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DIMENSIONS OF INFORMAL SUPPORT NETWORK DEVELOPMENT IN AN ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN THE NEW SOUTH: A GROUNDED THEORY

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DIMENSIONS OF INFORMAL SUPPORT NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

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A GROUNDED THEORY

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University

by

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband Sam

who has given me unconditional love and support.

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Suzie S. Weng
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Abstract

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The continuum of care framework posits that individuals move from one level to the next in seeking resources for help ranging from first using informal support to finally using formal services. Yet, the literature is mostly focused on formal services. It is well-known in the literature that existing formal services are underutilized by the Asian American population. If that is also the case in nontraditional settlement cities like Richmond, Virginia, the continuum of care framework and existing literature suggest that Asian Americans are turning to their informal support networks to meet their needs. Thus far, the literature on informal support networks is very limited and a focus on Asian American communities is nonexistent. Furthermore, there is not an adequate theory to explain and predict this phenomenon.

This study uses a grounded theory design to develop a testable theory that could further the understanding of informal support networks in the Asian American community. The theory posits that the Asian culture and community influence how individuals within the community seek help in times of need and, in turn, the helping process developed within the informal support network is a reinforcement of the Asian culture and community. When individuals have needs, they look to the informal support network and the network is developed in response to those needs. However, the informal support network is not able to meet all the needs of the Asian American community. At times, though infrequent, when the informal support network cannot meet the need, individuals are referred to mainstream services. Therefore, the informal support network serves as a gatekeeper to mainstream services. In addition, needs are rarely successfully met directly by mainstream services because of inaccessibility. Consequently, mainstream services provide infrequent help in meeting the needs of the Asian American community.

It is important to comprehend how these developing communities in the new South are responding to their own needs. This understanding will allow mainstream services to extend formal systems of care and better partner with existing resources to effectively serve the increasing Asian American population in the South.

Chapter I - Introduction

Once upon a time, in a land far, far away called Middle Kingdom lived a little girl whose father passed away because of cancer. To be closer to her mother's family, the little girl, her younger brother, and mother decided to move to a land called America. America must have been really far away because when a relative was going to that land, there was always a big celebration dinner. When the little girl talked to her cousins about going to America, they told her they would not see her again until she was much, much older. In fact, the little girl already knew this because every other relative that had gone to America had not returned. This made the little girl sad because it meant she would not be able to visit her father's grave often. But, she was also told by family that her mother would have a better life in the new land. This made the little girl hopeful because she saw how sad her mother was and wanted her mother to be happy again.

At the young age of eight, the little girl with her six year old brother, mother, and uncle travelled to America. After many days with multiple stops, they finally arrived in a city called New York. What an adventure! The little girl had never seen such a big plane. She wanted to explore the plane with her little brother but they had to be good and stay in their seats. The city of New York was also an adventure because it was filled with strange things and even stranger people. The little girl, her brother, and her mother were well cared for in America because they had many relatives there. They were given places to live and food to eat. The little girl and her younger brother went to good schools. But the little girl didn't see her mother very much anymore because her mother had to work.

The little girl's mother worked many many hours every day to make her family, who had been so helpful to her, proud. Eventually, the mother didn't have to work for her family anymore and found her own employment opportunities. But she had to continue to work many many hours each and every day to earn money so she could take care of her own children and make her family proud. For many many years, the little girl and her younger brother only saw their mother when she came home late at night to make dinner and on Sunday afternoons when they went grocery shopping.

In her entire life, the mother was always very thankful for the help her family provided when she first came to this far far away land called America. She spent her life being just as generous with her resources. When there was a person in need, she was always first to help. When the bill came for meals in a restaurant, she was always the first person to grab for it. When she visited friends and family, she always arrived with lots of presents. When she gave red envelopes for New Year's or celebrations, her envelopes were always filled with the most money. When someone she knew didn't have a place to sleep, she gave up her own bed. When her employees made mistakes, she always paid for their mistakes. When insurance didn't cover something for her employees, she paid it out of her pocket. When someone she knew came to America and didn't have family, she made sure they had everything they needed, including giving them a place to stay and a job.

To this day, the little girl and her younger brother are so thankful to their mother. They respect her so much and she has greatly influenced who they have become. The little girl is going to be a social worker scholar and the little brother is a detective in the New York Police Department. For the rest of their lives, the little girl and her younger brother, who are both all grown up now, want to help people, just like their mother has.

Rationale for the Study

Aggregated data show Asian Americans outperform other racial and ethnic groups in education, income, and general well-being. This has contributed to the model minority myth that all Asian Americans are not in need of human and social services. But closer review of stratified data of its subgroups demonstrate that some groups are in desperate need of these services. Literature has reported numerous studies that have found Asian Americans to encounter linguistic, cultural, economic, systemic, structural, governmental, and informational barriers to accessing support and services (Ahmad, Driver, McNally, & Stewart, 2009; Aroian, Wu, & Tran, 2005; Choi, 2001; Choi & Severson, 2009; Kimura & Browne, 2009; Lai & Chau, 2007; Yoo, Gee, & Takeuchi, 2009).

The "model minority myth" and various barriers have contributed to the well-known fact that Asian Americans underutilize formal services. In terms of mental health, where most of the research on Asian American service utilization has been the focus, only 17 percent of Asian Americans who had a psychiatric condition sought help and less than six percent used mental health programs (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS], 2001). Infrequent use of services has been seen as an indicator of a lack of problems in the Asian American community but it is not; it simply means that they are not using these services. For example, Barreto and Segal (2005) found 38 percent of Southeast Asian Americans had major depression and 26 percent of East Asian Americans had schizophrenia among Asians in California. The model minority myth combined with the preference for informal help and cultural barriers in seeking help may be masking the extent of the need that truly exists among the Asian American

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population. Furthermore, the influx of refugees and immigrants from Asia starting in the 1970s has led to concerns about their service use (or lack thereof) to help with adjustment to the new country. To better understand this population, the acculturation process of immigrants has attracted considerable research attention.

Despite mainstream services' attempts to develop culturally appropriate strategies to meet the needs of the growing Asian American population, low utilization rates persist. Ethnic communities also responded to the needs of their community by developing ethnic-specific services, either as its own nonprofit organization or in partnership with existing mainstream and government entities. Existing literature shows that the creation of ethnic-specific services seems promising and Asian Americans prefer ethnic-specific services over mainstream services (Lau & Zane, 2000; Sue & Dhindsa, 2006), but outcomes that measure the effectiveness of these services have been mixed (see for example Takeuchi, Sue, & Yeh, 1995; Yeh, Takeuchi, & Sue, 1994). In addition, much of the interventions and programs themselves have not been evaluated. The biggest drawback for the creation of ethnic-specific services is that they are mainly located in large metropolitan cities with large clusters of the Asian American population. This makes sense because when there is a large group of people, needs are easier to identify and distinguish. Another drawback for the development of ethnic-specific services is the large amount of resources required to start such a service, no matter the location.

Compared to ethnic enclaves, geographical communities in which the majority of residents are of the same ethnicity, that exist in large urban areas where Asian Americans have traditionally settled, needs may be conceptualized, assessed, and met differently in non-enclave areas, such as areas in the South, because the systems and resources to develop the systems are not in place. In ethnic enclaves, needs may appear more pronounced due to the dense residence

of the community members. Needs may also be easier to identify through existing community

centers or known means of outreach. To determine whether or not to address certain needs,

resources such as individuals with specific skills and money or fundraising opportunities, are

likely in place or easily identified. In non-enclaves, people are more scattered and less numerous

so it may take longer to hear about an existing need. A formal way of identifying needs or to

determine the extent of needs may be much harder if neither effective outreach methods nor

central gathering locations exist (Waters & Jimenez, 2005). Even when needs are identified, the

community must go through the process of evaluating whether or not the needs are critical

enough to warrant expenditure of community resources for community action.

Migration patterns within the United States in the last few decades show Asian

Americans to be moving away from traditional settlement cities like New York and Los Angeles

and settling in various localities in the South and Midwest regions of the United States (Schmid,

2003). For these changing localities with emerging Asian American communities, it may take

several more decades for the creation of ethnic-specific services to meet Asian Americans' needs

because these services require a large population and substantial resources. What may be more

common as the Asian American community grows in the South and Midwest is the creation of

informal support networks.

Supported by literature, frameworks such as the continuum of care indicate that low

utilization rates of formal services are due to formal services being viewed as an assistance

source of last resort (Lee, Law, Eo, & Oliver, 2002; Stuck, Small, & Ainsworth, 2000). In

essence, the framework posits that when individuals need help they initially turn to their family

members, other informal supports, and then finally formal support.   Prior to migration,

individuals are likely to be near family and have a natural support system in which they were

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born into or grew up. This natural support system was likely one in which not much effort was needed to create or sustain it. When individuals move to a new environment, away from the natural support system, that system tends to disintegrate simply due to the geographical distance and thus can no longer provide the support needed on a regular basis. It would seem Asian Americans who have resettled, including in the South, must then consciously and with effort build an informal support network of individuals who can provide the support needed in times of trouble or problems (Hung, 2005). For Asian Americans, that network is likely made up of other Asian Americans with similar cultural values because no matter where they resettle, they are still Asian Americans and they are likely to hold on to their cultural lens. The cultural lens that is most distinctive in terms of social services is nondisclosure of shameful problems to save the family face and name (Yamashiro & Matsuoka, 1997). In relation to the continuum of care framework and taking migration into consideration, if Asian Americans can no longer count on their family or natural support system for support after migration, they may develop their own informal support network to meet their needs before using formal services. In this sense, all supports are usually exhausted and the problem still persists or has worsened before Asian Americans enter the formal systems of care.

According to Rivera and Erlich (1998), community members are better able to develop interventions consistent with their communities. The informal support networks created in Asian American communities are likely to be as culturally appropriate as they can be because it is constituted by people who are members of the community for members of the same community. The community network is based on the foundation of community members' own networks that have developed over time (Delgado & Rivera, 1997). The networks are likely to be even more culturally appropriate than formalized ethnic-specific services because these networks do not

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have to follow the rules and regulations of an entity registered with the state, nor operate as a nonprofit organization under the Internal Revenue Service.

In conjunction with being culturally appropriate, informal support networks in Asian American communities are distinctive due to cultural influences. Because most Asian societies are patrilineal following Confucian ideals of respecting elders and men, Asian American community informal support networks may also be patrilineal. The cultural value of interdependence of members within the family may mean that community members, who are now geographically distanced from family members and their natural support systems, may rely on members of a similar network as their former familial one as a replacement for the support system they lost due to migration. This interdependence may also mean that the support provided may be prescriptive in how one must resolve issues as would be expected in their former informal network which is in line with Asian patrilinear cultural values. As with familial support, the receivers of support may then be expected to succeed and resolve the problem so as not to go outside of the network and perhaps bring shame to the whole community, rather than just the family.

Even though mainstream social service systems are increasingly aware that they are not meeting the needs of communities of color (see for example Hulewat, 1996; Nicholson & Kay, 1999) the social work profession has paid little attention to informal support networks that are often the first source of assistance in meeting the needs of these communities. Informal support networks are not a new phenomenon in social work. Immigrant ethnic groups have historically created mutual aid societies to provide services that are not accessible through mainstream agencies (Estrada, Garcia, Macias, & Maldonado, 1988). While research on informal social support highlights the predominance of family members, the need to examine nonfamily support

is crucial for those who are migrating to areas away from their natural support system. In the new settled areas, such as the South, informal support can be an important substitute for the disintegration of the natural support system. Yet, limited research is available on informal support and informal support networks for this population.

Extensive research exists on social support from an individual perspective, including numerous instruments to measure the level and extent of an individual's social support (see for example Dunkel-Schetter & Bennett, 1990; Gilbar, 2005; Krause, 2006). Many theoreticians have argued that the theoretical definitions of social support are too restrictive and inadequate because the concept is multifaceted (e.g. Cohen, 1992). In addition, a paucity of literature exists on social support on the community level. No theory exists to explain and predict the phenomena of informal support networks in general and dimensions of informal support network development in particular, especially for Asian Americans.

Focus of Current Study

This dissertation used a grounded theory method to expand our knowledge of the development of informal support networks in the Asian American community. The research question for this study was: What are the dimensions of informal support network development in Asian American communities in the new South? Specifically, the proposed dissertation explored the Asian American informal support network in Richmond, Virginia from a community perspective. Guided by the interview guide (see Appendix A), this project initially focused on the following dimensions related to the informal support network: 1) needs in the community, 2) development of the informal support network, 3) available resources in the informal support network, and 4) helping process. At the completion of data analysis, the

theoretical model consisted of the following dimensions: 1) Asian culture & community, 2) needs, 3) helping process, 4) informal support network, and 5) mainstream services.

Community was defined for the purposes of this dissertation about Asian Americans as a group of individuals who are from or whose ancestors are from an Asian country residing in the metropolitan area of Richmond, Virginia that includes surrounding counties such as Chesterfield and Henrico. In the last decade, the Asian American population increased by 71.47 percent in the South and similarly in Virginia by an increase of 70.82 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010e). Richmond serves as the capital of Virginia with nine percent of the state's Asian American population living in the area and this population is projected to increase 89 percent by 2030 (Virginia Employment Commission, 2012). The poverty rate among the Asian American population in the Richmond area has increased from 9.8 percent in 2000 to 12.3 percent in 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010b). This may help to debunk the model minority myth to show that Asian Americans can also be affected by the downturn in the economy, an indication that Richmond is a good place to study the population. Most of the Asian Americans in the greater Richmond area live in three localities: Henrico County (50 percent), Chesterfield (26 percent), and City of Richmond (12 percent) (Clapp, 2011). Although the city's Asian American population has been on the rise and an influx is projected in the next two decades, formal ethnic-specific services for this population currently do not exist as observed by the researcher and confirmed by leaders in the Asian American community. An informal support network, however, does exist within the community but it has not been studied.

Richmond's English colonial history from the early 17th century consists of mostly individuals who attended Anglican/episcopal churches (Carson, 2004). Methodists and Baptists are also part of the city's early history. A large Jewish population settled in Richmond by the

early 19th century, forming the sixth Jewish congregation in the United States. A large population of German immigrants also settled in the city in the 1840s. Despite these varied groups, they soon blended into what is more or less known as today's dominant society and referred to as the White or Caucasian population.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, Richmond has been one of the most densely populated cities in the South comprised of Caucasian and African Americans. The city was known for a thriving African American business community with Maggie Walker as the first female bank president in the United States in 1903. Richmond's African Americans were prominent again when Douglas Wilder was selected to serve as the first African American governor in the United States. The city's population continues to be understood historically Caucasian and African American, totaling almost 94 percent as late as 2007 but this percentage is slowly declining due to the rapid increase of Latinos and Asian Americans (U. S. Census Bureau, 2007). Bonilla-Silva (2004) argued that instead of the conventional Black and White dichotomy, a more complex racial framework is emerging given the "darkening" of the United States. Settlement in new localities with a lack of recent immigration history "…means that the place of immigrants in the class, racial, and ethnic hierarchies is less crystallized, and immigrants may thus have more freedom to define their position" (Waters & Jimenez, 2005, p. 16.13). If Asian Americans in Richmond are able to settle and develop a network, others in similar areas in the South may also be developing their own networks. Therefore, a study of the Richmond Asian American informal support network may be applicable to other areas where Asian Americans have also recently settled. Additionally, a theory developed based in Richmond may contribute to its ability to generalize to other localities where the Black and White racial hold may not be as clear.

Much of the literature on the consequences of Latin and Asian Americans arrival in the South has focused on Mexican Americans. It is unclear how Asian Americans have fared in the historically Caucasian and African American environment, particularly in relation to human services. An attempt was made during the gathering of information for this project to assess the percentage of Asian Americans served by local social services agencies in the Richmond metropolitan area. While most agencies were not responsive to the informal survey, the few that did provided very helpful information. Several stated they did not record race among their clients. Many agencies responded having never or rarely served Asian Americans in the history of their agency. Additionally, preliminary findings of a local needs assessment of the Asian American community found a majority turn to their family and friends for support (Nguyen, Weng, & Coles, 2011).

Before the start of this project, the researcher conducted a prior ethnography (Spradley, 1979) of the Asian American community in Richmond for two years. This process began with the attendance of numerous community events as a way to start understanding the Asian American community and the dynamics among its subgroups. Attempts continued through networking and relationship building. The need for access developed when the researcher became involved with a needs assessment project of the same community prior to the development of this project. The needs assessment was a great reason to contact leaders of the Asian American community directly to request their involvement with the project. Leaders were identified through networking and cold calling. Once the key leaders agreed to be part of the needs assessment project, the researcher and the faculty members responsible for the project were invited to attend the monthly board meetings of an Asian community organization. Since then, the researcher was elected to be a board member of the same organization as well as an

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organization focused on the Chinese American community. Membership in the two Asian American organization boards as well as participating in various community events provided the researcher access to potential participants and gatekeepers who connected the researcher to others in the Richmond Asian American community for the purposes of this dissertation. Prolonged engagement (Rodwell, 1998) was maintained through the researcher's attendance at monthly board meetings with the two community organizations, events of the organizations, and other interactions with members of the community. The researcher's involvement in the Asian American community allowed her to become an insider but this status results in biases that the researcher must overcome to conduct this study. To minimize the influence of the researcher's biases, a rigorous design plan is put in place. To address and contain the researcher's biases, several methods of rigor were put in place that include memo writing, visual aids, member checking, peer reviewer, and a cultural interpreter (see Chapter III for details).

The goal of this study was to develop a theory that was quantitatively testable for generalizability. Because the study's research question and goal was positivistic in that knowledge is concrete with generalizability is the purpose of research, Strauss and Corbin's (1990) method for theory development was selected given its prescriptive step-by-step process in conducting grounded theory research. The Strauss and Corbin (1990) method was chosen over many other varieties of grounded theory. In general, there are three broad schools of grounded theory method. One is the Glaser variety as exemplified in his *Theoretical Sensitivity* and many publications since. The other two are the Corbin and Strauss variety and the Charmaz variety. Charmaz (2000) and others (Bryant, 2002, Clarke, 2003, Seale, 1999), were not chosen because of their attempt to pull grounded theory method away from its positivist roots to build on the more interpretive or constructivist elements of the method. For this project whose goal was

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development of a testable theory, a grounded theory method that is also positivistic is most appropriate. Grounded theory methods originally developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and later separately by Glaser (1978, 1992) and Strauss (1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) fit this description. Glaser and Strauss (1967) was not an ideal choice because it does not provide a prescriptive means of conducting grounded theory. Glaser's (1978) *Theoretical Sensitivity* is a more open-ended data-driven approach but it also lacked specificity for some researchers to follow. Additionally, Glaser (1992) requires researchers to suspend their knowledge of literature. Because of the nature of dissertation expectations, Glaser's approach was not well suited. Strauss (1987) advocates researchers to use the self and the researcher's past experiences, which is too subjective or interpretive making it not a good fit for this project. Among Strauss and Corbin's (1990, 1998, & 2008) *Basics of Qualitative Research* editions, each edition becomes less prescriptive with the third edition moving towards subjectivism. Therefore, Strauss and Corbin's (1990) first edition was selected for this study because it offered a prescriptive systematic approach with clearly outlined steps and stages to building a theory at the substantive level.

True to the nature of grounded theory, this study's design was emergent because much of the study was guided by what was uncovered during the research process as well as during the construction of the theory. Despite the emergent nature of the research design, the project was guided by a structured framework that consisted of a sampling strategy, interview guide, data analysis plan, and products that were produced at the end of the study. Asian American community leaders were the population of interest because of the role they play in construction of the informal support network in the Asian American community. Semi-structured one-on-one

interviews were conducted either in person or on the telephone based on each participant's comfort level and need.

Sampling of community leaders was purposive for maximum variation by subgroup membership, gender, and leadership within identifiable social systems. The social systems of interest were based on Müller's (1958) 14 social systems and their intent (please see discussion in Chapter II). Theoretical sampling was also part of the purposive sampling to fill in conceptual gaps identified during thematic analysis. Interview guides were used for each interview. Honoring the emergent design, the dimensions and questions of the interview were the same for each participant but probes sometimes changed within subgroup members from one interview to the next based on data collected. Data collection and analysis took place through induction and deduction as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990) to best develop theory and inform categories. Miles and Huberman (1994) provided guidance for the development of the matrices. Field notes were taken during the interview. The researcher created expanded field notes, which served as the basis for analysis, within 24 hours of the interview with full sentences and complete thoughts as well as other information shared during the interview that may not have been fully captured in the field notes. To aid emergence, the researcher completed a thematic analysis of the extended field notes to determine if probes in the interview guide needed to be changed and which leader to interview next to extend and test the emerging information. Upon the completion of data collection, data were then formally analyzed via constant comparison (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) using ATLAS.ti, a qualitative analysis software program.

