting an American identity, as well as the adaptive function it serves socially, functionally, and in other domains. It would also be crucial to
understand the circumstances under which this identity is activated.

Finally, the participants’ self-reported need to stay connected to their Chinese Jamaican community supports the reviewed literature, which shows that individuals with a bicultural acculturation status have significantly higher psychological well-being scores than low acculturated and high acculturated participants (Chae & Foley, 2010). The Chinese Jamaican immigrants in this study, particularly those living in the South Florida area, tried to create a sense of community and to continue their traditions in the U.S. by participating in activities held by Miami’s Chinese Cultural Association and by gathering large groups of friends to celebrate various milestones or holidays. This finding supports the notion that community variables influence the level of engagement in ethnic identity practices, and that ethnic identity can fluctuate depending on the context the immigrant is in (White, Knight, Jensen, & Gonzales, 2018; Yip, 2009; Douglass, Yip, & Shelton, 2014). A comparison of ethnic identity engagement and pride levels among Chinese Jamaicans in U.S. states with lower (e.g. California or Arizona) and higher (e.g. New York and Florida) populations of members of this group would thus be an interesting way to confirm this body of literature. Lastly, an examination of the decision-making process regarding whether to return to Jamaica or stay in the United States is also warranted, as many of the immigrants voiced feeling unsure of where they wanted to retire, while others had concluded that they never wanted to move back to Jamaica.

Limitations

Although this ground-breaking study offers unique insights into the experiences of Chinese Jamaican immigrants and how they construct their identities, it is not without limitations. Overall, this study had four main limitations. First, it relied on interview data,
which were framed around open-ended prompts that did not exhaust all aspects of the participants’ experiences. For example, it would have been helpful to further fleshed out participants’ views on the political climate in this country, given that political turmoil was one of the main reasons cited for migrating out of Jamaica. This would allow for an even richer picture of these immigrants, which would help us further understand their experience adjusting to life in the United States and how it possibly affects (if at all) their identification as American. However, it is impossible for any study to exhaust all aspects of experience, and this study yielded robust descriptions that can provide many avenues for future research.

Secondly, the data obtained from the participants were colored by who I, the researcher, am personally, professionally, culturally, which undoubtedly influenced how the participants responded. This, however, was addressed by explaining my role and positionality as a researcher via researcher reflexivity, as well as taking steps to ensure the study met the rigors of qualitative research through prolonged engagement and debriefing, including a negative case analysis, member checking, and providing thick description. Although qualitative data allows us to acquire in-depth data, future studies may also want to collect quantitative data (i.e. a mixed-methods approach) in order to obtain a more comprehensive view of the factors that emerged as being important to the experience of these immigrants; for example, stage of ethnic identity, the relationship between levels of acculturation and psychological well-being, and salience and relationship among the different ethnic identities in Chinese Jamaican immigrants.

Thirdly, the majority of the study participants had lived in the U.S. for 30 years on average; as such, their experiences could be markedly different from new immigrants
who have lived in the country for less than 5 years. As noted earlier, the length of time an immigrant has lived in the United States can impact their identification with the host country, their psychological well-being, and their ability to understand the dynamics of the country (especially racial). Therefore, while an effort was made to recruit a sample that was roughly gender equal and that contained individuals who had lived in the United States for varying lengths of time (which ranged from 12 to 46), a comparative study including more recent immigrants is warranted in order to see if their experience contrasts with those who have lived in the U.S. for a longer period of time.

Finally, since Chinese Jamaicans have also migrated to other countries such as Canada, their experiences and identity construction may look different. Indeed, these countries’ differing demographics, policies, and social norms and references, as well as the number of Chinese Jamaican immigrants living there, all interact to influence to some extent, their ability to identify as Chinese Jamaican (Nagel, 1994). Thus, a fourth limitation is that the results of this study can mainly only be applied to the U.S. context.

**Implications for Counseling Psychology Practice**

This study produced four key findings for counseling psychologists to consider when working with Chinese Jamaican and other immigrant populations: (1) identity is unique, complex, and in a state of flux (2) attend to the role of family and family dynamics (3) consider the role migration, trauma, and religion, and (4) adjustment to the U.S. is a process.

**Identity Is Unique, Complex, and in a State of Flux**

Regarding identity, it would be crucial for clinicians to firstly understand context. Specifically, counselors should consider the cultural forces that have shaped the subject’s
identity in their home country, and the degree to which they have internalized the current cultural realities of the host country. Essentially, there may be multiple cultures playing a role in the life, behaviors, and identity of the client—not just the race/ethnicity box they may be forced to check off on a form, or the one they resemble phenotypically. To understand Chinese Jamaican immigrant identity, counselors must understand the history of British colonialism in the Caribbean region, slavery and indentured servitude, and the history of the overseas Chinese. Counselors must also consider the experience of growing up as a cultural minority in a majority Black country, as well as the dynamics of mixed-race identity given the numerous liaisons between Chinese Jamaicans and other races in the island.