This project entailed the engagement with people of different cultures. As such, care was taken to ensure cultural safety of the participants. Cultural safety means having participants feel safe about the research process they are a part of. Cultural safety reflects a bicultural orientation

with the intention of embracing differences in a bicultural manner (Wepa, 2005). Even though the researcher of this study was an Asian American with knowledge of Asian culture, there is a lack of guidance as to how research is most appropriately conducted with the Asian American community. Being mindful of cultural safety, when the researcher encountered situations in which she was unsure, she consulted with her cultural interpreter. She also consulted with her dissertation committee members, all of whom are bicultural and/or bilingual, with two members of the committee being Asian Americans and two of them currently conducting research with the same Asian American community as this study. Cultural safety also means the researcher must have knowledge about the diversity of the population being studied (Papps, 2002). The development of ethnic diversity knowledge was ongoing and the researcher of this project continued to learn about the diversity of the Asian American population through her community activities and service work. Cultural safety was emphasized for this project because of its commitment to social justice (Browne, Varcoe, Smye, Reimer-Kirkham, Lynam, & Wong, 2009).

Significance of the Study for Social Work

As the United States becomes increasingly multiethnic, mainstream services will need to be more responsive to ethnic and racial minorities. It is well known that Asian Americans are one of the fastest growing minorities in the United States (Lim & Resko, 2002). Service providers should be ready to meet the needs of this growing population. As Asian Americans live in the United States longer, more and more will leave the traditional settlement cities like New York and San Francisco and move to cities in the Midwest and South (Iglehart & Becerra, 2011). The migration of Asian Americans may have policy and service implications for both the locality that was left behind as well as the newly settled locality. Most importantly, social workers in the new localities will need to be mindful of the barriers faced by Asian Americans in

their service use and learn from the various service delivery methods developed in the traditional settlement cities.

Social work's emphasis on social justice suggests that all communities should have equal access to services and that these services are offered in a culturally appropriate and relevant manner (Hyde, 2004). The current study contributes to the development of culturally relevant strategies in meeting the needs of the Asian American community and in working with the Asian American population. This is important to note because it helps social workers recognize that response to human need in the Asian American community may take different forms than the traditional mechanisms social workers are familiar with from working in mainstream services with dominant populations.

Comprehending the role informal support serves in the Asian American community will help social workers to better work with the population when and if they finally enter the formal service system. This indicates that, in addition to formal services, a better understanding of and collaboration with informal support is necessary to effectively meet the needs of the Asian American population. While much of the literature has focused on formal services, there is a gap in the literature on informal services. This study attempts to fill part of that gap.

Investigations of informal networks are important in understanding the role they play in meeting the needs of the community. The informal network plays an important role in defining the nature of problems; identifying appropriate strategies for their resolution; and providing support of various types and purposes to the affected individual (Chatters, Taylor, Neighbors, 1989). For social workers, it is important to understand the nuances of this support so that mainstream services can examine how to partner with Asian American communities to better serve the growing ethnic and racial minority populations. A better understanding of the informal

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support network may enhance social workers' appreciation of the diversity of ethnic subgroups' experiences and improve their ability to meet their needs. A better understanding of communities' self-help methods can also allow mainstream services to appropriately extend the formal systems of care and partner with existing resources to effectively serve the increasing Asian American population in the region. The theory generated from this study at a minimum offers explanation as to the reasons, process, characteristics, and improvements for the development of an informal support network.

Chapter II - Literature Review

Introduction

Informal support networks within Asian American communities are being developed in localities like Richmond, Virginia in the South because the population is on the rise and ethnic communities have been shown to develop their own network for meeting the needs of its members (Bailey & Waldinger, 1991). When Asian Americans settled in the traditional gateway cities like New York and San Francisco, previous settlers who had come before had incrementally built a network of support that newcomers could readily access (Hernandez-Leon & Zuniga, 2002). But for localities in the South where the Asian American population has historically been low, the need or the resources to develop the support network may not have been identified. Such a network is important for many Asian Americans because Asians traditionally grow up in extended families and are born into natural support systems where they can turn for help in times of need (Stopes-Roe & Cochrane, 1990). In today's migratory climate where Asians come to the United States or Asian Americans move around within the United States, the natural support system can no longer be counted on. Therefore, to meet their needs wherever they settle, they must establish or join a network of support.

Asian American's dependence on the informal support network to meet their needs is further suggested by their underutilization of formal services. Despite the development of culturally sensitive practices and ethnic-specific services for the Asian American population in recent years, Asian Americans continue to be underserved, and they continue to underutilize

social, human, and welfare services (Choi & Severson, 2009). The development of ethnic-specific services has been slow and incremental, particularly outside of a small number of metropolitan areas. The slow development is a constant reminder that multiple barriers continue to exist that prevent Asian Americans from accessing services to improve their wellbeing. Compared to all nonprofits, Asian American organizations are few, young, and diverse both ethnically and functionally (Hung, 2005). If mainstream services are underutilized and ethnic-specific services are not easily available to meet their needs, the Asian American population is likely turning to their own informal support network, about which little is known. This dissertation explores the informal support network in the Richmond, Virginia, Asian American community.

To adequately explore informal support networks, a distinction must be made between formal and informal support services potentially provided by networks. Barker, Marrow, and Mitteness (1998) suggest that informal support is provided based upon feelings of affection, sense of obligation, or loyalty toward the recipient(s) of the assistance. Others distinguish informal support as unpaid help (Chen, Siu, Lu, Cooper, & Phillips, 2009); as not professional or trained (Azar & Badr, 2010); as nonofficial sources (Phillips, Siu, Yeh, & Cheng, 2008); as relationships that are not agency based (Rivers & Stoneman, 2003); as entities that performs unpredictable, non-uniform, non-technical tasks (Coe & Neufeld, 1999); as personal in nature (Seybold, Fritz, & Macphee, 1991); or as trusted and respected (Delgado & Rivera, 1997). The definition that seems to be the best fit for this project is: *formal support* is provided by structured social service delivery systems, whereas *informal support* is provided by people caring for each other through their natural helping tendencies (Hooyman, 1983). This definition of informal support connected to an informal network of support provides a framework for the study.

The term "community" is often used when referring to a group of people, particularly in relation to geographic and/or cultural boundaries. Therefore, it is important to define community for the purposes of this project. When referring to the Asian American community in general, the community can be defined by geographic and/or cultural boundaries. When referring to community in the context of this project, it is a group of individuals who are from, or whose ancestors are from, an Asian country but who are now residing in the metropolitan area of Richmond, Virginia, including surrounding counties such as Chesterfield and Henrico.

Terms such as "theory," "framework," "approach," and "model" must be clarified because they are used loosely in the literature where scholars may have used the terms without specificity. The terms must be used in a consistent fashion in order to understand what currently exists in the literature and its gaps. Regardless of the terms used in the literature, the terms presented in this dissertation will follow according to the definitions presented here. A *framework* is a structure that connects assumptions and related concepts into some form of understanding. According to Mullaly (2007), *theories* carry out four basic functions: description, explanation, prediction, and management of events. An *approach* is based on rational prescriptions having predetermined outcomes (O'Connor & Netting, 2011, p.33). Finally, *models* are detailed frameworks and are a type of approach, but are more prescriptive and supported by empirical evidence. Models provide guidance for understanding social problems and developing responses to those problems (Hardina, 2002).

Before fully exploring the literature on informal support networks, this literature review starts with the population of interest of Asian Americans and its background that includes the heterogeneity within the population, migration patterns and its consequences, and ethnic identity that is influenced by acculturation and cultural values. Asian Americans' need for human, social,

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and welfare services are then introduced in the context of the model minority myth. A brief overview of frameworks to assist the understanding of Asian American help-seeking patterns follows. Formal services in terms of service utilization, help-seeking behavior, and culturally sensitive practices are then presented. This is followed by an exploration of the literature on social support with a specific focus on informal social support that is an essential component of informal support networks. To emphasize the focus of this study, an examination of informal support networks and what makes up the networks in terms the nature of social support and of individuals "giving back" is provided. As part of the informal support network, the literature review also attends to ethnic-specific services and faith-based services including those provided by congregations, both of which may be informal and may eventually formalize as the community develops. With each section throughout Chapter II, existing theories, models, approaches, and frameworks found in the literature with which to ground this study of informal support network development in the Asian American community are evaluated. Finally, this review concludes with a discussion of the research question central to the project.

Asian Americans

Although the informal support network is the focus of this study, the population of concern for this project will be reviewed first. The U.S. Census Bureau (2010b) defines Asian Americans as people whose ancestors can be traced back to the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent. The U.S. Census Bureau (2010b) separates Native Pacific Islanders from Asian Americans and defines them as people whose ancestors can be traced back to Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands. The Asian American literature tends to combine the two groups and also refers to Asian Americans as Asians, Pacific Islanders, Asian Pacific Americans, and Asian Pacific Islanders (see for example Lai, 2008; Shiao, 1998; and Wang, Miller,

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Hufstader, & Bian, 2007). Because this project is focused on the Asian American population and to be consistent with the literature, the term Asian American is inclusive of Asians and Native Pacific Islanders as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau (2010b). Other terms related to Asian Americans include immigrants and refugees. To clarify the difference between the two, immigrants are individuals born in Asia, but who are now living in the United States (Lien, Conway, & Wong, 2004) regardless of immigration status. Refugees are individuals who were forced to leave their homeland to avoid persecution, war, execution, or labor camps and have been granted permission to reside and work in the United States. When referring to the immigrant population in this dissertation, it also includes refugees.

According to the U. S. Census Bureau (2010a), Asian Americans comprise about 5.5 percent of the total United States population. The top subgroups include Asian Indian (1.3 percent), Korean (0.9 percent), Filipino (0.8 percent), Chinese (0.7 percent), and Vietnamese (0.7 percent), with the remaining subgroups making up 1.1 percent. Asian Americans grew faster than any other race group between 2000 and 2010, with an increase of 43.3 percent. Between 2008 and 2050, the Asian American population is projected to increase from 15.5 million to 40.6 million, a 262 percent change (U. S. Census Bureau, 2008). According to the 2010(a) census, 61.6 percent of Asian Americans are foreign born immigrants or refugees. Among the foreign born, 4.8 percent came to the United States before 1970, 12.0 percent between 1970-1979, 20.6 percent between 1980-1989, 24.5 percent between 1990-1999, and 38.2 percent in 2000 or later.

In general, studies of Asian Americans compared to some other races are relatively limited. Historically, much of the literature is mostly based on small, nonrandom samples drawn from geographically limited areas. Few surveys of nationally representative samples contain subsamples of Asian Americans large enough to allow meaningful analyses of the group. For

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many subethnic groups, even small-scale, exploratory studies are rare. Due to the unique experiences of refugees, some studies have specifically focused on that population with Cambodians and Vietnamese seeming to be the most studied (see for example Chow, Bester, & Shinn, 2001; Nicholson & Kay, 1999; Ying & Han, 2008).

To overcome limited sample sizes, many researchers have turned to secondary data for their analysis of the population (see for example Akutsu, 2007; Conway & Wong, 2004; Kao, 2009; Ojeda & Bergstresser, 2008; Ryu, Young, & Kwak, 2002; Ta, Holck, & Gee, 2010; Yoo et al, 2009). An analysis of data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, a nationally representative study, indicates that youth from immigrant families show healthier adjustment than their peers from American-born families (Harris, 1999). The data show youth from immigrant families are less likely to be in poor health, to be obese, to have asthma, and to have missed school due to health or emotional problems. The data also show that first-generation and second-generation adolescents are less likely to use drugs and alcohol, to have had sex, and to engage in delinquent and violent acts. When comparing first and second generation adolescents, first-generation youths are healthier and less likely to engage in risky behavior. When comparing first-generation adolescents, those who came to the United States at a later age showed fewer behavioral problems and are in better physical health. When subgroup data are studied, children from Filipino immigrant families engage in more risky behavior than those of Chinese descent.

Much of the analyses from the 2002-2003 National Latino and Asian American Study and the National Epidemiological Survey of Asian Americans is related to mental health, physical health, and/or discrimination (e.g. Abe-Kim, Takeuchi, & Hong, 2007; Gee, Spencer, Chen, & Takeuchi, 2007; Ta, Holck, & Gee, 2010; Zhang & Ta, 2009). With mental health,

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Abe-Kim, Takeuchi, and Hong (2007) finds that for individuals who had a probable diagnosis, U.S.-born Asian Americans had higher rates of mental health service use than immigrants while third-generation or later had 62.6 percent rates of service use in the previous 12 months. After controlling for all other variables, Asian American immigrant elders with poor self-rated mental health were associated with significantly greater mental health service use (Kim, Jang, Chiriboga, Ma, & Schonfeld, 2010). Additionally, only mental health need factors such as having any mood disorders and poor self-rated mental health significantly affected mental health service use. Family cohesion and generational status affected the likelihood of Asian Americans seek mental health services (Ta, Holck, & Gee, 2010).

In relation to physical health, Zhang and Ta (2009) find significant differences in self-rated physical health among Asian Americans of different national origins but the differences diminish after socioeconomic status and immigration-related factors are considered. Vietnamese Americans report significantly worse physical health but not mental health than other groups. Japanese, Chinese, and Filipino Americans tend to report better physical health than other Asian ethnic groups (e.g., Cho & Hummer, 2001; Frisbie, Cho, & Hummer, 2001). Lack of personal resources (e.g. low levels of education and income) is a negative correlate of mental and physical health (e.g. Bruce, 2001; Johnson & Wolinsky, 1999). For immigrant populations, the level of acculturation has been closely connected with mental and physical health functioning (Lee, Sobal, & Frongillo, 2000; Myers & Rodriguez, 2003).

The 2002-2003 National Latino and Asian American Study data suggest individuals who report everyday discrimination experience many chronic conditions (Gee, Spencer, Chen, & Takeuchi, 2007). Discrimination is associated with indicators of health disease, pain, and respiratory illnesses. The study showed that among Asian Americans, Filipinos, followed by

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Chinese, and then Vietnamese report the highest levels of discrimination compared to other Asian subgroups (Gee et al., 2007). Among Asian Americans, racial discrimination was associated with increased body mass index and obesity (Gee, Ro, Gavin, & Takeuchi, 2008).

Heterogeneity

Part of the complexity of examining the Asian American population is due to its intragroup diversity. The Asian American population is extremely heterogeneous and is made up of 43 different ethnic groups who use 100 different languages (USDHHS, 2001). Despite the differences, ethnically diverse groups work together toward a mutually beneficial goal (Hoffman, Espinosa Parker, Sanchez, & Wallach, 2009). Because each Asian subgroup is such a small percentage of the overall United States population, the panethnicity identification of Asian American is a larger-scale affiliation that combines groups previously unrelated to assume a common identity, moving beyond subgroup identification to enable broader societal and political participation so they have a louder voice (Kilty, 2002). In addition, this panethnicity encompasses a wide range of religious beliefs, social classes, legal statuses, ethnic identifications, and migration histories.

Recognizing the level of group heterogeneity, many empirical studies are starting to stratify Asian Americans into smaller segments by national origin to facilitate between-group comparisons. Xie and Goyette (2004) indicate that refugees from Southeast Asia have lower levels of education, higher rates of unemployment, and lower household incomes. In relation to uninsured and insurance types, Kao (2010) suggest ethnic differences among Vietnamese, Chinese, and Korean Americans to be partially explained by socioeconomic and immigration-related characteristics. Lai (2008) asserts that, when arrest data are disaggregated by subgroup, Pacific Islanders and Southeast Asians have among the highest arrest rates compared to other

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racial groups in San Francisco and Oakland, California. Differences within subgroups have also been identified. Tewary (2005) details the diversity within the Asian Indian community with more than 25 languages, 200 different dialects, and at least seven religions.

Migration

The nature of the heterogeneity of the Asian American population evolved over time in the United States history. Some groups like the Chinese and Japanese began arriving in the United States in the mid-19th century while others only began arriving in large numbers in the past five decades. Reasons for emigration from homelands include pursuing employment or education opportunities, joining family members, searching for a better life, and fleeing persecution (Choi, 2001; Drachman, 1995). Once settled, many focused on building a better life by increasing their assets, which positively associates with children's educational outcomes (Williams Shanks, Kim, Loke, & Destin, 2010). Modern American society views mobility as a normal part of living, and coupled with the ready availability of different types of transportation, immigrants are able to relocate easily if necessary or desired.

The potential stressors for immigrants have been well documented (see for example Behnia 2004; Fung & Wong, 2007; Um, 1998). Newcomers to the United States have been found to experience stressors from the cultural transition process such as language, adaptation, social support, and finance challenges as well as other conflicts between their cultural heritage and new culture (Min, Moon, & Lubben, 2005). Recent studies suggest that as a group, immigrants have significant handicaps that impede their ability to adjust to living in America as well as experiencing increasing economic, social, and psychological stress and family problems (Capps, Ku, & Fix, 2002). Empirical studies also note the extensive trauma experienced by refugees (Carlson & Rosser-Hogan, 1993). A large body of literature exists that shows a positive

association between stress, physical conditions, and psychological symptoms (see for example Brown, 1986; Flannery, 1986; Goldberg & Comstock, 1980; Patel, 1992).

Geographical distance may result in the disintegration of established family and social support functions. Numerous studies have found refugees suffer from lack of adequate support systems in the country of resettlement (Behnia, 2004). Research also indicates that the presence of supportive resources such as family, friends, ethnic community, and formal services can help refugees with resettlement-related difficulties (Behnia, 2002). While formal services are used by many refugees, they often cease within a short period of the refugees' arrival in the United States (Patrick, 2004). For example, support for basic needs is provided usually for 30 days and general case management and tracking of refugee resettlement progress are provided for 90-180 days. Finally, Beiser, Turner, and Ganesan (1989) reported that emotional and social support derived from persons of the same ethnicity moderated depressive symptoms among Southeast Asian refugees by enhancing a sense of identity and belongingness.

A number of studies have analyzed predictors of refugee economic adaptation, and have found that factors include English proficiency, household composition, length of time in the United States, type of sponsorship, education, gender, age, history of trauma, and health and mental health status (Tran, 1991; Uba & Chung, 1991; Westermeyer, Callies, & Neider, 1990). A study of immigrants to Canada found that the basic settlement needs of newcomers are: general orientation to Canadian life, establishing community connections, housing, employment, language training and information on available services (Tsang & George, 1998), all of which may require a combination of formal and informal resources to resolve.

Several frameworks based on stages of immigrant adjustment are found in the literature. Cox (1985) proposed a framework based on the migration process that consists of four stages:

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pre-movement, transition, resettlement, and integration. Kuhlman's (1991) framework of refugee economic adaptation consists of six categories: 1) characteristics of refugees; 2) flight-related factors; 3) host-related factors; 4) policies; 5) residence factors in the host country; and 6) noneconomic aspects of adaptation. Finally, three migration integration frameworks by Cox (1985), Drachman (1992), and Kuhlman (1991) describe critical variables that affect newcomer adjustment at each of the above stages. These frameworks are helpful for this project to understand immigrant integration. The frameworks do not, however, provide information on how communities respond to those newcomer adaption needs. They also have not been tested empirically and they do not address informal support network development to help with the adjustment of immigrants.

A number of approaches have also been advanced in working with immigrants. Hicks, Lalonde, and Peppler (1993) proposed using an ecological approach to understand the complex interplay of individuals and their environment in their experiences in the new country. Similarly, Morales (1981) advanced using the ecological approach for working with immigrants from third-world countries. Hirayma, Hirayama, and Cetingok (1993) explored a stress reduction approach for working with Southeast Asian immigrants. Other scholars have promoted use of the empowerment approach (e.g. Gutierrez, 1992). The solution-focused approach has been found to be effective in shifting the discourse from one that is problem-saturated to one that emphasizes solutions (DeJong & Berg, 2002). Solution-focused practice offers a number of techniques that emphasize mutual support and empathy, as well as the strengths and resilience that Schwartz (1961) identified as central to the mutual aid process. The approach is intervention focused during times of crisis.

All of the approaches on working with immigrants and refugees reviewed in this section have some empirical evidence. However, they largely focus on practitioners working with individuals rather than from the community perspective that is the focus of this project. Moreover, none of the approaches in this section address community self-help or assistance provided by nonprofessionals, as seems to be the case in the Richmond Asian American community.

Move to the South

Regardless of immigration status, more and more Latino and Asian Americans are migrating to the South and Midwest rather than settling or remaining in traditional settlement cities like New York and San Francisco (Corona, Gonzalez, Cohen, Edwards, & Edmonds, 2009; Iglehart & Becerra, 2011). Because of the shift in settlement patterns, research on immigrants needs to look at the transformation of the South and Midwest (Waters & Jimenez, 2005).

Between 1990 and 2000, the South grew by 14.8 million people, a 17.3 percent increase (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). It grew another 14.3 million by 2010, the largest population growth by region in the country (U. S. Census Bureau, 2010a). The Asian American population in the South increased 75.69 percent between 1990 and 2000 and another 71.47 percent between 2000 and 2010. Table 1 list Southern states and their Asian American population percentage increases between 2000 and 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010b). Some localities saw their foreign-born populations grow exponentially; Whitefield County, Georgia, for example, grew 652.7 percent from 1990 to 2000 (Waters & Jimenez, 2005).

Table 1

Asian American Percentage Increase in the South

State	Percentage Increases
Arkansas	108.00%
North Carolina	89.61%
Georgia	85.52%
Alabama	80.73%
Delaware	78.05%
Florida	75.44%
Texas	75.39%
Kentucky	72.91%
South Carolina	71.48%
Virginia	**70.82**%
Tennessee	67.46%
Maryland	52.66%
Oklahoma	48.49%
Mississippi	44.58%
District of Columbia	40.61%
West Virginia	36.04%
Louisiana	31.66%

Note. Compiled from U.S. Census Bureau, 2010b.

Research on the new settlement patterns is mostly focused on the changes and explaining the reasons behind the changes with a primary focus on Mexican immigrants (e.g. Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2002; Hernandez-Leon & Zuniga, 2000). Reasons for the change in settlement patterns include: 1) the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act that legalized 2.3 million formerly undocumented Mexican immigrants and freed them from fear of apprehension to travel beyond states nearest to the United States-Mexico border; 2) militarization of population crossing areas for Mexican immigrants that drove them to cross at more remote points in the border; 3) growing anti-immigrant sentiment in California in the 1990s, the most popular destination for Mexican immigrants; and 4) the unusually deep recession in California and better

economic opportunities elsewhere (Massey et al., 2002). Hernandez-Leon and Zuniga (2000) finds growth of the immigrant population in the South is also due to secondary migrations to join families who first migrated to the new localities after amnesty under the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act. Additionally, according to Schmid (2003), nearly four of every 10 jobs gained in the United States between 1978 and 2000 were in the South.

In the few studies on Asian Americans, the settlement patterns of refugees are due to federal policies (Rumbaut, 1995; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Zhou and Bankston (1998) finds Vietnamese refugees were placed in cities with virtually no recent significant immigration. According to Rumbaut (1995), while some Asian refugee groups made secondary migrations to larger metropolitan areas in California, others have remained in the original placement areas like Hmongs in Minnesota and Wisconsin and Vietnamese in Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

Other literature on immigrants in new settlements concentrates on the influences of the new immigrants on the communities that are largely unaccustomed to an immigrant presence as well as the dynamics of change in the new areas (e.g. Cravey, 1997; Hackenberg & Kukulka, 1995; Millard & Chapa, 2004). Stull and colleagues (Stull, Broadway, & Erickson, 1992) report the transient nature of immigrant population results in few interactions with the mainstream and the challenges of the school system. Cravey (1997) observes tensions between the rising Latino immigrant population and the established community in North Carolina, including competition for low-income housing. Hackenberg and Kukulka (1995) note the strains new immigrant populations placed on primary health care in Kansas. According to Millard and Chapa (2004), Latinos experience discrimination in nearly all aspects of life, but the authors also describe the communities' efforts to improve relations between the Caucasians and Latino immigrants. The

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authors also report the growing second-generation being caught between their parents' immigrant experience and the Anglo experience of their peers.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2010c), Asian Americans make up 5.57 percent (451,850) of the population in the Commonwealth of Virginia (8,001,024).   Among the Asian American population, 71 percent live in Northern Virginia, 13 percent in the Virginia Beach area, 9 percent in the Richmond area, and 7 percent in other parts of Virginia (Clapp, 2011). This project takes place in the Richmond metropolitan statistical area (MSA), as established by the United States Office of Management and Budget. The top localities where Asian Americans live in the Richmond MSA include Henrico County (50 percent), Chesterfield (26 percent), and City of Richmond (12 percent). The majority of Asian Americans settling in suburbs such as Chesterfield and Henrico County, rather than urban areas, is consistent with literature (Waters & Jimenez, 2005). In the Richmond area, Asian Americans are projected to increase by 89 percent by 2030 (Virginia Employment Commission, 2012).

<div align="center">**Ethnic Identity**</div>

According to Fuligni, Kiang, Witkow, and Baldemomar (2008), "ethnicity is a meaningful and salient social category within the United States, differentiating people across an array of social, economic, and behavioral indicators" (p. 944). Identities are linked to social meanings related to stereotypical characteristics, norms, and behaviors of social groups and identification with a social group means a greater internalization of the values of that group (Hogg, 2003). While there is no consensus on the definition of ethnic identity (Sue, Mak, & Sue, 1998), Phinney and Alipuria's (1987) definition seems fitting for the purposes of this study: "An individual's sense of self as a member of an ethnic group and the attitudes and behaviors associated with that sense" (p. 36). This sense of membership and commonality with others is

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based on origins, values, beliefs, and customs of a particular group of people (Sotomayor, 1977). While the construct of ethnic identity has been debated in the literature, there is a general consensus that research on this topic includes self-identification, group membership, attitudes toward one's ethnic group, ethnic involvement, and cultural values and beliefs (Phinney, 1990). Therefore, these areas of research are explored in this section.

To operationalize the construct of ethnic identity, many scholars use the Eriksonian (1968) approach that ethnic identity involves elements of exploration with the goal of achieving a fully developed sense of self as well as the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) that views group identity as values embedded within a group. Taken together, a common measure of ethnic identity is Phinney's (1992) two dimensional factor that focuses on ethnic exploration and ethnic affirmation or belonging. Ethnic exploration refers to one's search into what it means to be a member of an ethnic group while ethnic affirmation or belonging reflects one's attachment to an ethnic group (Kiang & Fuligni, 2009). Studies have observed that higher levels of exploration and belonging are associated with better psychological well-being, self-esteem, and academic achievement (e.g., Fuligni, Witkow, & Garcia, 2005; Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003). Compared to adolescents from European backgrounds, Latin American and Asian American adolescents have reported higher exploration of their ethnic belonging (Phinney, 1990).

Ethnic identification is a part of immigrants' and their children's adaptation process that involves discovering the ethnic options available to them and the importance of their ethnicity as part of their overall sense of self (Fuligni et al., 2005). How ethnic minorities and immigrants categorize themselves is a reflection of their ethnic identity (Fuligni et al., 2008). In the self-identification literature, there is general agreement that the development of an ethnic identity is a process that is multi-faceted, evolving, diverse and dynamic, and nonlinear (Phinney, 1990; Yeh

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& Huang, 1996). Atkinson, Morten, and Sue (1983) proposed five stages of minority identity development: 1) conformity in which individuals prefer values of the dominant culture over native culture; 2) dissonance where individuals experience confusion and conflict regarding the native and dominant cultural systems; 3) resistance and immersion in which individuals reject the dominant culture and accept their native culture; 4) introspection where individuals question the values of both dominant and native cultures; and 5) synergistic articulation and awareness in which conflicts are resolved and the individual develop an identity that encompasses elements from both dominant and native cultures. Atkinson and colleague's (1983) five stages have been criticized to be too linear with no information related to how individuals move from one stage to the next (Jones, 1990). Other ethnic development stages also exist that include Phinney and Alipuria's (1987), in which development of an ethnic identity is a process in which individuals go from not having previously examined the idea to commitment based on parental values to a period of exploration, and finally arriving at an ethnic identity. Specifically related to Asian Americans, Hayano (1981) found that ethnic identity may change because of political movements, social contexts, family dynamics, and place of residency. Yeh and Huang's (1996) ideas of ethnic identity formation support the literature on Asian culture as an influence in which collectivism and external factors have significant influences. Longitudinal studies suggest ethnic exploration may peak at the beginning of high school and then level out or decrease in later years (Pahl & Way, 2006; French, Seidman, Allen, & Aber, 2006).

Much of the literature on influences of ethnic identity that include language (e.g. Hurtado & Gurin, 1995), peers (e.g. Kao & Joyner, 2004), context (e.g. Lawson & Sachdev, 2000), and discrimination (e.g. Sellers & Shelton, 2003). Studies have shown that first generation individuals who are born outside of the United States prefer national origin labels while second-

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generation individuals choose pan-ethnic, American, and hyphenated-American labels (e.g. Doan & Stephan, 2006; Fuligni, Witkow, & Garcia, 2005). Whether one has a stronger sense of American or ethnic identity, empirical evidence suggests both are equally important (Yip & Cross, 2004). Ethnographic studies report Black immigrants from the West Indies and immigrants from Mexico retain their national origin labels to avoid negative stereotypes associated with pan-ethnic labels such as Black, Hispanic, or Latino (Matute-Bianchi, 1991; Waters, 1999). Studies on diverse ethnic samples have shown that ethnic identity is linked to positive outcomes such as mental health, adjustment, and self-esteem (e.g. Gray-Little & Hafdahl, 2000; Umana-Taylor, Diversi, & Fine, 2002). Studies also suggest ethnic identity may shield against negative or stressful experiences (Cross, Parham, & Helms, 1998; Mossakowski, 2003). At the same time, scholars have questioned the relationship between ethnic identity and well-being (e.g., Cross & Fhagen-Smith, 2001; Yip & Cross, 2004) due to multiple identity patterns individuals may have. Finally, scholars have suggested ethnic identification is employed by immigrant parents to keep their children from adopting undesirable "American" behaviors and attitudes that include selfishness, materialism, and laziness (Gibson & Bhachu, 1991; Sung, 1987).

Group Membership & Attitudes Toward One's Ethnic Group

Ethnic group membership research focuses on self-concept, self-hatred, and solutions minority members use to improve their social status that include passing as a dominant group member or establishing a bicultural identity (Yeh & Huang, 1996). Scholars argue that ethnic identity is a dynamic and interactive aspect of self-concept (e.g., Helms, 1995; Phinney, 1996; Rotheram & Phinney, 1986). Other scholars argue that ethnic identity is multidimensional and

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taking a multidimensional approach provides a more complete picture (Ashmore, Deaux, &
McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Caldwell, Zimmerman, Bernat, Sellers, & Notaro, 2002).
According to Marcus and Kunda (1986), measurements of one's identity or self are related to
statements of self that are numerous and can be dynamic, multidimensional, and multifaceted.
Triandis (1989) added that the concept of self is made up of three dimensions that vary in
importance based on one's cultural background and include: 1) private – what one thinks of
himself or herself; 2) public – what others think of the individual; and 3) collective – what
specific groups think of the individual. Yeh and Huang (1996) argue that individuals incorporate
all three dimensions of selves in ethnic identification, but because of the collectivistic nature of
Asian cultures, Asian Americans incorporate the public and collective selves more than the
private self. This argument was supported by literature in comparison studies of Asians, North
Americans, and Europeans (Triandis, 1989).

Scholars have argued ethnic identification is motivated by internal anger and resentment
against the dominant culture. However, Yeh and Huang (1996) found shame to strongly
influence Asian American's ethnic identity development in which they conform to the dominant
culture as a way to avoid being different. For Asian Americans who are bicultural, they have
integrated their ethnic identity in which their sense of self is inclusive of their native and host
cultural settings (Zuniga, 1988).

Other literature on ethnic identity among ethnic minorities and immigrants is related to
how youth explore or value their ethnic membership (Fuligni et al., 2008; Phinney, 1990).
Research is focused on ethnic labeling of adolescents that differentiates them from their peer
groups (Waters, 1999; Matute-Bianchi 1991) and how ethnic labeling has important implications
for children's adjustment in terms of academic success (Matute-Bianchi, 1991). More recent

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literature focuses on how youth label themselves and suggests ethnic labeling may be part of their acculturation process (e.g. Phinney, 2003; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). While cross-sectional studies are most common, longitudinal studies on adolescents' ethnic identity are emerging. A longitudinal study of how Chinese and Mexican youth change in ethnic labeling, Chinese youth were more likely to move toward a pan-ethnic label between middle school and end of high school while Mexicans move toward the national origin label (Portes & Rumbaut).

Acculturation

One of the theories of ethnic identity formation is acculturation. Scholars have turned to the concept of acculturation in an effort to make sense of how moving from one society to another affects immigrants (e.g. Garcia Coll & Magnusson, 1997; Parke & Buriel, 1998; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993). The acculturation process is often defined in the literature as the psychological and behavioral changes that come from adopting cultural elements of the host culture while maintaining much of the culture of origin (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). A frequently cited conceptualization of acculturation developed by Berry and his colleagues (Berry et al., 1989) proposed that conflicts occur when two cultures come into contact. Individuals adjust differently to lessen the conflict by selecting one of four adaptation modes: 1) acculturation into one's own ethnic culture (separation); 2) acculturation into the dominant culture (assimilation); 3) acculturation to both of the cultures (integration, also known as biculturalism); or 4) acculturation to none of them (marginalization). Early acculturation theorists (Berry & Annis, 1974; Szapocznik, Scopetta, Kurtines, & Arnalde, 1978) conceptualize the adaption process mainly as assimilation of individuals moving along a single continuum from one end of a continuum in the culture of origin to the other end of the same continuum in the host culture. The uni-linear continuum has been critiqued because it focused only on assimilation of

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immigrants adopting the host culture while simultaneously discarding their culture of origin (Mendoza, 1989; Ramirez, 1984). Szapocznik and his colleagues (Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1980; Szapocznik, Kurtines, & Fernandez, 1980) are credited with the development of the first bilinear measurement of integration in which immigrants adapt to the host culture while also holding on to their culture of origin. Extending the approach to measure acculturation, recent movement has been toward a multi-linear measurement that includes measuring acculturation along various domains of social functioning (Kim & Abreu, 2001). The multi-linear measure also extends the bilinear measure to include acculturation measurements to reflect different cultures.

The majority of studies on immigrant acculturation in general have shown that immigrants adapt to their new environment but also retain their traditional cultural traits, beliefs, and values (Han, Kang, Kim, Ryu, & Kim, 2007). Much of the literature has focused on the various factors associated with the acculturation process and include acculturation attitudes (Berry, et al., 1989), social support (Bhugra, 2003), length of residence in the host country (Oh, Koeske & Sales, 2002), level of education (Berry, 2003), and fluency in the English language (Yeh, 2003). According to Yeh (2003) English fluency is a main factor that facilitated the assimilation of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean immigrant youth into the American culture.

Acculturation is also important in understanding Asian American service use, family dynamics, and social support. These factors relate to how they address their needs and where they seek help. Acculturation has been found to influence service use among different groups. Abe-Kim, Takeuchi, and Hong (2007), for example, reports that U.S.-born Asian Americans who are more assimilated into the dominant culture demonstrate higher rates of formal service use than did their immigrant counterparts. Bhattacharya (1998) notes that greater family and cultural conflicts occur when parents are less assimilated than their children. Intergenerational conflicts

due to different acculturation levels between parents and children may cause distress in the familial network, leaving members to seek support outside of the family.

The kind of social support available to immigrants may also have an impact on the extent to which they adapt to a new culture while trying to maintain their own cultural identity. The presence of supportive family members, relatives and friends, as well as one's church and one's personal sense of connectedness are shown to provide emotional support for immigrants in coping with external challenges in their acculturation process (Wierzbicki, 2004; Wong & Mock, 1997). Immigrants' risk for social support deficits have also been examined (e.g. Simich, Beiser, & Mawani, 2003). Choi and Thomas (2009) found Korean, Indian, and Filipino immigrants who have a higher acculturation attitude have lower social support.

Cultural Values

According to Phinney (1992), ethnic identity involves exploring and committing to the cultural values and orientation of the ethnic group. Members of ethnic groups often share cultural values, traditions, heritage, and group affiliation (Kwan & Sodowsky, 1997). Culture holds a crucial place in the goals of developing ideal individuals through a system of values, beliefs, and ideas and the socialization practices necessary to achieve the ideal (Harkness & Super, 1996). According to Sue et al. (1998), internalization of cultural values is a natural result of identity formation. These cultural values are important because the immigrant and minority status of many Asian Americans creates the need for family members to support one another (Fuligni, 1998). Fuligni, Tseng, and Lam (1999) finds Asian American adolescents quickly internalize cultural traditions of support and respect.

Despite its heterogeneity, the Asian American population shares a number of important cultural characteristics such as collectivism, familialism, patriarchy, and filial piety. The

influence of Confucianism on Asians is seen through their more family orientated practices in which individual goals, interests, and welfare are secondary to that of the families' (Yang, 1995). Yip (2005) noted that Asian cultures place an emphasis on collectivism, which creates interdependence in social relationships, as opposed to Western individualist ideals that emphasize independence. This social weaving of relationships is especially exemplified in filial piety, which is related to traditional patterns of social relations that emphasize male authority and respect for the elderly (Weng & Nguyen, 2011). Due to the emphasis on "saving face," defined as one's prestige in the social field, Asians go to great lengths to avoid negative stigmatizing labels (Kleinman & Kleinman, 1993).

The conceptual literature has identified certain Asian cultural traits such as "saving face" as associated with that which is perceived to be socially stigmatizing including mental illness (Hsu, 1985), substance abuse (Ja & Aoki, 1993), HIV (Wong, Campsmith, Nakamura, Crepaz, & Begley, 2004), and domestic violence (Yick, 2007). Stigma and shame have been suggested as potential impediments to help-seeking among minority groups (e.g. Anglin, Link, & Phelan 2006). Research on the complexity of culture in Asian American populations is inadequate because the emotional aspect of shame and the social nature of stigma seems to be absent in the literature.

Use of cultural factors to explain Asian American immigrants' lack of mental health services utilization is common among researchers (Tsang, 2004). Okazaki (2000) finds the level of stigma that family members endorsed was significantly associated with greater treatment delay for patients. In medical research, a patient's cultural background has consistently been found to affect his or her illness experience (e.g. Lewis-Fernandez, 1996). Asian Americans have very different beliefs about medical care than what is provided in United States mainstream

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medical facilities (Congress & Lyons, 1992). Researchers, Atkinson and Gim (1989) for example, have demonstrated differences in problem perceptions, treatment methods, and outcomes among various Asian American subgroups and between recent immigrants and more acculturated Asian Americans.

While culture may be a major factor in help-seeking, existing literature on the cultural beliefs of Asian Americans is largely conceptual, based on general assumptions of the differences between eastern and western cultures (e.g. Weng & Nguyen, 2011; Yip, 2005) and rarely supported empirically. An exception may be related to the attribution of spiritual causes of mental illness among Chinese, Filipinos, Japanese, Koreans, and South Asians (e.g. Florsheim, 1990; Kim, 1999) and Asian Americans' somatization as a method of expressing psychological distress (Zhang, Snowden, & Sue, 1998). Despite the comparisons between eastern and western beliefs, limited information is available comparing western therapies with non-western therapies of healers, gurus, shamans, and other experts. There is little research focused on the variability of beliefs between and within the myriad of Asian American cultural groups. A surprising exception is the amount of literature found related to Cambodian culture and their psychotherapy beliefs (e.g. Nicholson & Key, 1999).

Despite the fact that cultural beliefs and values are largely based on untested general descriptions, the literature is filled with suggestions on how to address potential cultural barriers in working with the Asian American population. For example, Strober (1994) suggests involving family members in treatment to lessen cultural dissonance. The therapeutic literature cautions against the expectation that Asian American clients will be very emotionally expressive or insightful (e.g. Huang, 1991). The conceptual literature suggests that Asian American clients attribute more credibility to healers who are authority figures (e.g. Chin, 1993). Much of these

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suggestions are inferences from Asian research investigating healing and the healer's role in Asian society (see for example Basham, 1976; Doi, 1969; Hsu, 1976).