A theme of internal conflict was thus detected, which stemmed from the many cultural worlds these immigrants internalized (Jamaican, British, Chinese, and American). In addition, the participants reported that the experience of not resembling the majority of people in their home country phenotypically, while also not having first-hand experience of the culture that most people ascribed them to come from, had resulted in some feelings of distress. In fact, although the majority of the participants were born in Jamaica, most were assumed to have been born in China. Only one participant was born outside of Jamaica (Taiwan), but his family had migrated to Jamaica when he was two, and he had no knowledge about his country of birth, “except for on a map.” Upon moving to the U.S., Chinese Jamaican immigrants are confronted with a fourth culture to which they must assimilate, on top of the three cultural worlds they are already navigating. On the one hand, this allows them to relate to and participate in more than one cultural and social network; on the other hand, however, it often causes them to feel
like a rare outsider.

This internal conflict, also produced some external conflict, as participants who were particularly mixed race described being treated differently by members of the various groups that made up their identity. For example, participants who were both Chinese and Black described being teased and not fully accepted by their Chinese family and friends, since they were not entirely Chinese. Similarly, they also reported having Black friends who did not see them as fully Jamaican because they would call them "Ms. Chin or Mr. Chin" - a term all Chinese people in Jamaica were called, regardless of their last name (Mixed Race America, 2008). This lack of total acceptance left many participants feeling as though they were being subjected to scrutiny from all sides. Once in America, the participants described feeling caught between two worlds: feeling too foreign for their home country, and feeling too foreign for America. Some reported feeling as though they stood alone because they did not exactly fit in with Whites, Blacks, Asians, or Hispanics. In fact, some stated that the Chinese who came from China and lived in America did not really accept them as real Chinese either.

Thus, much like working with multiracial clients, counselors should recognize the uniqueness of the Chinese Jamaican immigrant identity within the US context, be conscious of the complexity of the client’s lived experience, and recognize them as the authority of their own lived experience (Burke, 2006; Root, 1996). In this respect, acquainting such clients with the Bill of Rights for Racially Mixed People (Root, 1996) may be helpful, as it acknowledges their right to identify as they wish without justification, even if it differs from how others see them (Root, 1996). It is also important for counselors to help such clients maintain connections to aspects of their home country.
or culture, which has been found to be a key factor in lowering distress levels among immigrants and other ethnically diverse groups in the U.S. (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Kuo, 1976; Lv, 2010; Chavez-Dueñas, Adames, Perez-Chave, & Salas, 2019; Rasmus, Trickett, Charles, John, & Allen, 2019).

Along these lines, the value of having student associations on college and university campuses, such as the Caribbean Students Association or Organization for Jamaican Unity, cannot be overstated (Wong, 2011). Participants frequently referred to these organizations as places where they were able to “band together” and help each other, and to continue their participation in their culture, particularly at a time when they are away from their home and feeling nostalgic. Additionally, they cited the Chinese Cultural Association in Miami, Florida, as another important venue where they could engage with others who shared the Chinese aspect of their identity and be surrounded by other Chinese Jamaicans, leading them to feel less ostracized from the larger American society.

**Attend to Family Concerns and Consider the Role of Family**

As with many other immigrant groups, Chinese Jamaican immigrants value family highly, and research has found that the presence of a supportive family is associated with better mental and physical health outcomes (Corona, Campos, Rook, Biegler, & Sorkin, 2019; Schwartz, 2007). The participants in this study characterized their families in Jamaica as multigenerational and multicultural, and they highlighted their concerns about leaving their aging parents behind. Being away from the country could thus increase feelings of anxiety about the parents they left behind, as well as lead to feelings of strain due to not having access to parents to help with child rearing and
child care. A few female participants reported that not having their mothers with them in the U.S. to help them juggle childcare and work had evoked feelings of stress, and that their lives would likely be much easier and more manageable if their parents lived relatively close by. Given this, it is vital to recognize these concerns and the unique constellation of the family system, and how it relates to behavior change and symptom relief (Vakalahi, Hafoka, & Fong, 2016).

Somewhat relatedly, the remarks of participants who had come to the U.S. with their parents as a child, or those who ended up having children in the U.S., seemed to indicate some generational conflict. This conflict has also been documented in other immigrant groups (Santacrose, 2019; Juthani & Mishra, 2019; Lui, 2015). Helping these immigrants manage the tensions that can arise from clashes with their parents over values, as well as internal struggles with values, would also be highly beneficial. For example, participants voiced concerns about where to raise their children given the obvious cross-cultural differences that would accompany raising a child in the U.S. and away from the Jamaican culture. Thus, it is critical to develop parenting programs that incorporate values important to these immigrant parents, or that modify or culturally adapt evidence-based family interventions that reduce intergenerational conflict and improve parent-child understanding (Liu, 2015; Hwang, 2006).

Further, researchers have documented differing rates of acculturation between children and adults, which results in acculturation gaps that create divergent values which affect family relationships (Ho & Birman, 2010; Birman, 2006). To minimize these gaps, it will be important to continue to improve and facilitate communication between immigrant parents and their children about their immigration experience (Ho & Birman,
2010). Indeed, some participants in this study reported a wide gulf between what parents thought their children were going through in the U.S. and what they were actually struggling with. This divergence in perception was further compounded by the notion that Chinese Jamaican parents “can be difficult to talk to,” a notion that is also often attributed to immigrant Chinese parents (Qin, 2008). Therapists working with such families can normalize this type of acculturation-based conflict by providing psychoeducation relating to the competing cultural values and systems they have to contend with in America, which will in turn promote a greater level of understanding within their relationships (Juang, Syed, & Cookston, 2012).