Giving Back

Giving back is a voluntary activity performed by community members for the benefit of community and society. Communities that provide opportunities for interethnic groups to work towards the same goals have reported ethnocentrism (Hoffman & Wallach, 2006). Literature on Asian American communities or Asian Americans related to giving back is lacking. In samples of high school and college students, motivation to participate in community service was connected to identity development (Rhoads, 1997; Youniss & Yates, 1997). Individuals report community service activities to be rewarding and having a sense of fulfillment (McAdams, Diamond, Aubin, & Mansfield, 1997). Studies have reported that individuals have a stronger sense of community and network when they contribute and help others (Hoffman, Wallach, & Morales-Knight, 2007; Smith, Keating, & Stotland, 1989).

Much of the literature on community involvement focuses on the reasons behind the involvement. Scholars have argued that people's involvement in community service and voluntary activities may be a basic innate need (McAdams et al., 1997). Similarly, Erikson (1980) suggests individuals during middle adulthood feel the need to donate their time and resources to help society as a way to make it better for future generations. Related to evolutionary theory, Hoffman and colleagues (Hoffman, Wallach, & Sanchez, 2010) propose helping others as a way to improve our own chances of survival and future generations. Researchers have observed that individuals are compelled to give back to society as a means to establish meaning in their lives (Erikson, 1980; Kleinberg, 1995) and such meaning enhances self-worth and dignity (Barnett & Hyde, 2001).

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Involvement in community service and volunteer activities are also related to intrapersonal factors (Hoffman et al., 2010). Penner and Finklestein (1998) note giving back is related to personality traits or dispositional characteristics of individuals who are responding to the needs. Research also suggests individuals give back based on: 1) empathy in identifying with the person in need; 2) belief in a just world; 3) social responsibility of having an obligation to help those less fortunate; 4) belief in one's ability to control the course of events; and 5) low selfish characteristics (Bierhoff, Klein, & Kramp, 1991). Scholars have explained that identification with others, such as those of the same ethnic group, who need help is inherently compelling to offer support (Batson & Oleson, 1991; Penner, Dovidio, Piliavin, & Schroeder, 2005). Norms have also been identified as a factor that promotes community service, particularly when a strong expectation exists and behaviors are observed (Gaulin & McBurney, 2001).

Model Minority Myth & Need for Service

Some of the Asian cultural traits may have contributed to Asian Americans being regarded as a model minority by the dominant United States society. The myth refers to the assumption that all Asian Americans achieve universal and unparalleled academic, occupational, socioeconomic, and general success (Museus & Chang, 2009). This in turn influences the availability of culturally appropriate services and the creation of barriers for Asian Americans seeking services. Historically, early Chinese American communities only crossed their boundaries for economic purposes, staying within the community for all other needs (Iglehart & Becerra, 2011). This isolation may have contributed to the perception that the Chinese American community was able to care for itself.

Research has shown that the assessment of economic success does not take into account Asian Americans' geographic concentration in high-income and high-cost areas or the large number of wage earners per family (Museus & Chang, 2009). Despite their very high representation as professionals, Asian Americans are significantly underrepresented in positions of authority, leadership, and decision-making in the private sector, government agencies, and institutions of higher education (Varma, 2002).

Despite general successes of the Asian American population as a whole, numerous studies exist to show that some subgroups are in desperate need of social services. Both clinical and community sample studies have uniformly reported high prevalence rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety among Southeast Asian American refugees. Among Asian Americans, Caucasians, African Americans, Latino Americans, and Native Americans in California, Barreto and Segal (2005) found 38 percent of Southeast Asian Americans had major depression and 26 percent of East Asian Americans had schizophrenia. In addition, according to the Asian Pacific American Legal Center (2005), 53 percent of Hmong, 40 percent of Cambodian, 32 percent of Laotian, and nearly one fifth of Samoans, Pakistanis, Vietnamese, Tongans, and Thai Americans in California lived below the poverty line. Tanjasiri, Wallace, and Shibata (1995) found 13 percent of Asian American elders, compared to one percent of Caucasian elders to have had no formal education. Ayyub (2000) found one out of four South Asian immigrant women to report domestic abuse. And finally, elderly Chinese-American women are ten times more likely to commit suicide than elderly Caucasian women (Browne & Broderick, 1994). Based on this available data, it appears that Asian Americans do not underutilize formal health and human services due to a lack of need but that perhaps their needs to some degree are being met informally.

Helping Pattern Frameworks

Now that Asian Americans' need for services is established, an exploration of helping patterns is necessary. Helping patterns refer to the way one proceeds to ask for assistance or the way in which help is provided in times of need. The framework to explain how one seeks help, the substitution framework (Scott & Roberto, 1985) posits that, when individuals need help, they initially turn to their family members, other informal supports, and then, finally, formal support. This is also a linear way in which individuals turn to the next more restricted or less intimate level when one level is either unavailable or unable to help. The distinction with the substitution framework is that individuals expect their family intimates to be available in times of need and use formal services only as a last resort.

Though constructed differently, similarities exist with the hierarchical compensatory framework (Cantor, 1979) which posits that individuals move from one level to the next when help is not available, also utilizing formal support as a last resort. The hierarchical compensatory framework contends that the person called on for assistance is based on a hierarchy of preference. The framework is comprised of a series of concentric rings, with the individual at the center representing independence and self-sufficiency, followed by people of different degrees of affiliation with the individual, including kin, friends, community associations, and formal care systems. As individuals move to the outer rings, they become less self-sufficient in meeting their own needs and more dependent on formalized types of care.

Similar to the substitution framework (Scott & Roberto, 1985) and the hierarchical compensatory framework (Cantor, 1979), the continuum of care framework, which is often referred to as a model, provides guidance in how help should be provided in times of need. Governed by 1980 legislation, the child welfare continuum of care framework provides an

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outline in which most child welfare case management takes place today (Stuck et al., 2000). The underlying belief of the framework is that services should be considered for children and families in a linear, step-wise fashion from least (raised in a home, including adoption) to most restrictive (placement into group care or institution). The continuum of care framework with the same function of least to most restrictive service was also introduced for homeless service delivery in the mid-1990s. This framework is used as a guide for distinct and linear programmatic responses to address the housing and service needs of the homeless population that range from emergency shelters, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing (Wong, Park, & Nemon, 2006).

The above frameworks can assist in understanding the helping patterns of the Asian American population. In applying the frameworks, data suggest that, in their attempt to resolve problems, Asian Americans tend to first turn to their family for help, then to the rest of their informal support network (Shon & Ja, 1982; Ho, 1992; Stopes-Roe & Cochrane, 1990; Uba, 1994). If the problem is still unresolved, research has shown that Asian Americans prefer ethnic specific over mainstream services (see for example Akutsu, Snowden, & Organista, 1996; Zane, Hatanaka, Park, & Akutsu, 1994). Thus, services provided by mainstream programs and seeking outside professional help have often been viewed as last resorts (see for example Lee, Law, & Eo, 2003; Ja & Aoki, 1993).

Much of the literature on helping patterns is conceptual, but a few empirical studies support this proposition. For example, Asian Americans with emotional problems were found to turn to mental health services only as a last resort, preferring to first seek assistance from family and friends, then extending to informal social networks and community-based organizations (e.g., clergy/religious organizations, traditional healers or folk medicine, mutual

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assistance or family associations), and only subsequently seeking professional medical or health providers (Uba, 1994). These helping patterns were relatively consistent for Asian American subgroups including Chinese Americans (Ying, 1990), Japanese Americans (Narikiyo & Kameoka, 1992), Filipino Americans (Tompar-Tiu & Sustento-Seneriches, 1995), and Korean Americans (Shin, 2002), though little research was presented related to the quality and existence of these informal preferred networks for Asian Americans.

<center>**Formal Services**</center>

Formal Services Utilization

Much of the literature on Asian American service use is based on measures of formal services, despite evidence indicating preferences for informal support (Leong, 1994). While formal services may not be as relevant for the purposes of this study, it is informative and the research in this area is more rigorous than on informal support networks. It has been well documented that minorities in general and Asian Americans in particular make less use of social and mental health resources in the mainstream service delivery system for all types of problems than the majority population (Sue & Sue, 1990). Diverse investigations have shown that immigrants' knowledge and use of formal services is often low compared to their needs (Moon, Lubben, & Villa, 1998). Choi and Tirrito's (1999) study of older Korean Americans revealed that only 13 percent of the respondents had visited social service agencies or used social services despite their documented mental and social service needs and eligibility.

Like other areas of research on Asian Americans, most studies related to service use and the most rigorous studies are in mental health. A well-cited nationwide report found that compared to other racial groups, Asian Americans were least likely to seek mental health care (USDHHS, 2001). In the report, 17 percent of Asian Americans who had a psychiatric condition

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sought help and less than six percent sought a professional mental health provider. One recent literature review examining Asian American mental health service use found that Asian Americans used all types of mental health services to a significantly lesser degree when compared to Caucasians and that Asian Americans used approximately one third of what might be expected given their proportioned representation in the population (Yang & Wonpat-Borja, 2006). Of important note, research also suggests that mental health utilization rates vary among Asian American subgroups with service use almost nonexistent among Southeast Asian Americans (Young, Bukoff, Waller, & Blount, 1987) and Vietnamese Americans (Phan, 2000).

The available evidence suggests that poorer mental health outcomes among Asian Americans may result from relatively infrequent and delayed use of formal mental health services. Several studies have reported substantially longer delays between illness onset and first psychiatric treatment among Chinese ethnic groups (Lam & Kavanagh, 1996). The lower utilization rate and delay in accessing Western mental health services appears to contribute to Asian Americans exhibiting more severe types of mental disorders when treatment is finally accessed (Yeh et al., 2002). Studies have repeatedly shown that when Asian Americans were treated for mental health and substance abuse problems, their conditions were severe with the need for intensive treatment (e.g. Lin & Cheung, 1999). Studies of public mental health systems have consistently shown that Asian American youth and adults are diagnosed with greater proportions of psychotic disorders and enter treatment at lower levels of functioning than do Caucasians (Durvasula & Sue, 1996).

Studies of service use in most areas related to the Asian American population and with specific subgroups tend to be small-scale using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Studies show that Asian Americans are not using health services or are using them less than

comparable populations (see for example Hu, Snowden, Jerrell, & Nguyen, 1991; Uba, 1992). In addition, with more culturally stigmatizing issues such as substance abuse and domestic violence, service use research tends to be exploratory and qualitative (see for example Bui & Morash, 2007; Yu, 2009) .

The conceptual framework of service utilization proposed by Andersen (1995) seems to be the most used and empirically tested in the literature in relation to the Asian American population. The framework suggests that the use of services is determined by predisposing (socio-demographic characteristics), enabling (conditions that impede or facilitate service use), and need factors (conditions of users that trigger use). Yet, research has consistently found evidence to support one or two but not all three factors at the same time. The Andersen framework was first developed to explain the use of formal personal health services, but has since been conceptually refined and expanded to apply to use patterns of social services, mental health services, long term care, ambulatory care, home health services, primary care services, and dental services, as well as to understand unmet needs for services. Andersen (1995) suggests that values and beliefs are also personal characteristics that would influence one's decision on service use but this notion is not supported in the literature. Andersen's (1995) framework is helpful to understand service utilization for this project particularly because after much critique informal support was incorporated into the framework. The framework was critiqued because it was widely applied to understand use patterns of formal service utilization, which is not reflective of the literature indicating general low use of formal services by ethnic minority groups (Chappell & Lai, 1998; Miller et al, 1996). There seems to be a gap in the literature with no information found using the framework to understand use patterns of informal services. Additionally, the framework lacks guidance in identifying specifics of an informal support

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network in which service use may take place. Therefore, Andersen's (1995) framework however informative is inadequate as a theoretical base for this project.

Help-Seeking Behavior Related to Formal Services

The interest in understanding help-seeking behaviors of Asian Americans is partly related to the well-documented underutilization of services by the population. Help seeking refers to the process in which one seeks assistance. Utilization refers to the use of services in which one has sought. The low service use is partly due to the multiple barriers Asian Americans face in accessing formal services. Barriers to formal service utilization have been well documented. The multiple barriers can be grouped according to challenges related to linguistic, cultural, economic, systemic, structural, governmental, and informational barriers to accessing social services and support. Table 2 below outlines the multiple barriers to formal services with examples from the literature.

Table 2

Barriers to Formal Service Utilization

Type of Barrier	Examples
Linguistic	Language differences (Talamantes, Lawler, & Espino, 1995) Lack of English proficiency (Lo, Wang, Wang, & Yuan, 2007) Shortage of bilingual services (Sue, 1988) Lack of efficient interpreter services (Sue, 1988)
Cultural	Conceptualization of problems and services differently than Westerners (Karasz, 2005) Association of utilization of some services with stigma (Corrigan, 2004) Shortage of bicultural services (Sue, 1988) Distrust of the system and government (Min & Moon, 2006) Personal beliefs (Casado & Leung, 2001) Cultural incompatibility between service providers and users (Casado & Leung, 2001)

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Economic	Inadequate financial resources (Damron-Rodriguez, Wallace, & Kington, 1994) Lack of transportation (Tsai & Lopez, 1997) Lack of insurance (Sohn, 2004)
Systemic	Lack of availability of culturally sensitive and appropriate forms of treatment (Akutsu, Tsuru, & Chu, 2004) Experience with unacceptable services (Choi, 1999) Institutional racism (Casado & Leung, 2001)
Structural	Inconvenient locations of the facilities (Chan, 1981) Inconvenient hours of operation (Chan, 1981) Confusing application and systems procedures (Sigel & Kappaz, 2002)
Governmental	Policies and regulations that restrict services for immigrants (Min & Moon, 2006) Lack of recognition by policymakers and service providers to the extent and specifics of needs (Choi, 2001)
Informational	Lack of awareness that some problems are treatable (Yeung, Chang, Gresham, Nierenberg, & Fava, 2004) Limited knowledge of existing services (Bui, 2004) Inadequate community outreach efforts (Chan, 1981)

Help-seeking in the literature is often defined and conceptualized as the propensity to seek professional services (Yamashiro & Matsuoka, 1997). Studies have compared the help-seeking process between Asian Americans and other racial groups. Tracey, Glidden, and Leong (1986) confirm the claim that the help-seeking process was different for Asian Americans than for Caucasians. Research on help-seeking also suggests that attitudes and behaviors differ among ethnic groups (Hu et al., 1991) and may be influenced by context or environment (Kaniasty & Norris, 2000; Nevid, Art, & Moulton, 1996).

Similar to other areas of research on Asian Americans, research related to help-seeking mainly focuses on mental health. From that perspective, several factors have been implicated in help-seeking behaviors, including: 1) intensive family involvement because of distrust of or stigma regarding psychiatric services (Shin, 1999); 2) use of other formal (e.g., medical, social

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services) and informal services before mental health services are sought (Ho & Chung, 1996); 3) high levels of stigma regarding the use of mental health care (Takeuchi, Leaf, & Kuo, 1988); 4) low awareness of mental health services (Ho & Chung, 1996); and 5) lack of culturally and linguistically responsive mental health services (Shin, 1999). Predictors of mental health care help-seeking include diagnoses for mental health problems (Barreto & Segal, 2005) and insurance coverage (Abe-Kim, Takeuchi, & Hwang, 2002). To explain Asian American delay in seeking help from formal services, research has compared the differences in mental health services of Asian countries to western countries (Deva, 2004). The existing literature attributes underutilization of formal services to cultural values regarding avoidance of shame and importance of family integrity (Lee, 2005).

Finally, in addition to the help-seeking pattern frameworks reviewed above, help-seeking behavior frameworks are also available to explain the barriers to and promoters of service utilization. Green's (1982) conceptualization of the help-seeking framework among minorities suggests that a client would recognize and label an event as a problem in the context of personal cultural values and beliefs. Green's (1982) help-seeking framework includes the utilization of professional as well as informal resources. Additionally, Abe-Kim et al. (2002) suggests using a network episode framework of help-seeking to conceptualize help-seeking among Asian Americans because of its emphasis on relationship-oriented variables. Despite the empirical support of help-seeking frameworks by Green (1982) and Abe-Kim and associates (Abe-Kim et al., 2002), their ability to serve as a theoretical framework for this project on informal support development is limited. First, exploration of the provision of informal resources to meet needs is limited. Second, the frameworks provide a structure of existing support systems but few details are available at each level of support. Third, the frameworks provide limited categories of

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support which may not be applicable or appropriate to the Asian American population. Lastly, the frameworks are focused from the individual perspective of how one goes about seeking help rather than from a community perspective of how a community attempts to garner help for its members.

Culturally Sensitive Practice

One of the recommendations among numerous scholars for overcoming the resistance by Asian Americans, as well as breaking down some of the barriers for the population to use the formal system of care is to provide culturally appropriate services (Chow & Austin, 2008; Chow et al., 2001). Vast amounts of literature exist related to practitioner cultural competence and sensitivity (Hulewat, 1996; Nicholson & Kay, 1999; Padgett, Patrick, Burns, & Schlesinger, 1995; Wong et al., 2003) despite critique by Lum (1992) that major social work theorists and texts only give minimal attention to ethnic minorities and related areas.

Research on culturally responsive human service organizations is limited, but growing. Nash and Velazquez (2003) examined the Child Welfare League of America in an attempt to define a culturally responsive organization. Similarly, Chow and Austin (2008) have attempted to define a culturally responsive organization through the reporting of a case study of a county social service agency in California. Despite its recent growth, literature at the organization level in terms of cultural responsiveness is limited to mostly descriptive case studies with nothing at the community level.

One way to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services is through matching clients with practitioners of the same ethnicity with the assumption that the therapist's culture and beliefs will more closely match those of the client for the purposes of better serving minorities. Supporters of ethnic matching argue that cultural differences can affect the validity

of assessment as well as the development of therapist-client rapport, the therapeutic alliance, and treatment effectiveness (Sue, 1998). However, few studies have investigated what therapists specifically "do" with clients. The literature shows mixed results for the efficacy of ethnic matching (Ortega & Rosenheck, 2002). In Flaskerud's (1990) literature review, he concluded that the research on the process of therapy offers little support for the assumption that ethnically similar therapist-client pairings are more effective than dissimilar ones. Sue (1998) examined the impact of ethnic matching in therapeutic interventions and concluded that an ethnic match between participant and therapist is important but not sufficient to maintain minority engagement in voluntary therapy. The persistence of controversy in the literature over ethnic matching may be attributed in part to the lack of rigorous research on this issue. Much of the literature is of an anecdotal or conceptual nature, or involves uncontrolled observations and limited research findings.

A number of approaches to minority social work practice have developed. Four have sustained histories in social work practice literature since the 1980s and include: 1) Cross, Bazron, Dennis, and Isaacs (1989; known as the Cultural Competence Model); 2) Devore and Schlesinger (1996; known as Ethnic-Sensitive Social Work Practice); 3) Green (1999; known as Cultural Awareness in the Human Services/Help-Seeking Behavior); and 4) Lum (2000; known as the Process-Stage Approach). These approaches (none are models by the definition used in this project) share many overlapping characteristics. One specific shared characteristic includes targeting people of color to the basic exclusion of members of other cultural groups. Other shared elements across all four approaches include a need for assessing self-awareness; building appropriate knowledge, skills, and behavior for work with ethnic persons of color; use of a strengths-approach with children and families; attention to issues of political dominance;

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incorporating indigenous supports and strategies into intervention plans; and a strong emphasis on the importance of language and communication. Much effort has been dedicated over the past two decades to the development and improvement of the four approaches to minority social work practice, but there seems to be an absence of empirical evidence for the effective application of any of the approaches (Davis, 2009). Information on their actual impact with multicultural populations is also lacking. While application to macro practice is offered to varying degrees, they all primarily focus on direct client practice. Therefore, these four approaches are inadequate for the purposes of serving as a theoretical base for explaining and predicting the dimensions of informal support network development.

Social Support

In addition to culturally sensitive practices, social support in general, informal social support and Asian specific social support specifically, should be explored because they are an important element of informal support networks. Social support occurs at all levels of society and can be either formal or informal in nature. This section will focus on social support, which can be formal or informal due to scholars' ambiguity about the type of support, followed by an exploration of literature that is specifically identified as informal support and social support related to Asians and Asian Americans.

Social support is identified as a key concept in community and social intervention (Rebolloso, Hernandez, Fernandez, & Canton, 2003). In recent years, a great deal of research focuses on social support and support networks. The literature on social support is widely available across a range of disciplines that include social work, sociology, psychology, psychiatry, medicine, nursing, and communications. A social network is the structure in which social support relationships occur. Individuals, groups, and communities are connected in a

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network, but not all social networks provide support because these relationships can be positive, negative, or mixed (Berry, Cash, & Hoge, 1998).

Social support is a multi-faceted concept that has been difficult to conceptualize, define, and measure. Although this concept has been extensively studied, there is little agreement among theoreticians and researchers as to its theoretical and operational definition. As a result, the concept remains unclear and almost anything that infers a social interaction may be considered social support. A review of relevant literature reveals many different definitions but three stand out as classics. Social support is defined by Cobb (1976) as the provision of information that leads individuals to believe they are cared for, loved, esteemed, valued, and considered a member of a network of communication and mutual obligation (p. 300). Kahn's (1979) research into the concept of social support resulted in three major factors which comprised social support: aid, affirmation, and adequacy. House (1981) maintains there are four types of support within social support: 1) emotional support (expressions of empathy, love, trust, and caring); 2) instrumental support (tangible aid and services); 3) informational support (advice, suggestions, and information); and 4) appraisal support (information that is useful for self-evaluation). Two overarching categories of support have been consistently identified as the most salient and encompassing: emotional support and instrumental support (Declercq, Vanheule, Markey, & Willemsen, 2007). One common characteristic among all the definitions reviewed is that social support is some type of positive interaction or helpful behavior provided to a person in need of support.

Extensive literature documents the impact of social support domains. Age is a factor in relation to support in the literature with a focus on youth delinquency and caregiving for the elderly (see for example Kim & Goto, 2000; Kim & Knight, 2008). There is a beginning

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exploration of support in issues that have been referred to as culturally stigmatizing such as HIV, substance abuse, and domestic violence (see for example Lau, Cleland, Magura, Vogel, & Knight, 2004; Lee, Pomeroy, & Bohman, 2007; Shippy & Karpiak, 2005). Research on social support shows a strong relationship with health and well-being in different cultures and contexts (Antonucci, Sherman, & Akiyama, 1996). Research confirms that individuals who receive high levels of social support experience better health and well-being (Fratiglioni, Want, Ericcson, Mayyton, & Winblad, 2000); recover faster from illness (Lang, 2001); demonstrate healthier coping strategies during times of adversity (Cohen, Gottlieb, & Underwood, 2000); and better adjust to stressful events (Gilbar, 2005). Social support among ethnic minorities was also found to alleviate the stress resulting from the discrimination immigrants experience (Noh & Kaspar, 2003). Higher levels of social support have been associated with enhanced use of preventive services (Kang & Bloom, 1993) and decreased morbidity and mortality (Waxler-Morrison, Hislop, Mears, & Kan, 1991). Social support is a well-documented psychosocial factor influencing physical health outcomes (e.g. Seeman, 1996; Uchino, 2004). Additionally, the relationship between social support and psychosocial well-being is well established in the literature, dating back to Durkheim (1951).

The vast majority of studies testify to the benefits of social support (Taylor, 2007) despite the identification of both positive and negative forms of support provision (Pasch, Harris, Sullivan, & Bradbury, 2004). There is also a discrepancy between perceived social support and received social support, with only the perceived support being shown to be consistently linked to health (Haber, Cohen, Lucas, & Baltes, 2007). Perceived support refers to one's perception of available social support, whereas received support refers to the reported receipt of support resources, usually during a specific time frame (Dunkel-Schetter & Bennett, 1990).

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Multiple measures of social support have evolved over the past three decades. The diversity of social support measures is due to the different ways one can experience support and the variety of ways in which the concept has been defined and operationalized. Although some demonstrate psychometric rigor, many lack a theoretical underpinning, and either fail to provide psychometric information (Bowling, 2005) or are of poor psychometric quality. A number of studies attempt to categorize the dimensions into emotional support and instrumental support (Semmer, Elfering, Jacobshagen, Beehr, & Boos, 2008). There is a beginning recognition of the bidirectional nature of the construct and the benefits specifically aligned with giving and receiving of social support (Vaananen, Buunk, Kivimaki, Pentti, & Vahtera, 2005). Variables measured in the literature consist of size of social network, network composition, frequency of contacts, satisfaction with the support received, and accessibility of support. Two prevalent conceptualizations have been defining types of support and measuring support as perceived or received (Krause, 2006). Table 3 below outlines the measures of social support identified in the literature.

Table 3

Measures of Social Support

Instrument	Literature
Arizona Social Support Interview Schedule (ASSIS)	Barrera (1980); Barrera, Sandler, and Ramsay (1981); Sandler and Barrera (1984)
Cancer Perceived Agents of Social Support (CPASS)	Goldzweig et al. (2010)
Duke-UNC Functional Social Support Scale	Mann, Mannan, Quiñones, Palmer, and Torres (2010)
Family Support Scale (FSS; Dunst et al., 1984)	Benson and Karlof (2009); Oravecz, Koblinsky, and Randolph (2008); Oravecz, Osteen, Sharpe, and Randolph (2011)
Index of Sojourner Social Support (ISSS) Scale	Ong and Ward (2005)
Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (ISEL)	Cohen, Mermelstein, Kamarck, and Hoberman (1985)

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Inventory of Socially Supportive Behaviors	Schwarz and Roberts (2000)
Medical Outcomes of Social Support survey (MOSS)	Paranjape and Kaslow (2010)
Medical Outcomes Study (MOS) Social Support Survey	Abramowitz et al. (2009); Gjesfjeld, Greeno, Kim, and Anderson (2010); Phillips, Burker, and White (2011); Segrin and Domschke (2011)
Modified Diabetes Social Support Questionnaire-Family (M-DSSQ-Family)	Malik and Koot (2011)
Modified Version of the Inventory of Socially Supportive Behaviors Scale (MISSB: Krause & Markides, 1990)	Schwarz (2000)
Social Networks in Adult Life Questionnaires	Antonucci and Akiyama (1987); Ashida and Heaney (2008)
Social Provisions Scale	Kirkevold and Espehaug (2011); McGrath, Brennan, Dolan, and Barnett (2009)
Social Provisions Scale — Parent Version (SPS-P)	Cutrona (1989); Cutrona and Russell (1987); Cutrona, Cole, Colangelo, Assouline, and Russell (1994)
Social Support Behavior scale	Vaux, Riedel, and Stewart (1987)
Social Support Index	Azar and Badr (2010)
Social Support Inventory	Panzarella, Alloy, and Whitehouse (2006)
Social Support Network Index	Albarracin, Repetto, and Albarracin (1997)
Social Support Network Questionnaire (SSNQ)	Gee and Rhodes (2008)
Social Support Questionnaire	Sarason, Levine, Basham, and Sarason (1983)
Social Support Scale	Xiao (1994, 1999)
Social Support Survey (SSS)	Richman, Rosenfeld, and Hardy (1993); Cook-Craig and Koehly (2011)
Sources of Social Support (SOSS) Scale	Koeske and Koeske (1990, 2001); Kaijage and Wexler (2010)

While researchers have taken various theoretical and measurement approaches to examining the construct of social support, they have consistently ignored the complexity of the concept when it comes to measuring it. When operationalized for research purposes, only aspects of the concepts are measured. For example, some studies have employed measures that sum the number of supportive behaviors supplied by any member of the respondent's social network (Rook, 1984). Others have counted the number of people in the social network, or have asked respondents to rate their level of satisfaction with the level of support they receive

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(Sarason et al., 1983). This variety in approaches to measuring social support makes it difficult or impossible to generalize across research findings (Barrera, 1986). In almost all studies of social support, the investigation was undertaken from the perspective of the individual recipient, examining only the recipients' perceptions of the type of support and/or their support network characteristics rather than from the mezzo or community level. Researchers rarely consider the provider or the informal support as a variable to study. Provider factors such as their perceptions and characteristics may influence the support that is provided how it is received, whether support is accepted, and the outcomes of the supportive interaction. Finally, the majority of the research on support is measured in quantitative studies where some important nuances are not always captured. According to Lietz, Lacasse, and Cacciatore (2011), additional qualitative research is needed to understand how social support is defined and experienced by individuals due to the lack of a clear definition of what social support is and the degree to which it is context specific.

Informal Social Support

The informal social support literature is largely descriptive related to the existence, function, structure, and features of support networks and often lacks theoretical grounding. Studies on the structure of informal support focus on who the network members are, how many there are, and how they relate to one another. Studies on the support functions focus on the when, where, by whom, and what kind of help was provided (Antonucci, 1990). Theorists and researchers generally agree that informal social support is a multidimensional construct and process but conceptual definitions of informal social support often fall short of adequately capturing the nature, quality, or range of behaviors and activities that have been associated with this construct.

Sources of informal support identified in the literature include family, friends, significant others, peers, neighbors, coworkers, church members, and community contacts. Other sources identified in the literature are not as clear on whether they are formal or informal. For example, Guidry, Aday, Zhang, and Winn (1997) categorize churches and civic clubs as formal, while others (Delgado, 1998; Sanders, 2007) considered them informal. Delgado (1998) takes it a step further and states that formal helpers can be considered informal when they provide help that is widely considered outside of their job description. Existing categories of informal and formal support may not be adequate for populations who are not well studied. Resources may exist within those communities that literature has not identified. For example, Anderson, Cimbal, and Maile (2010) found hairstylists to be an important source of support for older adults. Sources of social support to Asian American communities are not well defined.

The current interest in informal social support stems from the fundamental importance of social relationships in shaping values and behaviors and the recognition that formal service systems often fail to provide the needed services (Farrow, 1997). Natural helpers and existing supporters are closer to, more trusted by, and more frequently available to struggling families than most traditional formal services. As such, they can facilitate individualized assistance that builds on strengths, responds to needs in a timely manner, and considers the contexts of each individual. For some Asian Americans, advice from family elders and religious leaders is considered superior to the more formal institutionalized methods of meeting human needs found in the United States human services system (Bromley, 1987; Nicholson, 1989).

The task-specific framework stipulates that informal and formal resources are qualified to accomplish different types of tasks (Litwak, 1985). Formal services are to deliver highly specialized and predictable tasks whereas informal ones are more about unpredictable and

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nontechnical support. The task-specific framework suggests a substitution relationship in which there is a clear distinction between help by informal and formal resources. According to this framework, family members are generally viewed as the most appropriate group to provide extensive long-term help (for example, home health care) and advice and comfort. However, because modified-extended family patterns are characterized by the geographic dispersion of adult children, only those tasks that do not require proximity are seen as appropriate for kin. Neighbors, because of their proximity, are better equipped to deal with time-urgent tasks (such as emergencies) and daily social interaction, but do not typically perform tasks that require long-term commitments. Friends provide support that emphasizes peer-group concerns and problems as well as similarity of experience. Unlike relationships with neighbors, however, friendships typically involve long-term commitments (Litwak, 1985).

Although limited, the empirical literature on informal social support seems promising. Abe-Kim et al. (2002) suggest that informal services constitute an important resource for individuals in distress, but such individuals may not be aware of the mental health services that are available to them. Informal social support is found to be an important factor in the overall well-being of older adults (Anderson et al., 2010). Informal social support is linked to higher quality of life, a deeper sense of meaning in life, better emotional and physical health, and lower levels of morbidity and mortality (Phillips et al., 2008). With respect to caregiving alone, informal support provides the equivalent of $257 billion annually in care for chronically ill or disabled individuals (National Alliance for Caregiving & AARP, 2004). In a study of older adults with osteoarthritis, Blixen and Kippes (1999) observe informal support of family and friends play an important role in moderating effects of depression, pain, and functional limitations on participants' quality of life. Bosch and Schumm (2007) suggest informal support

provides better assistance than accessing professional services among rural women who are

domestic violence survivors. A few measures of informal social support are identified in the

literature and listed below in Table 4.

Table 4

Measures of Informal Support

Instrument	Literature
Arizona Social Support Interview Schedule (ASSIS)	Barton, Roman, Fitzgerald, and Mckinney (2002)
Lubben Social Network Scale	Johnson (2008)
MacArthur Social Support Scale	Au et al. (2009); Au et al. (2009)
Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS: Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, & Farley, 1988)	Edwards (2004); Ramaswamy, Aroian, and Templin (2009); Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, and Farley (1988)
Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support - Arab Women (MSPSS-AW)	Aroian, Templin, and Ramaswamy (2010)
Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support and General Health Questionnaire	Tam, Foo, and Lee (2011)
Social Support Scale for Children (SSSC)	Harter (1986); Abela, Vanderbilt, and Rochon (2004)

Informal support scales fall loosely into three categories, those that measure: 1) the

structure of social support (the number of people in the network); 2) the function of the

recipient's perception of available support (Miller, Smerglia, Gaudet, & Kitson, 1998); or 3) the

function of support which the recipient has received (MaloneBeach & Zarit, 1995). These

measures lack psychometric rigor, psychometric testing, and theoretical underpinning. The

measures also ignore the complexity of the construct. Finally, measures of informal support are

from an individual perspective rather than a mezzo or community perspective.

Asian Specific Social Support

Research on social support in Asia seems to be more focused on informal support.

Previous studies of elderly Chinese people show that a larger network size such as more children

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and close relatives is associated with a greater amount of available support and fewer depressive symptoms (Lam & Boey, 2005). In addition, Chi and Chou (2001) indicate that lower frequency of contact with family members is associated with depression among older Chinese people, while contact with friends did not substantially affect the degree of depression. Literature suggests that older Chinese adults living in three generation families enjoyed greater psychological well-being than those not in three generation families (Silverstein, Cong, & Li, 2006).

With the focus of this project on Asian Americans, it is important to know the literature on this population related to social support. Although support is an important component in Asian American families, it may be defined and provided differently than Western ideals of social support due to distinct cultural values. The culture of a people provides the contextual grounding for informal support to be given and received (Dilworth-Anderson & Marshall, 1996). The process of obtaining informal support, as well as the expectations that come with the assistance, may also differ. Migration may lead to disruption or loss of natural support systems and the familiar means by which support is socially communicated (Sandhu, 1994). Immigrants are also forced to develop new ways of obtaining some of the required support, which includes maintaining regular long-distance communication with important sources of support at home and developing new support systems in the host country (Walton, 1990). These unique features of migration are not captured by existing support measures.

Asian Americans may not receive the kind of informal support defined by the mainstream for many reasons. Asian parents' love for their children is shown through more subtle methods, such as working to provide them with better opportunities in life (Leung & Chew, 1989; Shon & Ja, 1982). Asian American families may not necessarily use the reward systems learned in mainstream schools. Asian Americans may experience the burden of shame and guilt if their

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anticipated level of excellence is not being met (Leung & Chew, 1989). Intergenerational

differences in English proficiency or education may lead to role reversals within the family

related to power dynamics and decision-making that is different from traditional cultural roles

where elders are respected and are the decision makers. In addition, social support and the level

of it may be interpreted differently among Asian Americans based on their ethnic identification.

Measures of social support identified in the literature that were used with Asian and

Asian American populations are listed in Table 5 below.

Table 5

Measures Used with Asian and Asian American Populations

Instrument	Asian & Asian American Population
MacArthur Social Support Scale	Dementia family caregivers in Hong Kong (Au et al., 2009)
Medical Outcomes Study (MOS) Social Support Survey	Korean American and Korean women (Lim & Yi, 2009)
Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS: Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, & Farley, 1988)	Chinese immigrant mothers and their children (Short & Johnston, 1997); Southeast Asian women with mental health problems in Britain (Dutt & Webber, 2010); children affected by AIDS in China (Hong et al., 2010); on adolescents in Hong Kong (Cheng & Chan, 2005)
Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support and General Health Questionnaire	Students in Malaysia (Tam et al., 2011)
Social Support Behavior scale	Taiwanese (Wu, 2008)
Social Support Index	Chinese (Dong & Simon, 2010); Korean, Indian, and Filipino Americans (Choi & Thomas, 2009)
Social Support Network Index	Chinese and Malay Muslim mothers in Singapore (Ow, Tan, & Goh, 2004)
Social Support Questionnaire	Asian American women (Patel, 1992), hospital patients in Hong Kong (Lam, Chan, & Lam, 2011)
Social Support Scale	Chinese employees (Chen et al., 2009)

Investigation of social support for immigrants is hampered by the availability of

culturally sensitive measures of social support. Although many of the above measures have been

developed or modified for specific studies and populations, there continues to be a need for more

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culturally appropriate and standardized measures of assessing support than are currently available due to the continuing diversity of the United States Asian American population. Most studies use measures of social support developed and validated on middle-class adolescent and adult populations, thus limiting their applicability to minority populations experiencing unique levels and combinations of stressors. Specifically, few social support instruments have been developed with Asian Americans and/or immigrants, a group experiencing high levels of stress related to the transition to the new country, minority status, and economic and social strain. For example, Akhtar and associates (2010) did not find any widely used indigenously developed and standardized instruments to assess social support in South Asian cultures. The importance of developing social support assessment instruments that are valid for minority populations, including Asian Americans and immigrants, has been recognized by some researchers (Coffman & Ray, 1999), however, there is little recognition of the support network aspect of these instruments.

Informal Support Networks

While formal services and formal social support are informative, for the purpose of conceptualizing and focusing this project, they are not relevant to this study because they are underutilized by the Asian American population. It is of interest that informal support networks provide a community perspective of support that social support in general, and informal support in particular, do not. The concept of informal support networks is similar to what has been referred to in the literature as "natural support systems" (Baker, 1977). Social work scholars such as Delgado (1982), Sanchez (1987), and Sanchez-Ayendez (1988) have recognized the importance of informal support networks in the Latino population. Delgado (1995) defines "natural support systems" as networks of individuals in a community who are accessible and

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provide and receive assistance on a regular basis as well as in times of crisis. The author further states that these systems represent a community's capacity or collective efficacy to help itself and serve as a mechanism for helping groups maintain their cultural heritage. Hooyman (1983) defines informal support networks as a series of linkages along which information, emotional reassurances, and services flow to and from a person and his or her exchange relationships. Informal networks include any number of group associations, typically less organized networks of personal relationships that are voluntarily formed and maintained, including relationships with work associates, neighbors, and friends (Huebner, Mancini, Bowen, & Orthner, 2009).

Investigations of natural helping networks have been used on a broad range of populations and have demonstrated characteristic patterns of helping networks for specific populations. The populations range from mental patients, neglecting and abusing parents, families with young children, elderly people living independently (e.g., Fine, 1973; Henderson, 1977). The studies have helped to identify the network properties associated with satisfactory help and those that are not for different populations. Compared to the general population, clinical patients' natural helping networks have fewer links, lower density, higher proportion of weaker links, and fewer reciprocal and more dependent links (Sokolovsky, Cohen, Berger, & Geiger, 1978; Tolsdorf, 1976). In relation to elders, Chappell and Blandford (1991) did not find a complete task division between the formal and informal care systems.

The term "natural support systems" is not used for this project because the word "natural" infers born into or given without effort. This is not the case with many immigrant communities in which many of its members migrated to the new location and must work on developing a support system. The term "informal" is a better fit for support built away from where people were born and grew up with as an extension of their natural support. The term "system" portrays

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a formalized design that organizes people into relationships. In McKnight's (1997) characteristics of a system, the structure is designed primarily to permit a few people to control many people and it functions to produce many of the same things. The term "network" is a better fit for marginalized or invisible communities to signify that the interconnected networks of relationships are based on willing consent. Furthermore, the network is where people express their free choice to contribute their unique gifts, skills, and talents in assisting others in their community (McKnight, 1997).

Some dimensions of informal support networks have been identified in the literature. Structural characteristics of support networks include the number of network members, density of the network (i.e., the extent to which network members know each other), homogeneity of the network members, frequency of contact with network members, and geographic proximity to the network members (Heaney & Israel, 2002). Some of these characteristics (e.g., network size, density, and homogeneity) are expressed in terms of the network as a whole, whereas others are seen as relationships between the focal person and each network tie (House, Umberson, & Landis, 1988).

It is known that the structural characteristics of social networks can influence whether or not professional help sources are utilized (Horwitz, 1977). The functional characteristics of support networks include social connectedness (or social engagement), social support, social influence, and social comparison (Berkman & Glass, 2000). Social connectedness refers to how members of the network feel connected to the network. Social support refers to the support members gain from the network. Social influence refers to norms and values that exist in the network that may affect attitudes and behaviors. Social comparison refers to similarities and differences between members of the social network.

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Granovetter's (1973) concept of "weak ties" should be reviewed in relation to informal support networks (p. 1364). Weak ties are those which can link the individuals outside of their regular social circles, leading to greater diffusion of information, mobilization, or opportunities. The people who surround individuals as regular social circles are considered strong ties. The strength of weak ties may be an indication of what the social network can do in terms of sharing of information as well as mobilization and advocacy for change (Ayon, 2011). Strategies in expanding network ties have been explored in the literature. For example, Morin and Seidman (1986) suggest that network size could be increased by adding either more groups of people (clusters) or more individual network members. Individuals may be introduced to a new cluster through joining a subgroup association; being referred to formal organizations; or joining services such as church or recreational groups, activities with community groups, or volunteer activities. Individual network members can be added to the client's network through volunteer linking; through reconnecting with past network members; or through locating natural helpers in the community. Very limited conceptual literature exists on factors that contribute to the difficulty of building a support network.