**Consider the Role of Migration, Trauma, and Religion**

For any immigrant, and particularly for the Chinese Jamaican immigrant, the role of migration and the migratory patterns of the generation before them should be considered (Vega & Rumbaut, 1991). Chinese Jamaican immigrants’ journey to the U.S. is sometimes not their first migration story, and it may not be their last. Their parents or grandparents typically left China in search of a better life in Jamaica, and then moved again to the U.S. when conditions in Jamaica did not seem favorable. Many Chinese Jamaican families were split up during the height of the migration to the U.S. in the 1960s and 1970s, as many fathers sent their wives and children to the U.S. and stayed behind to be the breadwinner. Some families never reunited for a host of reasons.

Thus, it is important for counseling psychologists to develop an understanding of the history of the people, the reasons that motivated their migration, the political climate during the time period in which they left their country (David & Nadal, 2013), and whether or not they left family behind. Indeed, research has found that immigrants
coming to the U.S. to escape adverse conditions in their home countries, tend to be at greater risk of developing mental health disorders (Fazel, Wheeler, & Danesh, 2005). It would also be important to understand these immigrants’ attitudes towards the new country, particularly the benefits they expect to enjoy and the challenges they have experienced. These attitudes have significant implications for whether an immigrant decides to stay in the U.S., or whether they consider returning home or migrating to another country.

Since many Chinese Jamaicans were motivated to migrate due to political and social targeting, in addition to experiencing and witnessing violence, clinicians may want to screen for and consider the role of trauma in adjustment. Indeed, research has found high rates of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among migrants (47%; Bustamante, Cerqueiar, Leclerc, & Brietzke, 2018), which suggests that pre-migration trauma exposure can affect current mental health functioning (Keller, Joscelyne, Granski, & Rosenfeld, 2017). With regards to mental health, many of the Chinese Jamaican immigrants interviewed for this study reported a family history of addiction, which is a frequently co-occurring disorder or arguably symptom of trauma (Skewes & Blume, 2019).

Given the finding that Chinese Jamaicans are likely to rely upon themselves, or on their faith (most reported being Catholic or Christian) and trusted community groups, it would seem to be essential that prevention or intervention programs be offered through faith-based or a community-based organization. This approach would reduce the stigma associated with such programs and make more credible to Chinese Jamaicans, thereby increasing access and participation, and decreasing attrition. Additionally, it is important
to recognize the role of faith in their lives, such as their reliance upon prayer, worship, and their relationship with God, and to assess the strengths and weaknesses of this approach to coping. Similarly, the role of religion and spirituality has been found to be helpful in the treatment and service utilization among other immigrant groups (Dinh et al., 2009; Chaze, Thomson, George, & Guruge, 2015).

**Adjustment to the U.S. Is a Process**

Given the fact that they are immigrants, and depending upon the developmental stage of the client, psychologists need to pay attention to how the client’s ethnic culture may (or may not) have changed over time and situations in which it does not play a role. Furthermore, it is important to understand that there might not be a consensus as to what constitutes the cultural values of an ethnic group; as such, the individuality of each immigrant from the culture should be respected as its own version of “the truth.” Thus, the framework proposed by Wong, Wang, and Farmer (2018) would be useful for counseling psychologists. This framework provides a more malleable understanding of complicated factors—which ethnic identity is for the Chinese Jamaican immigrant—as it takes into consideration context, time, meaning, and adherence, which allows counseling psychologists to assess and understand these clients much more accurately. Additionally, Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory (1989) was found to be highly relevant to understanding all aspects of the Chinese Jamaican immigrant experience, and is recommended for developing an understanding of the proximal and distal factors that interact to influence development, acculturation, identity, and well-being over time.

**Implications for Future Research**

This study has a number of implications for future research and research practices
with ethnically diverse immigrants. Regarding research practices, given the fact that
Chinese Jamaican immigrants do not have exactly similar lived experiences, histories,
and socialization experiences to the racial/ethnic group to which they are most frequently
ascribed, researchers should consider using variables aside from race/ethnicity when
classifying individuals in their studies (Helms, 2007). Furthermore, researchers should
employ better conceptual practices to distinguish between when the use of racial identity
vs. ethnic identity is called for (Helms, 2007). Having an open-ended option where
participants can write in their race and ethnic identity, rather than a forced choice option,
would also be a better approach. This study also highlights that our present categories for
racial/ethnic groups are not socially valid and do not accurately capture who people are.

Finally, at least five future lines of research were generated from this exploratory
study. Firstly, studies could descriptively characterize the stages of ethnic identity
development in Chinese Jamaicans using scales such as the MEIM or EIS, while
supplementing this understanding with a qualitative component that captures the meaning
and factors that led to that stage of ethnic identity. Other studies could also compare the
ethnic identity development stages between Chinese Jamaicans in Jamaica and those who
have immigrated to the U.S. in order to examine environmental factors that may
contribute to any possible differences between the groups.

A second line of research could explore how identity prescription and denial
impacts ethnic minority immigrant integration, identity, and well-being in order to
determine any implications for policy and to mitigate any negative repercussions.
Thirdly, a study that examines the benefits and risks of identifying with an American
identity was found to be warranted, as well as whether or not the R/CID model proposed
by Atkinson, Mortensen, and Sue (1989) holds for this population given their experience has been in a country that is majority Black as opposed to majority White.

Fourth, the development of a theoretical framework that demonstrates acculturation taking place in more than three dimensions is highly warranted, as is an exploration of the salience and relationships among the different identities with which Chinese Jamaicans identify, and the relative roles of each in psychological adjustment, (such as in Birman and Chang’s (2005) study). Taken a step further, a situational understanding of the contexts within which each particular ethnic identity is activated may also be warranted. Understanding which identities predict more or less alienation in the U.S. context (as compared to the Jamaican context) would also be valuable. A comparative study of Chinese Jamaicans’ levels of ethnic identity engagement, pride, and mental health in states with higher (e.g. New York or Florida) and lower (e.g. California or Arizona) populations of immigrants from this group would also be useful; similarly, such a study examining differences between countries would also be useful (i.e. Canada and England).

Finally, future studies should further examine the physical and mental health status of these immigrants, with particular attention to PTSD (Sivarva, Bjornsson, Pérez Benítez, Moitrar, Weisberg, & Keller, 2019), and the degree to which they seek services along with types of interventions that would be most helpful for them and why. With regard to psychological well-being and ethnic identity, an exploration of whether this population experiences psychological distress due to the internalization of multiple identities causes is warranted, as is research aimed at identifying of some of the positive outcomes of having more than one cultural world to draw from.
Conclusion

Immigration is a phenomenon the U.S. has been experiencing since the nation was founded, with a documented historic high of more than 41 million foreign-born people in 2013 (Dettlaff, Fong, & O’Grady, 2016; Zong & Batalova, 2015). The ethnic and racial landscape of the U.S. has thus been transformed, yet research on the mental health and health needs of the various immigrant populations is still desperately needed (Takeuchi, Alegria, Jackson, & Williams, 2007). This study clearly shows that the Chinese Jamaican immigrant group is a culturally, racially, and ethnically complex population that may allow researchers to explore identity in an expanded and complex way, with the potential to move the field forward in its thinking about immigrant and ethnic minority identity and its relationship to health and well-being. It also answers the urgent call placed by researchers over 20 years ago, for more research on Asians, with particular attention to the disaggregation of data, due to the fact that very little research has been conducted with this group, despite it being one of the largest and most diverse ethnic groups in the U.S. (Tsai, Ying, & Lee, 2000; Kitano & Nakaoka, 2001; Vakalahi, Hafoka, & Fong, 2016). While this is the first known study to descriptively characterize the experience of Chinese Jamaican immigrants in the U.S. and their identity construction, it is clear that much more research is warranted for this specific group.

Further, the results of this study affirm Benton and Gomez’s (2014) claim that the overseas Chinese identity is a protean construct that is influenced by social interactions and context, and that very little is shared besides an ethnic label. Identity construction was found to involve a compare-and-contrast process between the participants’ home and host countries, which underscored the importance of available cultural avenues in the
U.S. where they can participate in and connect with their culture and community. This was particularly key given that part of their immigrant experience included identity denial, prescription, scrutiny, and, in many cases, mistaken identity. The results also highlight the need for counseling services to be culturally-tailored and cognizant of key community values, and family constellations and dynamics found in this immigrant group. Future research with this group will assist the field in developing an expanded understanding of the U.S.’s Asian immigrant populations, particularly those from multicultural societies, and broaden the literature on immigrant risk and resilience factors.

An in-depth qualitative exploration was thus demonstrated to be an important methodological approach, as the majority of studies on ethnically diverse immigrants in our field have been quantitative in nature, relied upon forced-choice options, and have focused more on a stage-based approach to identity. With such an approach, this immigrant group may not have been identified, and a rich and contextualized understanding of their unique experience and needs produced by the present study may not have been elucidated. Finally, the results show that the Chinese Jamaican immigrant ethnic identity is more than an amalgamation of two or more seemingly contradicting identities; rather, it is a complex, dynamic, unique, multicultural, and multiracial identity that is greater than the sum of its parts, and offers a reconceptualization and expansion of the current racial and ethnic paradigms currently conversed about and researched in the U.S.
APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT MESSAGE

Hi Everyone,
My name is Kimberly Ho Misiaszek and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Miami, School of Education and Human Development.

As a researcher, I am committed to understanding and improving the psychological health of ethnic minorities and immigrants. As part of this endeavor, I am interested in learning about your experience in the U.S. as an immigrant and how you identify. To be clear, this is not a psychological evaluation of you. You are the expert in the room and there are no right or wrong answers.

If you meet the following criteria listed below:

- Identify as a Chinese Jamaican (or Jamaican Chinese, Jamaican of Chinese descent, or other variation)
- Over the age of 18
- Lived in Jamaica for 5 - 7 years during formative years (i.e. from birth up to age 18)
- Have been residing in the U.S. for at least 5 years
- Speak and read English / Patois

LET’S TALK!

I would be grateful to speak with you for 1 hour, at a location convenient to you (or via Skype/Facetime if you are not in South Florida), where I will ask you some questions, as well as ask you to fill out a brief demographic survey. You will be compensated with a $20 gift card for your time.

My email is k.ho2@umiami.edu and my phone number is 561-291-1494.