Social psychology literature shows that, when people are faced with a problem, they turn to their own informal networks as the main source of help, rather than to formal organizations (Litwak, Messeri, & Silverstein, 1990). In the west, informal social support networks have been shown to be important resources for surviving disasters (Kaniasty, Norris, & Murrel, 1990); accessing information (Granovetter, 1973); influencing socioeconomic status (Campbell, Marsden, & Hurlbert, 1986); psychological and emotional well-being (O'Brien, Hassinger, & Dershem, 1994); health (Haines & Hurlbert, 1992); and obtaining emotional and material support (Wellman & Wortly, 1990). Informal social support networks have also been shown to be an

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important resource for individuals and households in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in gaining access to scarce goods and services (Sik, 1994), handling symptoms of stress (Dershem, Patsiorkovski, & O'Brien, 1996), increasing household food production and sales (O'Brien, Patsiorkovski, Dershem, & Lylova, 1996), and adapting to socioeconomic change (O'Brien, Patsiorkovski, & Dershem, 1998).

Informal support networks have been found to be the main source of support among diverse immigrant groups (Hernandez-Plaza, Pozo, & Alonzo-Morillejo, 2004). Research suggests that these networks play a significant role in newcomers' adjustment process (Leslie, 1992). In immigrant communities, the network often consists of other immigrants from the same country of origin. Informal support networks have shared norms about needs and help seeking (Gottlieb, 1988, 2000). These networks are more stable because they are based on interpersonal relationships rather than funding sources (Cowen, 1982; Gottlieb, 1988, 2000; Litwak et al., 1990). These networks are more culturally sensitive because they adapt to the individual's needs based on knowledge obtained throughout the relationships (Gottlieb, 1988, 2000). These networks are also more flexible in terms of how and when support is provided because they do not have to follow policies and procedures of formal resources (Gottlieb, 1988, 2000). Informal social networks can vary in terms of the different kinds of support each member or group can provide (Cowen, 1982; Gottlieb, 1988, 2000; Litwak et al., 1990). Finally, these networks can be bidirectional, equalizing power dynamics (Gottlieb, 1988, 2000) due to the benefits of giving as well as receiving social support. Specific negative aspects of informal support networks are lacking in the literature, which means an even handedness is not present.

Previous research has stressed the close-knit and supportive aspects of Asian American family relationships (Stopes-Roe & Cochrane, 1990). One important aspect of the migration

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process, from one's culture or from a supportive context, is that it disrupts easy access to the extended family system. The geographical distance makes post migration difficult for family and friends to provide the necessary support for migrants in their relocated community (Hernandez-Leon & Zuniga, 2002). For some, the small network of support of the traditional family system is being challenged and is no longer adequate to meet their needs. Consequently, they must expand their network in their new location, like in the case of Asian immigration to the South, to identify the resources needed for a successful transition as well as for the maintenance of daily life (Patel, 1992).

Studies in the migration literature have found that an informal network has the potential to provide functional and emotional exchanges for its members (Wong & Song, 2006). Tran (1994) and Kamya (1997) argue that the availability of a network during resettlement is vital for sheltering immigrants from adaptation stressors. Wong and Song (2006) have also found that the perceived availability of social support enhances the mental health of migrant populations. Social support among the members of the ethnic community provides a supportive environment for the educational and occupational advancement of the second generation (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Studies also show that ethnic social support provided in the networks serve as a protective factor among immigrant youths from the pressure to negate their original culture (Feliciano, 2001; Gibson, 2001).

Research is limited on the influence of informal support networks related to severe or long standing problems, but scholars have observed that effective informal support networks can have preventive, therapeutic, and buffering effects for distressed individuals (see for example Brim, 1974; Burke & Weir, 1981). Perhaps most importantly, networks of kinship, neighborhood, and community remain available after crises subside and services stop. Finally,

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these networks offer mutual assistance and support and are often considered essential to maintaining gains that may result from more formal interventions (Rzepnicki, 1991).

The social network intervention framework by Biegel, Tracy, and Corvo (1994) for people with chronic mental illness incorporates three strategies: 1) building new network ties; 2) maintaining and strengthening existing ties; and 3) enhancing family ties. The major issues for each intervention are goals and rationales, types of interventions employed, requisite worker skills and knowledge, and implementation issues. The framework is developed specifically for case managers who work with clients experiencing mental illness. The framework provides structural and functional characteristics of social relationships in terms of 1) how structural characteristics are related to the various functions of the social ties; 2) how the functions may be associated with each other; and 3) how each function may mediate the associations between the structural network characteristics and health status.

Delgado and Humm-Delgado's (1982) natural support systems framework outlines four types of support found in Latino communities, with many drawing from the Puerto Rican community. The four types of support include: 1) family/friends; 2) religion; 3) folk healers; and 4) merchant/social clubs. This framework supports the notion that the types of support can be culturally influenced and may vary from community to community.

The stress buffering theory includes the notion that social networks provide the resources to reduce distress and enhance coping for people experiencing stressful life events (Callaghan & Morrissey, 1993). The theory maintains that social support leads to well-being but only for persons under stress. Moreover, social support is most effective when it matches the particular stress being experienced. Social support was found to be a buffer against depression later in life (Tsai, Yeh, & Tsao, 2005). Researchers have suggested that belongingness may buffer against

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stress and the pressures of daily life, but empirical studies show perceived availability of support as more of a buffer (Bosworth et al., 2000).

Another framework that may provide guidance for this project is Müller's (1958) 14 social systems and their intent. Influenced by European thinking, Müller is a Brazilian who has tested this framework in the context of community development networks in Brazil. The social systems and their intent are as follows:

1. Kinship—Generation refers to the assuring that there will be a future.

2. Health—Health refers to a health system supportive to good health.

3. Maintenance—Sustenance refers to basic and concrete resources needed to stay alive.

4. Loyalty/Connectedness—Love refers to connection so one feels included and responsible.

5. Recreation—Happiness refers to having a balance in order to have fun and enjoy life.

6. Communication—Knowledge refers to power of being informed.

7. Education—Wisdom refers to preparation needed to be a good citizen and a wise person.

8. Ownership—Possessions refers to having sufficient resources to feel comfortable.

9. Production—Usefulness refers to the work of the individual and community in which the individual feels valued and the community is functional and useful.

10. Religiosity—Spirituality/Holiness refers to meaning making and answering questions about the meaning of life.

11. Safety—Safety refers to not just physical but also cultural safety and security.

12. Politics—Government/Order refers to power in relation to decision making that includes rules and order; can be formal or informal.

13. Justice—Fairness refers to what constitutes what is fair.

14. Respect—Self Respect refers to respect of self and others.

The idea is that all systems must be in place and functioning to meet the needs of a community.

The frameworks and theories reviewed in this section do not provide the adequate theoretical basis for this project investigating the development of an informal support network. The social network intervention framework is inadequate because it focuses on intervention from a formalized service provider perspective rather than a community perspective focused on informally meeting needs. Delgado and Humm-Delgado's (1982) framework provides culturally specific sources of support but some of the categories are not applicable to the Asian American community. Stress buffering theory is not appropriate to use as a theoretical base for this project because stress buffering is observed inconsistently in empirical studies, and the stress-buffering effects are often difficult to replicate. Müller's (1958) 14 social systems basic to a functioning community are inadequate as a theoretical base for this project because it does not provide guidance for the development of the systems. While these social systems can be used from a community perspective and can assist in the understanding of the resources available in the Asian American community, they do not provide guidance in the development of the systems nor details about the dimensions of the development. Additionally, whether or not Müller's (1958) 14 social systems are congruent with Asian cultures and relevant to the Asian American community is unknown. However, the 14 social systems could be useful to analyze the components developed in an informal support network. Nonetheless, a theory is still needed to explain and predict the phenomenon of this project of informal support network development.

Moving from Informal to Formal

Adjunct to the informal support network are congregation and ethnic-specific services targeted to specific populations that are ethnically and culturally in line with that population. Some of these services can be provided through mainstream entities while other scholars (Jenkins, 1980; Uriarte & Merced, 1985) have found that they often emerge organically from within ethnic communities that are defined by geographic and identity boundaries in order to meet social service needs and, frequently, with some level of commitment to impact community issues and problems. Depending on the stage of development, ethnic-specific and congregation services can be viewed as informal if the help is provided through people's natural helping tendencies or as formal services once a structured social service delivery system is in place (Hooyman, 1983).

Congregations

Congregations are important to consider when discussing services for Asian Americans. There is evidence that religion is important in the lives of people of ethnic cultures, and some studies report that the church is an integral part of support networks for African Americans, Korean Americans, and Latino Americans (Atchley, 1998). Suh (2004) found that 80 percent of Korean Americans are affiliated with Christianity. Similarly, most Filipino Americans are Christian or Catholic (Kimura & Browne, 2009). Unlike Koreans and Filipinos, Asian Indian Americans are religiously diverse with Hindus (80.0 percent), Muslims (14.0 percent), Christians (2.4 percent), Sikhs (2.0 percent), Buddhist (0.7 percent), Jains (0.4 percent), and others (0.4 percent) (Tewary, 2005).

The support provided by congregations can be considered formal or informal based on how structured their social service delivery systems are (Hooyman, 1983). Because the influx of

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the Asian American population to Richmond, Virginia is fairly recent and the need may take some time to be identified, the majority of services provided to Asian Americans by congregations may be part of the informal support network and may eventually become more formalized. De Leon, Maronick, De Vita, and Boris's (2009) examination of community-based organizations that serve immigrants in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area found more than half of the organizations in the region had religious affiliations. In immigrant communities, congregations have been noted to serve as acculturation centers for newcomers to develop networks with others who share their native culture and language (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000). Congregations are often the first and main points of contact for newcomers. They provide a ready-made community of identity with shared religion, language, culture, and norms. Religious community leaders are often keenly aware of newcomers' needs. They often provide direct services or educate individuals and families about how and where to find help. These networks have been found to provide emotional and informational support (Conway & Wong, 2004). Other resources available from the church include volunteers and facilities with space for community activities. Immigrants also tend to search for religious belief systems after immigrating to adjust to the new country's lifestyle or simply to extend social networks (Min et al., 2005). Congregations can be an important social force to meet needs as well as a social networking hub (Park & Bernstein, 2008).

Ethnic minority churches are a tradition in American life (Reid, Linder, Sheeley, & Stout, 1990). The ethnic church tends to serve a predominantly homogeneous population. Much of the literature related to Asian American and religious support focuses on Korean Americans. Hurh and Kim (1990) argued that among the majority of Korean immigrants, the religious need (meaning), the social need (belonging), and the psychological need (comfort) for attending the

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Korean church are inseparable. They found that regardless of their length of residence, sex, age, level of education, economic status, or extent of socio-cultural assimilation, respondents participated actively in church functions.

Ethnic-Specific Services

Because Asian American communities are still fairly new and formalized ethnic-specific services currently do not exist in places like Richmond, Virginia, these services are likely part of the informal support network that may eventually formalize. The movement towards the development of ethnic-specific services is yet another effort to respond to the Asian American underutilization of social services (Iglehart & Becerra, 2011). These services may be provided by ethnic agencies, congregations, or mainstream services.

Services for immigrants are not a new phenomenon in social work. Jane Addams (1893) of Hull House promoted cultural pluralism by recognizing the unique needs of immigrants and valuing their cultural heritage. Iglehart and Becerra (2011) argue that despite the early start of ethnic-specific services in American social work history, the integration of social work into minority communities and culture did not occur. Rather, ethnic minorities have had to develop their own means of social service provision in order to meet their communities' needs. This self-help ethos resulted in human service organizations that are now known as ethnic agencies. They have existed alongside mainstream traditional agencies as parallel service delivery systems (Iglehart & Becerra, 2011). Ito and Maramba (2002) suggests that ethnic specific services require more than the bilingual and bicultural matching of therapist and client, and, instead, should entail constant negotiations between therapist and client about the types of services provided. Jenkins's (1980) seminal work on defining the ethnic agency resulted from her study of the characteristics of those organizations. After examining 54 agencies that served five

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ethnic/racial groups, she identified seven characteristics of an ethnic agency: 1) serving primarily ethnic clients; 2) staffed by a majority of individuals who are of the same ethnicity as the client group; 3) an ethnic majority on its board; 4) ethnic community and/or ethnic power-structure support; 5) integrating ethnic content into its programs; 6) viewing strengthening the family as a primary goal; and 7) maintaining an ideology that promotes ethnic identity and ethnic participation in decision-making processes (Jenkins, 1980).

The ethnic agencies provide services, engage in organizing, and participate in advocacy activities. In the area of social service delivery, ethnic specific programs offer a service array that contributes to the social and economic incorporation of immigrants. At the same time, ethnic-specific programs help retain the customs and service delivery styles of the countries of origin. Cordero-Guzmán (1999) found that immigrant groups, organizations, and service providers in New York City provide approximately 32 different types of services to immigrants, including educational programs, health care, housing assistance, job training, and emergency services. Arts and cultural programming are also important in immigrant organizations as they provide people a space to express their cultural heritage and maintain connections with their countries of origin (Cordero-Guzmán, 2005). In the areas of advocacy and organizing, activities are directed toward creating spaces and conditions where new understandings of immigrants' lives and needs can emerge (Tarrow, 1998). Through advocacy and organizing, immigrant-serving organizations seek to address policy issues; gain or improve access to political institutions; and develop new discourses for understanding conditions faced by immigrants.

When available, ethnic-specific services seem promising (see for example Chow, 2002; Lau & Zane, 2000, Sue & Dhindsa, 2006). Initial research with ethnic specific agencies and services indicates many benefits for Asian Americans in human service access and use. The

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existence of ethnic-specific services can increase an ethnic community's capacity to respond to the needs of the community (Iglehart & Becerra, 2011). Chow (2002) found that many ethnic agencies provide comprehensive social and human services and fill an important gap within the service delivery system for the Asian American community. Ethnic-specific services have generally been found to be better received by Asian Americans than mainstream services (Sue & Dhindsa, 2006). When both are available, Asian Americans choose ethnic specific over mainstream public sector services (Lau & Zane, 2000). The recreation or social interaction aspects of ethnic-specific services increase individuals' likelihood of participation (Lum, 1992). Zane et al. (1994) concluded that ethnic-specific services in a counseling center reduced service inequities for Asian Americans. In comparison studies with mainstream services on mental health, Asian American clients using ethnic agencies have more service use (Flaskerud & Hu, 1994; Lau & Zane, 2000), higher return rates (Takeuchi et al., 1995; Yeh et al., 1994), and shorter delays in seeking treatment (Okazaki, 2000).

Despite the recognition of ethnic-specific services in the literature, with few exceptions, the majority of the literature is conceptual, presenting general assumptions or reported as case studies without much disclosure of the methodology used in the research. Examples of the exception include Chan, Cole, and Bowpitt's (2007) random sampling of Chinese in the United Kingdom to study the formation of ethnic organizations and Hein's (1997) study concerning the impact of social welfare programs on the formation of Indochinese refugee associations.

The majority of the empirical literature on ethnic-specific services is in mental health, with much of it focused on individual treatment or service use patterns. We know almost nothing about other ethnic-specific services. Even in the area of mental health, there is a lack of solid research on treatment outcomes for ethnic minority populations. Comparison of study

results is made difficult by the differences in the outcome measures used. It is likely that none of the variables by themselves can adequately measure the effectiveness of treatment.

Existing literature on outcome measures related to ethnic specific mental health programs has been mixed. One study found better outcomes as measured by functioning at discharge (Yeh et al., 1994). However, the three studies which found positive ethnic-specific services effects used a common dataset from the same county mental health system (see Lau & Zane, 2000; Takeuchi et al., 1995; Yeh et al., 1994). In addition, outcome measures may not have cross-cultural validity or may be insensitive to ethnic differences. Few studies have gone beyond outcome-based studies and examined what elements of the services distinguish them as ethnic specific. Existing literature does not identify what specific elements are utilized in therapeutic practice that makes ethnic specific services culturally congruent with client beliefs and expectations. Additionally, many of the programs and interventions on which they were built do not appear to have been evaluated rigorously.

Asian-Specific Agency Formation

The early ethnic associations were led by merchants, landlords, and factory owners who served as "gatekeepers and spokespersons between the community and the rest of society" (Iglehart & Becerra, 1995, p. 160). These early organizations functioned like trade-unions: workers who needed assistance could count on the organization's help. Social services in Chinese American immigrant communities traditionally were provided by surname and kinship associations (Chow, 1999). In addition they served as a political link between the communities and the government. According to Yu (1980), early Japanese immigrants formed associations based on prefectural or regional identity. Unlike the Japanese and Chinese, Filipino organizations were formed based on specific interests of friendship circles. Asian Indian

American nonprofits were started in the 1960s and 1970s by businessmen to solidify social connections and to sponsor cultural events (Hung, 2005).

Several scholars have explored the reasoning behind the formation of ethnic organizations. According to Holley (2003), ethnic services were created to provide services in ethnic communities which are consistent with the communities' worldviews in an attempt for them to meet and address their own needs. Abraham (1995) state that South Asian women's organizations were started in the United States because South Asian American women saw an increased need to address the problems women in their community faced. Cordero-Guzman (2005) identifies five factors related to immigrant organization formation, namely that: 1) the immigrant population is large and growing; 2) the immigrant population develops needs not addressed by existing services; 3) the community member with a social service background starts an organization; 4) the connections to larger social service delivery system exist; and 5) the resources and capacity building exist to sustain the organization.

The major theme in the literature on formation of ethnic agencies is that they are formed in ethnic communities based on geographic and ethnic identity boundaries (Iglehart & Becerra, 2011). Among Asian Americans, ethnic enclaves developed in the early 20th century when the Chinese and Japanese immigrants needed to survive a hostile and discriminatory society (Khao & Bui, 1985). The literature generally shows socioeconomic resources as the most important determinant of whether individuals reside in ethnically concentrated inner city neighborhoods (Sanders, 2002). The community tends to have high concentrations of first generation non-English speaking working class immigrants within a small geographical area.

Living in close proximity has traditionally facilitated the development and maintenance of social networks among immigrants in urban areas. Differences in culture and language

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between the country of origin and host country may be initial barriers for new immigrants to participate in mainstream society. Ethnic communities, whether geographic or identity based, have played an important role throughout the United States' history by providing newcomers a safe haven upon their arrival and helping them adjust to the host country (Weng, 2012). Ethnic communities may also serve as an extended family on which new immigrants can count for support. The ethnic enclave sometimes serves as an incubator for formal services, but also as a voluntary ethnic support structure that provides linkages to resources for new and existing arrivals. Several studies have shown the importance of ethnic community support (see for example Behnia, 2008; Finch & Vega, 2003; Garcia, Ramirez, & Jariego, 2002; Noh & Kaspar, 2003).

Several approaches and frameworks have been proposed related to ethnic organizations, but all lack rigorous testing. Chow's (1999) DECENT (developmental, educational, comprehensive, empowerment, networking, teamwork) framework assesses cultural appropriateness of service delivery. He applies the framework to understand the practice principles and challenges of three Chinese multiservice centers in New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles. The framework is also applied in a case study of a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program for Southeast Asian Americans in Oakland (Chow et al., 2001). Preisser's (1999) culture specific advocacy and intervention approach is developed from a case study of a South Asian domestic violence agency in Washington, D.C. Holley (2003) presents a framework for understanding the influences of cultural and contextual factors on the evolution of ethnic agencies as well as ethnic awareness on the goals, objectives, and services of ethnic agencies. Rogler, Malgady, Constantino, and Blumental (1987) propose the organizational development framework for conceptualizing how culturally relevant ethnic sensitive services can

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be developed and implemented. The approaches and frameworks discussed in this section do not adequately serve as the theoretical base for this project on informal support network development for several reasons. First, they are developed through and for the formalized ethnic social services agency. Second, ethnic-specific services currently do not exist in most cities in the South (including Richmond) for the Asian American community partly due to lack of population size and the resources needed to develop them. Finally, differences are unclear regarding structural services provided by formalized organizations and informal support networks that are largely unstructured.

Conclusion

Based on what is available in the literature, we know that existing formal services are underutilized by the Asian American population. We know that Asian Americans have needs that must be met in order for them to contribute to American society. We also know that multiple barriers continue to exist, despite formal services' attempts to provide culturally sensitive practices. Based on help-seeking frameworks and empirical evidence, we know some Asian Americans' needs are being met informally.