Gratefully,
Kimberly
## APPENDIX B

### Table B1

**Participant Demographics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant #</th>
<th>Birth Year</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Work Status</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Ethnicty</th>
<th>Age came to U.S.</th>
<th>Full Years Living in U.S.</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
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Informed Consent for the Chinese Jamaican Immigrants in the U.S. Study

Hello, my name is Kimberly Ho Misiaszek and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Miami, School of Education and Human Development. Thank you for your time, as your participation is very important to the study. As a member of the CRECER research group, which stands for Challenging Racism and Empowering Communities through Ethnocultural Research, I am committed to understanding and improving the psychological health of ethnic minorities and immigrants in the US. As part of this endeavor, I am interested in learning about your experience in the U.S. as an immigrant and how you identify. To be clear, this is not a psychological evaluation of you. You are the expert in the room and there are no right or wrong answers.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to understand how Chinese Jamaican immigrants in the U.S. self-identity culturally and experiences living in the U.S.

Location and Duration: This study will take approximately 60 minutes of your time at a location convenient to you.

Procedures: You will be asked to complete a demographic information sheet, and then I will ask some questions related to your immigrant experience, identity, and well-being. I will audiotape the interview so all information we collect is accurate.

Risks: This study presents no foreseeable risks or discomforts to you.

Benefits: This study may help educators, counselors, and other professionals who work with ethnic minorities and immigrants, to better understand the different immigrant groups' strengths, identity, and overall well-being.

Compensation: You will receive a $20 gift card for participating in the study.

Confidentiality: Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality. Names will only be included on the demographic information sheet which will be assigned a random identification number to be used for the transcriptions. All transcriptions will be password protected. In addition, all relevant research materials will be stored in a locked safe. The audiotapes will be stored for 3 years then destroyed afterwards.

Whom to Contact: You may contact the project coordinator, Kimberly Ho Misiaszek at
k.ho2@umiami.edu for answers to any questions you may have regarding this study. You will receive a copy of this consent form. Participation is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Participants may choose to withdraw from the study at any time, without any penalty or loss of benefits. If you have questions regarding the rights of research participants, you may contact the Human Subjects Research Office at 305-243-3195.

__________________________________________  ____________
Printed Name                                      Date

__________________________________________  ____________
Signature                                        Date
APPENDIX D: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Year of Birth ____________
2. Age in Years ____________
3. Sex 1 ( ) Female 2 ( ) Male
4. Marital Status 1 ( ) Married 2 ( ) Living Together/Common Law
   3 ( ) Divorced 4 ( ) Separated 5 ( ) Single
5. Work Status 1 ( ) Employed, full-time 2 ( ) Employed, part-time 3 ( )
   Unemployed
   4 ( ) In school, full-time 5 ( ) Other, Please Specify ______________
6. What is your Race? _____________________________________
7. What is your Ethnicity? _____________________________________

8. What country were YOU born in?
   1. ( ) U.S.
   2. ( ) Outside of the U.S., Where? ______________________
      How old were you when you first came to the U.S.? ___________
      How many years have you lived in the U.S.? __________

9. What is your nationality? ____________________________

10. What country was your MOTHER born in?
    1. ( ) U.S.
    2. ( ) Outside of the U.S., Where?
       Did your mother come to the U.S.? 1 ( ) Yes 2 ( ) No
       If YES, how old was your mother when she first came to the U.S.? __________

11. What country was your FATHER born in?
    1. ( ) U.S.
    2. ( ) Outside of the U.S., Where?
       Did your father come to the U.S.? 1 ( ) Yes 2 ( ) No
       If YES, how old was your father when he first came to the U.S.? __________

12. Where were your GRANDPARENTS born?
    a) Maternal Grandmother 1 ( ) U.S. 2 ( ) other ________ 3 ( ) don’t know
    b) Maternal Grandfather 1 ( ) U.S. 2 ( ) other ________ 3 ( ) don’t know
    c) Paternal Grandmother 1 ( ) U.S. 2 ( ) other ________ 3 ( ) don’t know
    d) Paternal Grandfather 1 ( ) U.S. 2 ( ) other ________ 3 ( ) don’t know

13. Do you speak any language other than English?
    1. ( ) No
    2. ( ) Yes
       a) If YES, what language(s)? _________________
14. **Is English your first language?**
   1. ( ) No
   2. ( ) Yes
      a) If NO, what was your first language? ________________

15. **What language(s) do you speak at home?** ________________

16. **What is the highest level of education you have completed?**
   1. ( ) Some High School
   2. ( ) Completed High School or GED
   3. ( ) Some College
   4. ( ) Technical, Trade or Certificate Program
   5. ( ) Associates Degree
   6. ( ) Bachelors Degree
   7. ( ) Some Graduate School
   8. ( ) Graduate or Professional Degree
APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

I: Hello, My name is Kimberly Ho Misiaszek, and I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Miami, School of Education and Human Development. Thank you for your time, as your participation is very important to the study. Before beginning, I’d like to share a little bit about my ethnic and racial background. I was raised in Jamaica and identify as a Chinese Jamaican. My mother is half Chinese, half Black, and my father is Chinese. I came to the U.S., specifically South Florida, after I completed high school in Jamaica, at age 17. I am sharing this so you won’t have to wonder about my background but on the other hand, to let you know that I may be clarifying and following up on things you mention, even though you might assume I am supposed to know, because each of our experiences are unique.

As a researcher, I am committed to understanding and improving the psychological health of ethnic minorities and immigrant health disparities. As part of this endeavor, I am interested in learning about your experience in the U.S. as an immigrant and how you identify. To be clear, this is not a psychological evaluation of you. You are the expert in the room and there are no right or wrong answers.

Lastly, I will be audiotaping these interviews for accuracy, in order not to misrepresent you. Is that okay? Do you have any questions that I can answer before we get started?