The family support system in Asian American families, which is a large part of individual's natural support system they are born into or grew up with, is known to contribute considerable amounts of emotional, informational, and tangible support. Empirical studies have shown that Asians turn to their family members for help if they have problems (Stopes-Roe & Cochrane, 1990). The role of the family in the informal support network of Asian American elders has also been shown in small-scale studies (Rosenthal, 1986). Cameron and Vanderwoerd (1997) rate the potential performance of family members high on several dimensions of support,

including length of commitment, range of support (emotional and instrumental), availability in a crisis, and intensity of involvement.

However, the family and natural support system's availability has fostered some erroneous assumptions in today's migratory climate. These assumptions bolster a belief that minorities can always count on their family and take care of their own. While some members of the natural support system continue to provide long distance social support post migration, previous assumptions about racial and ethnic minorities' social support systems seem to be too simplistic.

In addition to general social needs one may face in life, the potential stressors for immigrants, include migratory, financial, and acculturation stress, have been well documented (e.g. Min et al., 2005; Vega, Gil, Warheit, Zimmerman, & Apospori, 1993). To address one's needs and maintain one's well-being, one must find or build a network of support in the new area of residence that no longer consists of the family and natural support system. Consequently, separation from the natural support system due to migration or relocation may mean the need for another network. This network is likely to be made up of people with similar cultural values because no matter where people resettle, they tend to hold on to their cultural values. Given Asian American's distinct cultural traits such as face saving and stigmatization of certain social problems, the informal support network that they engage with in the resettled environment is likely to be made up of people who have the same cultural values as their natural support systems.

As immigrant communities made up of people from similar backgrounds emerge and grow, the community's needs may become more definable. This may then lead to networking and connection of networks within the community to address those needs. These networks

consist of dimensions, such as resources, structure, and use of support, which makes the community work. What may also make the community work is that this informal network is culturally appropriate because it is developed and comprised of individuals who are part of the network. This also may mean that the developed informal support network will have traits consistent with the culture of its members.

If the Asian American population continues to increase in the South as expected, scarce social service agency resources may not be available to meet the need for services. Additionally, in cities like Richmond, where there are no ethnic enclaves and where formalized ethnic-specific services currently do not exist, there is an assumption that people still have needs. Richmond is a unique city because the city's population has historically consisted of African Americans and Caucasians with only a recent attention to other minority population. The combination of increased need with inadequate or inappropriate formal services may lead the Asian American community to serve as informal service providers. Anecdotal evidence shows that ethnic communities usually develop a complex network of meeting their own needs (Bailey & Waldinger, 1991).

It is important to understand how the developing Asian American communities in the new South are responding to their own needs in order to prepare formal providers to effectively provide complementary services. An unknown element is the role and development of informal support networks and Müller's (1958) 14 social systems. These types of data are critical to understanding the community's strengths in its own problem solving ability, the types of resources available in the community, and a community's ability to care for its own members. Because the concept of social support is not clearly defined, although a considerable body of literature has looked at the role of social support from the individual perspective, far less is

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known about the informal support network on the community level. In explaining social support networks, the literature also describes them from an individual perspective where the individual is in the center of the network rather than the community as a whole. The literature on both informal support networks and Asian American communities is limited, particularly in the absence of ethnic enclaves, like in many localities in the South. Furthermore, an extensive literature review failed to yield adequate empirical findings on network development in ethnic communities. Finally, the dimensions of informal support network remain undefined.

There is an absence of an adequate, useful theory to help explain and predict the dimensions of an informal support network development. None of the frameworks, models, approaches, and theories reviewed in this chapter address network development in general, and specifically, the dimensions of informal support network development particularly for Asian Americans. It is common for theories, models, frameworks, and approaches to fail to include cultural factors as well as factors related to minority status. Theories, models, frameworks, and approaches that exclude minority status factors may provide an incomplete picture of the need to develop and sustain informal support networks. In order to understand minority populations, it is essential that theories, models, frameworks, and approaches be developed or modified to reflect the cultural behaviors, values, and attitudes of the population being studied. Minorities often have experiences which differ markedly from those of members of the dominant culture. Similarly, recent immigrants often experience acculturation stress in their attempt to adapt to the American culture (Vega, Gil, Warheit, Zimmerman, & Apospori, 1993).

The theoretical starting point for this dissertation lies in the idea that the Asian American population may no longer have the natural support system common to them as a source of social support due to the transient nature of today's Asian Americans. Consequently, they may seek

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out others who share common values and culture in their new community to develop a new support network in times of need.

The research question this dissertation attempts to answer is: what are the dimensions of informal support network development in the Asian American community in the new South? This project will focus on three dimensions of the informal support network. The first background information about participants including how and why they are involved in the Asian American community. The second is the helping process within the network, including its development as well as its resources and structure. The third dimension is the network over time including how it has changed and what its future may entail.

As demonstrated in the review of literature, there is not a theory that can adequately explain the creation of an informal support network for Asian Americans. The goal of this project then, is not to test or verify existing theories or hypotheses, but to develop a substantive testable theory that can help people better understand, create, and use informal support networks in the Asian American community. The method most commonly used by researchers for theory development is grounded theory, which is "…a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 24). Details of the ways in which this project developed a grounded theory of informal support network development in an Asian American community follows in Chapter III.

Chapter III - Methodology

Introduction

Developing a theory using grounded theory methods is most appropriate for this project. Sociologists Glaser and Strauss (1967) designed the grounded theory method by arguing for the inductive discovery of theory grounded in systematically analyzed data. The method aids the generation of theory about processes and the development of conceptual analysis of social worlds. It emphasizes constant comparison and concurrent data collection and analysis. The aim is to develop a well-grounded theory that describes, explains, interprets, and predicts the phenomenon of interest (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The research question for this study was: What are the dimensions of informal support network development in Asian American communities in the new South? Because the goal of this study was theory development and the research question was positivistic (see next section for further explanation) in nature, a positivistic grounded theory method was most appropriate. Using a positivistic grounded theory method resulted in a theory that is within positivistic standards leading to generalizability. Strauss and Corbin's (1990) grounded theory method was selected for this project and the process of elimination of other varieties of grounded theory is outlined below in the next section of this chapter. The choice was made based on the research question, the prescriptive nature of the method, and the consideration of the applicability and feasibility of the method in the context of the phenomenon of interest.

Varieties of Grounded Theory

When engaging in grounded theory research, O'Connor, Netting, and Thomas (2008) recommended being clear about which set of paradigmatic assumptions guide the research design. Paradigmatic assumptions refer to basic assumptions that order a person's world related to what is and can be discovered (O'Connor & Netting, 2009). The paradigmatic discussion in this chapter is guided by Burrell and Morgan's (1994) multiple paradigms framework. The interpretive and functionalist paradigms will be the main focus because they best apply to various approaches to grounded theory research.

The interpretive paradigm assumes that social reality exists as a product of one's mind (O'Connor & Netting, 2009). It asserts that knowledge about reality is natural, soft, and subjective. The paradigm assumes that people create their own realities and participate actively in the construction of social reality. For reality to be understood, it must be experienced. In relation to science, the interpretive paradigm contends that science should be subjective and focused on the uniqueness of individuals and the ways in which the individuals interpret the world. Although several scholars (e.g. Bryant, 2002; Clarke, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Rodwell, 1998; Seale, 1999) have written about grounded theory from the interpretive paradigm, Charmaz's (1983) constructivist version is the most pure. In constructivist grounded theory, data are reconstructions of experience through an on-going interaction between researcher and participants. It is assumed that action and meaning are dialectical, that meaning shapes action and action affects meaning. In constructivist grounded theory, the researcher takes a reflexive stance and studies how, and sometimes why, participants construct meanings and actions in specific situations (Charmaz, 2006). The researcher's interpretative understanding, rather than the researcher's explanation, of how the participant creates his or her understanding and meaning

of reality is the result of the analysis. The result of a study is presented as a story or a narrative told by the researcher with a focus on understanding the meaning of social processes.

Positioned from an objectivist positivistic perspective, the functionalist paradigm assumes that social reality exists outside the individual (O'Connor & Netting, 2009). It further assumes that reality is beyond individual knowledge so people are products of their environments. Hence, knowledge about social reality is concrete and there are facts that can be generally known. The functionalist paradigm emphasizes commonalities over individual differences. Thus, natural science methods are preferred due to their aim to control and manipulate data with the goal of generalizability. Grounded theory methods originally developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and later separately by Glaser (1978, 1992) and Strauss (1987; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998) fall within the functionalist paradigm. Positivist methods are based on the assumptions that the research can be generalized eventually. Its logic, analytic procedures, comparative methods, and conceptual assumptions of an external world are discernible, unbiased by the observer, and theory is discoverable. Therefore, this research project falls within the functionalist paradigm.

The question remains, of the many varieties of positivistic grounded theory methods, which one best fits the purposes of this project. Glaser and Strauss (1967) approach is not an ideal choice because it does not provide a prescriptive means of conducting grounded theory, but rather presented strengths of grounded theory method and outlined the key elements to encourage others to develop the method. Glaser's (1978) *Theoretical Sensitivity* is a more open-ended data-driven approach that lacks specificity for researchers to follow. Furthermore, Glaser (1992) required researchers to suspend their knowledge of literature and experience by taking a "no preconceived approach" to the method (p. 50). Because this project requires the detailing of

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prior knowledge in Chapter II, Glaser's approach is not well suited. Despite its position in the functionalist paradigm, Strauss (1987) advocated for researchers to use themselves and the researcher's past experiences in addition to the literature in the research process. Because the goal of this study is to develop a theory for generalizability, the study will be as positivistic as possible. The use of self for theory development is too subjective for the purposes of this study and, thus, Strauss's (1987) approach is not a good fit for this project.

　　Among Strauss and Corbin's (1990, 1998; Corbin & Strauss, 2008) *Basics of Qualitative Research* editions, each edition became less prescriptive with the third edition (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) moving towards the interpretive paradigm, finally actualized in Corbin and Strauss (2008). The first edition (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) was selected for this study because it offered a prescriptive systematic approach with clearly outlined steps and stages to building a theory at the substantive level. This structure helped to keep the project as objective as possible for the purposes of building a theory that can eventually be tested and developed in order to be generalizable. In relation to prior knowledge, Strauss and Corbin (1990) encouraged the use of discipline-based knowledge as long as the knowledge fits the data and is not inappropriately applied. That position is in line with traditional scientific methods of research and is a good fit for this project. Therefore, the first edition (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) was used to guide this study. Finally, because the first edition was heavily influenced by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss (1987), relevant aspects of these were also incorporated. The following aspects were incorporated from Glaser and Strauss (1967): 1) theoretical sampling, 2) selective coding, and 3) rigor criteria. Memoing was incorporated from Strauss (1987).

Design

The research design examined the development of the Richmond, Virginia Asian American community informal support network and its informal support to address its own community needs. A grounded theory method that is emergent using systematic procedures was used to conduct in-depth, qualitative interviews with leaders of the community. The products of this study consist of needs/resources matrices and a testable theory. The researcher used an interview guide for each interview with dimensions, questions, and probes. The method of this project was emergent due to the progression of theory development. Overall, the design of this project followed a framework in which sampling was done systematically, the questions remained the same from interview to interview. Thematic analysis followed each interview in order to determine what change in probes in questions was needed within the same subgroup participants. Detailed analysis of all data followed the steps outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Miles and Huberman (1994) and is described separately for each of the study's products. The main purpose of the study was to generate a theory of the process of developing an informal support network experienced by Asian American community leaders. Secondly, the researcher also set out to inform the Richmond Asian American community of its needs and resources.

Sampling

While the goal of this project was to develop a theory that can eventually be tested and generalized, the concern was not on representativeness of the sample, but of categories in their varying forms (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). As such, sampling was purposive for maximum variation and at times focused on theoretical sampling, which guides decisions about what data should be collected next based on the theory that is being constructed.

Maximum variation was the goal for the purpose of capturing as much diversity as possible (Flick, 2006). Maximum variation helped the researcher select participants most likely to provide data about the development of an informal support network, with the goal of uncovering as many potentially relevant categories as possible within as great a range of information as possible. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), the more variation uncovered in the study, the more likely it is that the propositions developed for the theory about the informal support network will apply to a broad range of situations.

Because of the heterogeneity within the Asian American population, subgroup membership as measured by how leaders identified themselves by their native country and/or their ethnicity constituted a major variation. The second variation was leaders' backgrounds, which include career and experience considerations, and interests in the community. One's background and interests may influence which of Müller's (1958) 14 social systems develop in the community. The last variation was the leader's gender, by gatekeepers' identification, due to the patriarchal nature of many Asian cultures and the fact that culture seems to be one of the major barriers in service use (i.e. Casado & Leung, 2001; Min & Moon, 2006; Sue, 1988). In summary, during sampling, all leaders interviewed were coded in accordance to the following three variations: subgroup identification and membership, leadership in social systems, and gender.

Theoretical sampling saturates categories and establishes relations between categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Theoretical sampling was part of purposive sampling to help best form the theory for this project when it was needed (Creswell, 2007). The aim of theoretical sampling is to sample individuals who can provide information indicative of categories, their properties, and their dimensions in order to develop and conceptually relate them. Theoretical

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sampling is driven by the emerging categories and propositions, the need for theoretical elaboration, and the need to ground the developing theory in the empirical data. Theoretical sampling helps to fill out categories, to discover variation within them, and to define gaps between them. Between each interview, the researcher assessed the need for theoretical sampling by conducting a thematic analysis to identify categories, assessing the complexity of each category, and defining gaps for theory development. Based on the gaps identified, the researcher changed probes within the interview questions to fill in the gaps and potential participants were recruited and selected with this in mind. The sample frame of leaders in the Richmond Asian American community remained the same throughout the project. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), the more systematic and widespread the theoretical sampling, the more completely the conditions and variations will be discovered. This process contributes to greater generalizability, precision, and predictive capacity.

Interviewing and sampling ceased when saturation of each category was reached. This project reached saturation when the researcher determined that additional data no longer contributed to discovering anything new about a category; the categories were theoretically dense or complex; and the relationships between categories could be established (O'Connor, 2002). In other words, categories were theoretically saturated when the addition of another indicator to those already grouped under a category did not appear to generate signficiantly new insights about that category. Glaser and Strauss (1967) stressed the importance of theoretical sampling for saturation in order to develop a theory that is conceptually adequate. O'Connor (2002) estimated a total sample of 25 to 30 participants for a positivisitc study to reach saturation. In the case of this project, a total of 39 leaders were interviewed.

The population of interest for the study was comprised of leaders of the Asian American community in the greater Richmond, Virginia area. In many Asian cultures, leaders are usually elders of the community who are well respected for their wisdom and experience. Because of ethnic identity, language proficiency, and connection to the dominant society, leaders of Asian American communities may not be limited to only elders. Nevertheless, the leaders of the community are still respected for their knowledge and wisdom. This knowledge is what makes many leaders the bridges and spokespersons within and outside the Asian American community. Leaders included individuals who held formal leadership roles with respect to Asian American organizations. Leaders were individuals who contributed to the culture of the Asian American community that embodied shared norms, values, beliefs, and attitudes that promote mutual caring and sharing. For this project, a leader had formal or informal influence in the Asian American community and was identified by more than two people as a leader and who added to the maximum variation along subgroup, gender, and Müller's (1958) social systems. Specifically related to the development of an informal support network, it was assumed that leaders were aware of the needs of the community, the service gaps in the community, and how to develop the informal culturally appropriate support network specifically for the community.

The researcher had access to the leaders of the greater Richmond Asian American community through her community work. To recruit participants for this study, she used a recruiting script to solicit participants (Appendix B). Because the researcher had only been involved in the Asian American community for a short time, there were some leaders interviewed who she did not know personally. In those situations, she asked individuals whom she knew for assistance. They used a separate recruitment script without revealing the identity of the potential participant to the researcher until the potential participant gave consent to be

contacted or contacted the researcher directly (Appendix C). The recruiters never knew who did

or did not participate in the research.

Data Collection

The methodology for this study was qualitative. Data collection consisted of interviews

with leaders of the greater Richmond, Virginia Asian American community From June 2012 to

September 2012. All of the interviews were conducted in person with the exception of two

interviews that were completed over the telephone. Phone interviews were an option for those

who could not participate in the study otherwise, either because they were not able to meet in

person, they felt more comfortable doing the interview over the phone, or they believed they

would have more privacy and could speak more freely on the phone.

Because subgroup representation was one of this study's sampling variations, the

researcher conducted interviews by subgroup. The number of individuals interviewed for each

subgroup was proportional to the group's population in the Richmond metropolitan statistical

area (MSA) as well as the subgroup's presence in the Asian American community. Similar to

the overall United States population, the top subgroups in the Richmond MSA are Indian,

Vietnamese, Korean, Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese (U. S. Census Bureau, 2005). The original

plan was to interview two to four leaders from the top subgroups. At the conclusion of the data

collection process, three leaders were interviewed from the Indian subgroup and four leaders

were interviewed from the remaining top subgroups. An interview with a fourth Indian leader

was cancelled and never could be rescheduled. In addition to the top six subgroups, the

following subgroups are also present in the Richmond metropolitan area: Bangladeshi,

Bhutanese, Burmese, Cambodian, Indonesian, Laotian, Malaysian, Pakistani, Singaporean, Sri

Lankan, and Thai. Not all of the smaller subgroups were expected to be included in this study

because leaders of such communities might not as yet have emerged. The researcher had originally planned to interview zero to two leaders from the smaller subgroups. At the conclusion of the data collection process, all subgroups were included with the following subgroups having two participants: Bhutanese, Malaysian, Pakistani, Singaporean, and Thai. The following subgroups had one participant: Bangladeshi, Burmese, Cambodian, Indonesian, Laotian, and Sri Lankan. The difference between including one or two leaders from the smaller subgroups depended on the size of the community, the extent of the informal support network, and access to leaders.

The order of subgroup to be interviewed was based on numerical presence in the community as well as the availability of the leaders. Subgroups with the most presence in the community were interviewed first because it was thought they would have knowledge of and be part of a more developed or connected informal support network. This strategy also allowed as many categories as possible to develop as soon as possible. Although O'Connor (2002) recommended 25 to 30 interviews to reach saturation, the total number of leaders interviewed was 39 due to great recruiting efforts and leaders' eagerness to participate in the study.

Data collection was an emergent process. The researcher used an interview guide for each interview that consisted of an overview of the research and the research process (Appendix A). The interview guide also included dimensions of informal network development. The dimensions include the following: 1) needs; 2) development of resources; and 3) helping process. Each dimension contained questions that were asked of all participants. Questions were developed based on the gaps identified in the literature, during the development of a theoretical model based on the literature, and expert knowledge of the researcher's dissertation committee. Figure 1 is the theoretical model developed prior to the start of data collection.

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Needs

Informal
Support
Network

Development of resources

Helping Process:
- How Help Changed Over Time
- Future/Next Steps
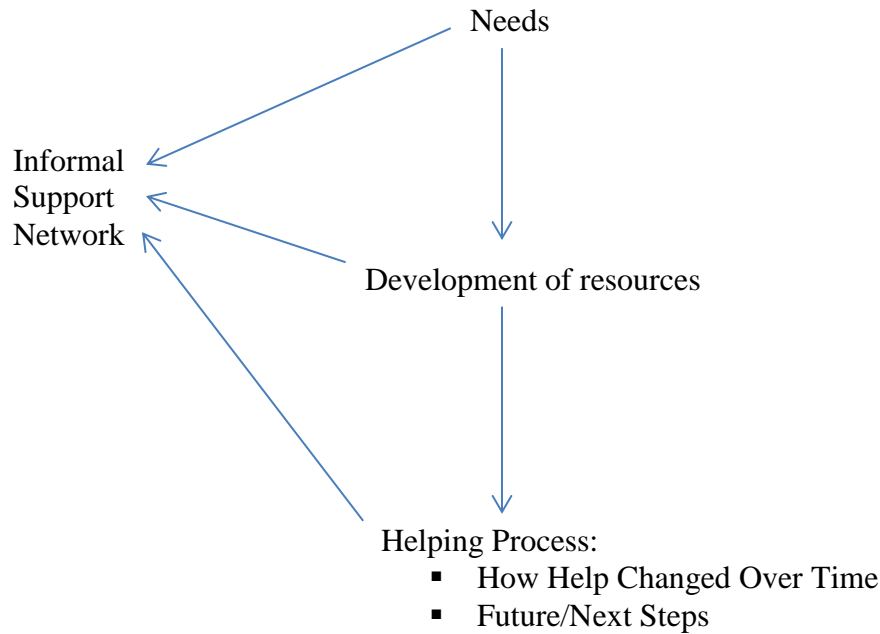
Figure 1. Theoretical Model Prior to Data Collection

    Research questions contained probes to further delineate the information needed. The dimensions and questions of the interview remained the same throughout data collection. Due to the emergent nature of grounded theory, informal thematic analysis between interviews within the same subgroup interviews lead to changes in probes for clarity and/or extension of information. This was used to test new understanding gained from the previous interviews among the same subgroup members. The researcher went back to the original set of questions and probes for each new subgroup. This strategy allowed for theory testing with each subgroup and comparison among the subgroups at the end of the theory development process. Only categories and propositions that held up for a majority of the subgroups were retained. Therefore, the theory developed through the project is truly Asian American.