NATIVITY AND IMMIGRATION Can you tell me a bit about yourself?

1. Where were you born? If the US, Where
   If Jamaica, Where
2. How many years did you live in Jamaica
3. What age did you come to the United States
   a. Did you ever go back and forth?
   b. How many times
   c. When was the last time that you were there?
4. What brought you to the United States?
5. Do you plan on retiring in the US?

EXPERIENCE

6. How would you describe your experience as an immigrant in the U.S.?
a. Probe for race
b. Probe for ethnicity
c. Probe for trauma
d. Probe for physical health
e. Probe for mental health
f. Probe for family life
g. Probe for education
h. Probe for religion
i. Probe for job/career
j. Probe for acculturation
k. Probe for any stressors
l. Probe about family
m. Probe about social support/groups/peers

IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

7. How do you self-identify, ethnically?
   • What led you to identify this way?
   • Was it the same or different in Jamaica?
   • What are some things that reinforce that for you?
   • What do you like about being [ethnicity]? How come?
   • Has there been a time you felt bothered about being [ethnicity]? Tell me about a
time when you felt this way?

8. How do you identify, racially?
   • What led you to identify this way, racially?
● Was it the same or different in Jamaica?
● What are some of the things that reinforce that for you?
● What do you like about being [race]? How come?
● Do you ever feel like there are certain things you’re supposed to do or ways your supposed to be because you are [race]?

9. **Does your self-identification vary depending on whom you are talking to and the setting you are in?**

   ● Please explain?

**IDENTITY CONTENT**

10. In your opinion, who is a Chinese Jamaican?

11. Are there particular values that characterize the Chinese Jamaican ethnicity?

   ● How about religion?
   
   ● How about practices?
   
   ● How about language?
   
   ● How about beliefs?

12. Are there differences between Chinese Jamaicans and other Jamaicans?

13. What does being Chinese Jamaican mean to you?

14. How would you describe yourself to someone you have never met?

**CLOSING**

15. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding your identity or experiences?

16. How do you feel about your future in the U.S.?

Thank you for your time and sharing of your thoughts and experiences.
APPENDIX F

Table F1

Table Displaying All Levels of Data

**Summative Statement:**

Chinese Jamaican immigrants in America fled Jamaica in response to feeling targeted by a socialist government in the 1970s, while those who were born after that era, usually migrated to America for higher education and/or better opportunities. These immigrants express feeling safer and better off in America despite different cultural perspectives and an initial struggle to get established in America. Culturally, they report being reared in diverse multigenerational households with multiple migration histories that interact to influence the degree to which Chinese traditions are passed on. They also identify key community values such as respect, education, faith, self-reliance, hard work, conservatism, and optimism which affect the degree to which they decide to utilize mental and physical health services in America for commonly reported struggles such as exposure to violence, addiction, and divorce. They see their identity as unique, multifaceted, complex, and difficult for Americans to grasp, which can result in an internal antagonism and isolation for some, as well as a feeling of being scrutinized or misunderstood by everyone. Over time, they see themselves as assimilating and identifying as American, while simultaneously trying to find ways to hold onto their customs and practices in Jamaica, particularly through maintaining ties to their Chinese Jamaican community. Identity is thus constantly being negotiated and influenced by contextual experience, making the two inextricably linked.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Themes (5)</th>
<th>Flourishing but pushed and pulled to leave for various reasons:</th>
<th>Feeling safer and better off, but missing home:</th>
<th>Key community values influence us and our views on how to deal with common struggles we faced:</th>
<th>Assimilating an American identity, but needing our community too:</th>
<th>Finding our identity unique and complex:</th>
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<td>We worked hard and flourished in Jamaica, but fled during the 1970s in response to social targeting during the socialist government of Manley. Later groups</td>
<td>It took us some time to get on our feet in America and while we feel safer and better off, we find ourselves comparing life here to Jamaica and the way we grew up.</td>
<td>Growing up Chinese Jamaican and in a Chinese Jamaican family involves diversity, multiple generations and</td>
<td>We see ourselves assimilating and identifying as American over time, as well as beginning to envision a future in America, while trying to find ways to stay</td>
<td>Our identity is unique, multifaceted, and complex and Americans find it hard to grasp and misperceive us to be something we aren’t, which leaves us with an internal antagonism at</td>
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emigrated for higher education or better opportunities.

migrations, an emphasis on hard work, respect, family, education, and self-reliance, all of which interact to influence the degree to which we decide to seek mental and physical health services in America.

connected to our Chinese Jamaican community.

times, and feeling isolated and scrutinized.

Having a good life in Jamaica, except for the violence and resentment;
We felt we had to leave and left for more opportunities;

Having Contact with the U.S. and Other Countries Prior to Moving

Having help in Jamaica;
Having guns;
Having a good life in Jamaica;

Having to change careers in America;
Going back to school after

Being in interracial relationships and experiencing

Seeing their mindset and thinking change having lived in

Finding it unique to be Chinese Jamaican;
Seeing the
Having different physical features than other Jamaicans; Growing up in Jamaica; Growing up under British system and adopting some customs and behaviors; Thinking the Jamaican education is amazing;

Finding Jamaica as having weakened family life and as violent; Seeing Jamaicans as classist; Being resented for coming from poverty and working their way up in Jamaica; Being social with friends; Being targeted in Jamaica for not being Black; Being called Mr. or Ms. Chin in Jamaica; Cautious and moving to the U.S. as an adult; Having to acclimatize quickly; Taking awhile to get on your feet; Realizing you can get caught up working in America; Finding America lonely in the beginning; Managing full time work and school or two or more jobs in America; Having ups and downs in America; Living with an aunt when first moved to America; Worrying about children integrating into the U.S. school system and fitting in; Struggling with the go go pace of the U.S.; Finding moving to the U.S. Stressful; Feeling like living in the U.S. is a more ostracism; Finding that Chinese tend to fit in everywhere; Being exposed to Spanish and Hispanic culture living in Miami; Not being aware of racism or prejudice towards them in the U.S.; Chinese Jamaicans and Black Jamaicans coexisting and mixing romantically; Being ridiculed or ostracized by full Chinese Chinese Jamaicans for being mixed Chinese Jamaican; Mixing with all ethnic groups in Jamaica easily; Jamaicans loving Chinese people as well ; Not being bothered by anti-Chinese gangs or riots; Growing up in a big family with lots of America for awhile; Identifying somewhat as an American; Identifying as American; Finding good and bad things about being Americanized; Children identifying as American; Not identifying as American; Feeling closer to other International people than Americans; Considering Jamaican Chinese American as a way to identify Jamaican-Chinese who became U.S. citizens or who were born in America; Seeing themselves and their children assimilate over time to the U.S.; Considering Jamaican; Chinese American as a way to identify Jamaican-Chinese; Getting used to having an Americanized family; Having the best of two cultures in one and not really differentiating the two; Describing a Chinese Jamaican as someone born in Jamaica from Chinese descent; Identifying as Jamaican Chinese or Chinese Jamaican; Finding no
| worrying about physical safety; Not knowing stress in Jamaica; Families being shopkeepers; Chinese Jamaicans helping Jamaican children who were poor through education, food, housing and support; Doing charity/volunteer work in Jamaica; Experiencing, witnessing, and knowing people who experienced violence in Jamaica; Experiencing racism in Jamaica; Being traumatized by their childhood and life experiences in Jamaica; Feeling Chinese Jamaicans have similar experiences that other Jamaicans are not aware of; transitional life; Experiencing hostility in Europe and the U.S.; Still struggling with the way of life despite having learned it; Struggling in college; Missing lifestyle and community back home; Not knowing the way of life initially; Finding it sad that their children don’t have a close group of friends like they did growing up; Being just a number here; Sounding different to others; Managing full time work and school or two or more jobs in America; Not having references for jobs in the U.S. having been self-employed in Jamaica; Finding it extended family and people not necessarily related by blood; Growing up with both parents and grandparents; Growing up working and helping in the family business in Jamaica; Having a parent or grandparent who was born in Jamaica then sent back to China to live and then back to Jamaica; Adult parents looking out for their parents and not putting them in a nursing home; Being divorced; Being exposed to habits of Chinese culture in the home from parents or grandparents; Having a parent or grandparent who was driven out of China; Having Chinese who became U.S. citizens or who were born in America; Finding it easier to be in the Black community having grown up around Blacks your whole life Retired and wanting to retire in the U.S.; Envisioning a future in the U.S.; Visiting Jamaica less as time goes on; Not knowing all the answers to all the questions coming up yet; Unsure of where to retire; Wanting to raise kids in Jamaica; Considering moving (to another State or back to Jamaica) only depending on opportunity; Feeling as though their future is to look after the kids and difference between Chinese Jamaicans and Other Jamaicans; Having been socialized to the Jamaican culture; Having grandparents who were Chinese, Black, Jewish, or Mixed; Loving aspects of Chinese culture; Saying we are Westernized; Remembering their grandparents’ customs; Putting Black on the racial forms; Being mixed race; Being racially ambiguous; Identifying as both Black and Asian; Being Chinese but from a Black country; Finding people see us as Jamaicans, but Chinese; Seeing a difference between CJ
Finding many Chinese Jamaicans owned a business/did business in Jamaica; Finding their upbringing very well rounded and grounded; Getting married young; Being born in another country, but growing up in Jamaica from a young age; Being born in Jamaica; Deciding to move to America to try something different; Attending college in Florida; Attending up to high school in Jamaica; Coming to the U.S. for tertiary education/college; Thinking it was a fear that drove them out (from Jamaica);

difficult to raise a family and work without having extended family around; Being angry as a child and getting expelled from school; Crying and being very depressed when they first came here; Feeling at home only in Jamaica; Having a reduced standard of living when first coming here; Having to work harder and be sharper than everyone else; Being a minority in Jamaica and the U.S.; Not having family or a business to go back to Jamaica anymore; Having a variety of occupations and degrees; Working with computers or in IT; Not having a diverse cultural upbringing; Having two kids; Being close with family; Divorcing for a variety of reasons; Emphasizing education; Having family in Canada; Having grandparents that had a strong cultural identity to China; Having parents or grandparents who were driven out of China or immigrated to Jamaica for a better life; Working hard and always working; Wanting to pass their culture on to their children; Respect being important; Giving children Jamaican food; Finding it amazing how connected you are with other Chinese grandkids; Finding Caribbean organizations in the college and the Chinese Cultural Association as supportive; Meeting other Jamaicans and Caribbean students made adjustment easier; Being able to get Chinese and Jamaican food where they live; Being able to know someone is Jamaican; Finding it helpful to have people around who knew you (i.e. Jamaicans) when you moved to a strange new place; Finding ways to get her old life in Jamaica back; Thinking the community in Jamaica is something we need; Having no support system but and other Jam but not thinking there should be; Seeing Chinese Jamaicans as driven; Success at work being important for Chinese Jamaicans; Being told they don’t look Jamaican or they look different from what they say they are; Struggling with people denying they are from Jamaica; Shocking, confusing, and surprising people that they are from Jamaica; Being incorrectly categorized ethnically by people in U.S. and Europe; Being unquestionably seen as Chinese in Jamaica even though you’re not really; Being classified as
| Going back and forth to Jamaica for business or issues with adjustment; | Going back to Jamaica to visit at least once a year; Coming to America with children; Going to another country besides the U.S. during the Manley era; Being victim of physical violence; Finding the crime a huge reason not to move back to Jamaica; Having family in Jamaica still; Having friends and family leaving Jamaica as well during the Manley period; Leaving Jamaica during the Manley period; Visiting family in the U.S. (mainly Miami) prior to moving; | family or business to go back to Jamaica anymore; Not having many friends; Children knowing nothing about Jamaica and not forcing them to either; Getting made fun of for their accent and gearing their accent for their audience; Having children born in the United States; Going to college in other states besides Florida; Living in other states in the U.S. besides Florida; Living in Miami since migrating and not living anywhere else in the U.S. Appreciating the conveniences of America; Appreciative of the opportunity and privilege | Jamaican people as you look more into your family tree; Having children who were born in America but have a Jamaican accent or understand the accent; Trying to continue the Chinese traditions in the U.S.; Eating and cooking Jamaican, Chinese, and American food; Parent or grandparent owning a gambling shop in Jamaica; Raised and identify as Catholic or Christian Finding it funny when people mistake their identity and using it as a joke; Seeing self as resilient and tough; Being social with friends; Writing about their life and experience; Not letting | Black by Americans; Being called Filipino; Being mistaken for another race; Asians in America thinking we are not really Asian; Being told “You’re not from Jamaica because you’re not Black.” by Americans; Finding some people recognize the accent, while some say they don’t sound Jamaican; Facing Scrutiny from all sides (Black Jamaicans, White Americans, Asian Americans and Black Americans); Noticing that Asians were never part of the color conversation and that people assumed our views were closer to Whites; |
| Having relatives already in the U.S. | to live in the U.S.; Finding America safer; |
| Having family and friends all over the U.S. and all over the world; Going to another country besides the U.S. during the Manley era; Living in Miami since migrating and not living elsewhere in the U.S.; Having family in Florida | Feeling at home in America; Feeling happy in America; Having more freedom in America; Noticing more opportunity in America; Feeling Chinese; Jamaicans have been doing well in America; Loving America; Being better off financially in the U.S.; Eating healthier food in the U.S.; Having good health insurance and making use of it; Not wanting to go back to Jamaica to live; Feeling fortunate to go to graduate school and some ivy league schools; Feeling fortunate to have a good things bother them; Learning to fend for yourself and deal with things on your own; Trying not to get absorbed into a lot of stuff; Trusting things will work out somehow; Letting it out and going on; Having the mentality of an islander, very carefree; Feeling their faith helped them in many ways; Feeling smart; Feeling the sky is the limit; Chinese Jamaicans are very realistic; Conservative and stubborn; Valuing awareness; Valuing empathy; Valuing honesty; Chinese Jamaicans being politically mixed; Describing Chinese Jamaicans as |
| Responding to off color jokes when White make them in front of her | Constantly feeling foreign and stuck in the middle of two worlds; Having to balance being patriotic to Jamaica but also neutral if Chinese are being criticized by Black Jamaicans; Feeling unsure of how to answer what being Chinese Jamaican is; Finding it difficult to choose from the racial boxes asked on forms; Encountering an antagonism from self and others as a mixed Chinese person |
job in America; Having a close Chinese Jamaican community in Miami, FL Seeing differences between Jamaicans who grew up in Jamaica and those born in America; Finding Americans not knowledgeable about the world and aware of surroundings; Seeing American families moving to go wherever the jobs are whereas Jamaicans don’t really do that; Not agreeing with some of the values in the U.S.; Finding the U.S. very race-based; Finding the college system very different and everything much bigger; Thinking their disciplined; Describing self as shy and preferring to keep to themselves; Facing and overcoming a negative stigma and not letting it bother you; Having no complaints or regrets; Making the most out of life; Remaining optimistic and taking things day by day Having a mental health and/or physical health diagnosis; Having addiction (to drugs/alcohol) in the family; Having an unstable and abnormal childhood; Seeking mental health services not a part of our Jamaican culture; Differing views on medication; Being an advocate for psychotherapy; Seeing a
children’s racial identity would not be a big deal in Jamaica; Not really talking or thinking about your identity much growing up in Jamaica; Feeling not everything is racially-based; Noticing questions about themselves, racially, began in the U.S. counselor for mental health; Having Caribbean parents who didn’t know what mental health was and how to address it; Having a child with mental and developmental health needs; Not initially paying attention to mental health; Relying on self or internet to address their mental health; Eating more unhealthy foods in the USA and gaining weight; Feeling unhelped by therapy; Not going to the doctor; Learning coping skills and relaxation strategies for anxiety; Compartmentalizing things to cope

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REFERENCES


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