    Interviews took approximately one and a half to two hours. The researcher conducted all interviews; took field notes during the interviews; and expanded the field notes immediately following each interview. Extending field notes involved completing sentences; including full

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thoughts; and addressing gaps expressed by the participants that were not noted during the interview while it was fresh in the researcher's memory. The extended field notes served as the basis for the formal analysis that occurred once interviews were completed (Rodwell, 1998).

Data Analysis

Strauss and Corbin (1990) and Miles and Huberman (1994) provided guidance for data analysis. Strauss and Corbin (1990) asserted that data collection and analysis were an interrelated process. As such, the process of data collection and analysis were an iterative process with informal thematic data analysis beginning after the first interview. After the researcher finished extending the field notes, she reviewed the extended field notes to identify emerging themes. This analysis was used to direct the next interview. The researcher made changes to the probes in the interview guide based on the themes from the previous session for participants within the same subgroup. Assuring emergence of the process enabled the researcher to capture the potentially relevant aspects of the topic and while assuring grounding the effectiveness of grounded theory design.

This section describes the data analysis undertaken for each of the study products. Upon the completion of data collection, formal data analysis took place. ATLAS.ti, a qualitative software package, was used in this formal coding aspect of analysis. Coding is the process of defining what the data are all about. This process entailed the researcher unitizing the data. Unitizing is the process of identifying the smallest pieces of information, called units, that can be understood without additional information (Rodwell, 1998). The study had a total of 4,477 units with1,158 units analyzed to construct the matrices and the remaining 3,319 units analyzed for the theory construction.

Extension of Müller. Early in data collection, while completing the thematic analyses of the ongoing interviews and attempting to recruit leaders for maximum variation based on Müller's (1958) framework the researcher realized that an expansion of the definitions within the framework was necessary in order to ensure ethnic sensitivity of the framework. The original definitions that began the project were too simple to apply to the Asian American community. Thus, testing of Müller's (1958) framework began during the participant recruitment process. The first step was to complete an identification and analysis of leader's backgrounds, expertise, and interests. This step allowed for an unlimited number of social systems being represented by each leader in order to avoid the researcher's bias in determining what aspect of each leaders' background, expertise, and interest was more important to the development of the informal support network. When assigning the social systems, the researcher chose not to focus on whether the leader's background suggested formal or informal leadership. The goal was to assign social systems based on all resources and capacities leaders brought to the informal support network. The second step was to categorize each leader's representations in the 14 systems (based on the statements provided by them) while expanding the definition of each social system to include the leader's representations. The last step was a review of the expanded definitions to ensure all leaders' representations matched the definitions. The ongoing thematic analysis that guided the emergence in data collection also guided the evolution of the expanded definitions of the 14 systems, while in turn allowed the more expansive understanding of the roles leaders played in the various systems.

Matrix. A portion of data collected for this project was used to identify the needs and resources of the informal support network. In order to achieve the goal of identifying the needs and resources per subgroup within the Asian American community in a meaningful way, the

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researcher faced a substantial challenge because the literature is clear that there is no statistical test of significance in positivistic qualitative research to determine if results "count" (Eisner, 1991, p. 39).

The alternative to significance is validity. In this project context, validity is defined as the extent to which findings are an accurate reflection of reality. The issue of validity has been at the base of the debate over the legitimacy of positivistic qualitative research. Critics have questioned the absence of "standard" means of assuring validity that exist in quantitative measurement that include explicit controls for threats and formal testing of hypotheses (Maxwell, 1992). Proponents have argued that validity measures for qualitative and quantitative methods must be different due to their varied processes and aims (Maxwell, 1992; Miles & Humberman, 1994).

To justify research findings and conclusions in positivistic qualitative research, Huberman and Miles (2002) proposed a typology of descriptive, interpretive, and theoretical validity. The typology is similar to that of the rigor expectations in grounded theory explored in the next section of this chapter and posited by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as credibility, plausibility, and trustworthiness. Specifically, *descriptive validity* refers to the accuracy of the data documented by the researcher, similar to trustworthiness. The strategies used in this study to meet descriptive validity include memo writing, developing visual aids, and member checking. *Theoretical validity* represents the degree to which the findings are credible and defensible, similar to credibility. The strategies used to meet theoretical validity include prior ethnography, prolonged engagement, member checking, peer debriefing, and use of a cultural interpreter. *Interpretive validity* refers to the extent to which the researcher's interpretation represents the understanding of the perspectives of the group under study and the meanings attached to their

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words and actions, similar to plausibility. The strategies used in this study to meet interpretive validity include memo writing and visual aids.

With no statistical tests for significance, Miles and Huberman (1994) assert that the researcher must take responsibility in discovering and interpreting what is observed. The authors also suggest that the researcher must establish a plausible connection between what is observed and the conclusions. Furthermore, when the typology of descriptive, interpretive, and theoretical validity are met, Huberman and Miles (2002) argue that researchers have the ability to interpret findings using the literature, practice experience, and knowledge of the sample frame to draw conclusions and thus provide greater explanatory power. Guided by Miles and Huberman (1994) and Huberman and Miles (2002), the author kept a methodological journal throughout the study to document major analytic decision rules based on her knowledge of the literature, practice experience, knowledge of Richmond Asian American community, and attention to the sample frame. This documentation of data analytic processes also document project emergence and led to the study's findings.

The matrices construction followed the guidelines of the variable-by-variable matrix as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 219-222). The matrices were developed in several steps. First, using ATLAS.ti, data were unitized, allowing needs and resources to be identified for a total of 1,158 units. These units were then analyzed according to the expanded definition of Müller's (1958) social systems. Specifically, a category was created in ATLAS.ti for each of the 14 social systems. The units were further coded as needs with a "-" sign and as resources with a "+" sign. The 1,158 units were then assigned to the appropriate system with "+" or "-" used to designate a need or resource.

Coding of needs and resources units within each of Müller's (1958) 14 social systems into subcategories was the next step of analysis with the goal of moving beyond the basic descriptions provided by participants to increase the complexity of description and explanatory power (Bazeley, 2009; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Needs and resources similar in nature were brought together to form into subcategories within each system. There was no limit set to the subcategories, however, in order to balance the influence among participants, a decision was made to combine information provided by the same leader for the same subcategory of need or resource. In other words, the same subcategory need or resource would be counted once no matter the number of times that same leader mentioned it. Therefore, meaningful difference was determined by the number of participants per subcategory of need or resource rather than the number of units assigned to a subcategory. This decision was guided by literature regarding the necessity to increase abstraction in later rounds of qualitative analysis as findings got further away from participant textual data (Dietz, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This decision was also guided by the fact that this study focused on the leaders' perception of needs and resources, not on identifying or measuring the scope or level of them. It was determined that to equalize the influence of each leader, the needs and resources mentioned repeatedly by the same leaders should not be overestimated.

After categorizing the needs and resources, the researcher began the matrix construction. While a single matrix was proposed at the beginning of the project, the emergent nature of the findings made it necessary to develop a variety of matrices. It became clear that one matrix would not be useful for the Asian American community because it would eliminate the specifics of differences between the subgroups related to Müller's (1958) social systems, thus diluting the information about the informal support networks the subgroups have developed.

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While creating the matrices, it also became clear that the privacy of the leaders for some subgroups could not be protected if the findings were reported by all the subgroups represented in this study. In order to protect participants' privacy and confidentiality, a decision rule was developed to combine the smaller subgroups so that the results could be shared without revealing participants' identities. For the larger subgroups which were large enough to have many individuals who would be seen as leaders that could have been recruited to participate in this study, they remained in their own subgroups for analysis. These subgroups include the Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Korean, and Vietnamese. The only exception among the formerly defined larger subgroups is the Japanese subgroup because, although the census information indicates the population size is large enough, based on the data from this study, their informal support network is not large and few leaders (all identifiable) exist within the subgroup in Richmond. Therefore, information provided by the Japanese participants was combined with the other smaller subgroups to comprise a subgroup called "small subgroups." The smaller subgroups consist of Bangladeshi, Bhutanese, Burmese, Cambodian, Indonesian, Japanese, Laotian, Malaysian, Pakistani, Singaporean, Sri Lankan, and Thai.

Also while creating the matrices, a decision rule was needed in order to determine a meaningful difference between resources and needs. For the purposes of this study, a meaningful difference between resources and needs was conservatively established. Meaningful (substantial) difference was determined to exist when either resources or needs were at least twice the other. In other words, if there were twice as many resources mentioned than needs, then the resources in a community were deemed meaningfully greater than the corresponding needs. Conversely, if the number of needs within a particular social system was at least twice the number of resources in that same system, then the resources in that system were deemed

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meaningfully less than the corresponding needs. This was the analytic convention used in all matrices resulting from the project.

This decision rule was based on qualitative literature that recognizes differences between groups (Dietz, 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This decision rule was also based on the researcher's knowledge of the Asian American community and logic that for the community to pay particular attention to a specific social system for specific subgroups, the difference between the needs and resources would need to be notable. Finally, this decision rule of one number being at least twice the other, though conservative, seemed appropriate because this study is exploratory and developmental.

In completing the matrices, this cut point test of meaningful difference was conducted by calculating the proportion of participants that mentioned resources out of the total number of participant that mentioned either resources or needs. Use of this proportion means that no matter how many participants were interviewed within subgroup or set of subgroups and how many responses each participant gave within that social system, the value of the proportion is between 0.0 percent (no resources and all needs) and 100.0 percent (all resources and no needs). Similarly, regardless of how many responses were recorded within a comparison set of needs to resources, the cutoff points for twice as many resources than needs and twice as many needs than resources are constant at 66.7 percent and 33.3 percent, respectively. To demonstrate this, Figure 2 below shows four different calculations where either resources or needs are exactly twice the other. In examples A.1 and A.2, the numbers of resource responses are twice the numbers of needs; in each example, the proportion of resources to total responses equals 66.7 percent which is the upper cut off point for the meaningful difference test. Similarly, in examples B.1 and B.2, the numbers of needs responses are twice that of resources; again in these

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two examples, the proportion of responses that are resources to total responses equals 33.3

percent, which is the lower cut off point for our meaningful difference test.

A) Twice as many resources as needs:

Example A.1:
Resources = 8
Needs = 4

Proportion:
$$\frac{Resources}{Total\ Responses} = \frac{8}{8+4} = \frac{8}{12} = 66.7\%$$

Example A.2:
Resources = 14
Needs = 7

Proportion:
$$\frac{Resources}{Total\ Responses} = \frac{14}{14+7} = \frac{14}{21} = 66.7\%$$

B) Twice as many needs as resources:

Example B.1:
Resources = 4
Needs = 8

Proportion:
$$\frac{Resources}{Total\ Responses} = \frac{4}{4+8} = \frac{4}{12} = 33.3\%$$

Example B.2:
Resources = 7
Needs = 14

Proportion:
$$\frac{Resources}{Total\ Responses} = \frac{7}{7+14} = \frac{7}{21} = 33.3\%$$

Summary – Interpreting the full range of proportion values from 0.0% to 100.0%

Proportion of Resource Responses to Total Responses

0.0%	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%

≤ 33.3%	33.4% − 66.6%	≥ 66.7%
The number of need responses is at least twice the number of resource responses	Neither the number of need nor resource responses is twice the other	The number of resource responses is at least twice the number of need responses
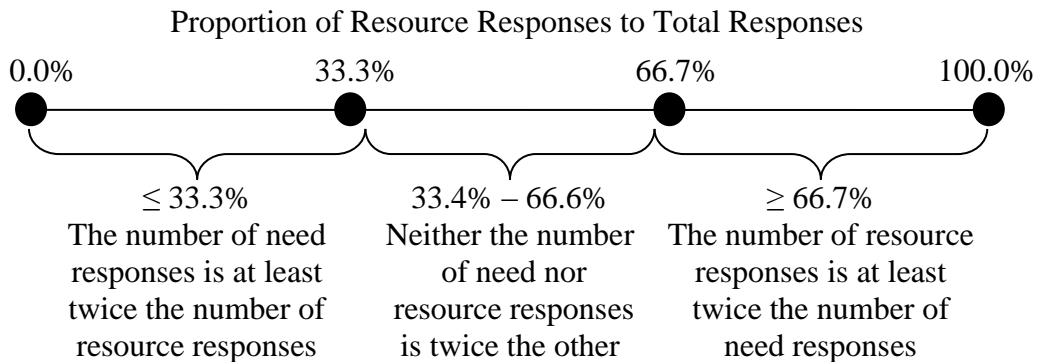
Figure 2. Translating Ratios of Resources to Needs into Proportions for Easier Comparison

Once the above decision rules were implemented, the matrices were constructed. For the

matrix of each social system, the rows represent subgroup representations provided by

participants while the columns identify the needs and resources. The counts columns reflect the

total number of leaders who provided detailed statements. The percent resources column is a

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calculation of the proportion of responses that are resources compared to the total number of responses.

The percent resources column provided the information needed to create the summary matrix. The subgroups constituted the columns and the social systems comprised the rows. The summary matrix indicates whether or not there is meaningful difference between needs and resources for each subgroup and social system. Meaningful difference was established if there were at least twice as many needs or resources over the other. If needs were twice the resources (percentage $\leq 33.3\%$) for a subgroup in a social system, it is represented on the summative matrix by a "-" sign. If resources were at least twice needs (percentage $\geq 66.7\%$) for a subgroup in a social system, it is represented by a "+" sign. If there is no meaningful difference between needs and resources (percentage between 33.4% and 66.6%), it is represented by a "+/-" sign, suggesting that difference between needs and resources is unclear and additional research is necessary.

The last step regarding the matrices construction and analysis was to determine if leaders' backgrounds related to the existence of needs and resources in the informal support network. The researcher first identified all areas of participant leadership in the system and then compared this to the network needs and resources to determine if the presence of leadership in a system is related. Thus, the count of leadership presence for each social system was compared and analyzed against the following three measures from the detailed social systems matrices: the number of resource responses, the number of need responses, and the percent resources (calculation of the proportion of responses that are resources compared to the total number of responses). For each comparison, a scatter plot was created with a least squares fit trend line within the scatter plot. The slope of this trend line indicated the positive or negative relationship

between leadership and the comparable measure and the R-squared indicated the strength of the trend line's ability to fit the data.

Theory. With theory construction, a formal constant comparative method of data analysis was undertaken when data collection ended. Using constant comparison, the researcher compared units to units, creating categories and comparing categories to each other. This analytic process assured that all data were systematically compared to all other data (O'Connor et al., 2008). Comparing the units allowed the researcher to notice subtle differences that resulted in developing the properties and dimensions of the categories. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), making comparisons helps to achieve greater precision and consistency as well as to guard against researcher bias. This process also allowed the researcher to clarify the developing theory and write a coherent theory.

Data analysis involved three levels of what Strauss and Corbin (1990) termed as open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The researcher took all 3,319 units and closely examined and compared them with each other for similarities and differences (see distribution of units for each category identified in Chapter IV). Each unit in ATLAS.ti has a distinct quote number includes the participant and participants' quote number that is separated by a semicolon. For example, 5:31 means the quote belonged to the fifth participant and it is his/her 31st unit. (This documentation convention will appear in Chapter IV in the theory construction section as a means of asserting the accuracy of quotations.) Only through the coding process was it possible for data units and theory to be connected to each other so that the theory generated has explanatory power. The analysis was iterative. Much of the time, open coding and axial coding occurred simultaneously but were separated in description here for clarification purposes. These

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three coding phases have become the most widely accepted phases of constant comparison in grounded theory designs (LaRossa, 2005).

The analytic process for this project started with open coding, which is taking units and assigning descriptive categories while constantly comparing units of data for similarities and differences. The researcher used the constant comparison of these units to develop categories through linking and the identification of emerging categories. A new category was created when a unit did not fit within an existing category. One of the main tenets of grounded theory is that coding should emerge from the data. Strauss and Corbin (1998) described conceptualizing, or giving a conceptual name to categories as the first step in theorizing. The researcher named and defined new categories as they emerged and changed the name of existing categories as necessary based on the data. The purpose of open coding is to give the researcher new insights by breaking through standard ways of thinking about phenomena reflected in the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In other words, unitizing the data and systematically comparing them against one another forced the researcher to examine preconceived notions about the data. It also served as a data reduction technique as the analysis moved to higher levels of abstraction.

In axial coding, categories were related to their subcategories and to each other (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), and the relationships were tested against the data. Subcategories are also categories, but they relate to a category in some form of relationship such as "a subset of" or a "property of." In this process, the researcher made connections between a category, its subcategories, and other categories creating network of associations.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) defined properties as attributes or characteristics of a category. The researcher focused on specifying a category in terms of the conditions that gave rise to it, the context in which it is embedded, the action/interactional strategies by which it is handled, and the

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consequences of those strategies. By the conclusion of axial coding, all categories had their salient properties, dimensions, and associated relationships between categories in order to move toward theory construction. During axial coding, the researcher drew theoretical models to help uncover potential causal relationships. During the later stage of model building, it became clear that subcategories in early stages were actually axial codes that provided links between categories (see Figure 7 in Chapter IV).

Level three of coding involved selective coding, which is the process by which categories were related around a core category. The core category represents the central phenomenon of the study and is identified through existing categories or a more abstract term, which in this case was "informal support network." The researcher moved back and forth between the five steps in the level of coding outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990). In the first step, the researcher formulated a narrative around the core category that explained the phenomenon of interest. The second step entailed the researcher integrating all other categories around the core category by arranging them to fit the narrative. The researcher continued to create theoretical models to assist in determining how categories related to the narrative of the core category. The third step consisted of relating categories to ensure they were connected around the core category to explain the phenomenon of interest. Specifically, the analytic process involved using the narrative as a guideline to determine under what conditions the phenomenon of "informal support networks" occurs, which then led to identifying context, then the action, and finally to consequences, all of which became the important categories of the theory. The fourth step involved the researcher validating the relationships between the categories against the data by writing hypothetical statements regarding relationships among the categories and testing them with the data. Finally, the fifth step included the researcher filling in categories that needed

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further development to give conceptual density and specificity to the theory. This occurred via member checking the results with a convenient sample of nine participants. This data extension included theoretical memo writing and reviewing field notes to fill the gaps (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

During selective coding, the researcher identified poorly developed categories in which few properties had been uncovered or subcategories that contained only a few explanatory categories. In order for the theory to have explanatory power, each of its categories and subcategories needed conceptual density or complexity providing enough details to explain and predict the phenomenon of interest. Noting the patterns in the data in terms of dimensional locations, events, and incidents pertaining to the property of a phenomenon of informal support network was the foundation of selective coding in this project. This process focused on integrating categories to form a grounded theory, which will be discussed in Chapter IV.

Yet another analytical technique suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990) is theoretical sensitivity, the ability to recognize what is important in the data and give it meaning. It refers to the attribute of having insight; the capacity to understand; and the capability to separate the pertinent from the noise. It enabled the researcher to see the research situation and its associated data in new ways and to explore the data's potential for developing theory. To increase theoretical sensitivity during data analysis, the researcher followed the steps outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990). First, the researcher periodically stepped back from the data and asked: What is going on here? Does what I think I see fit the reality of the data? Next, the researcher maintained an attitude of skepticism toward categories or hypotheses that appeared too early in the research process by continuing to validate them repeatedly with the data collected and memoing. All of which was documented in the memos process available in ATLAS.ti.

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Upon the completion of the formal analytic process, a within and between comparison took place with the ethnic subgroups. This compare and contrast activity produced a relatively complex examination of the informal support network that further tested the theory developed via selective coding to determine how and whether the theory held up within and between the dimensions for each subgroup. The result was a multidimensional theory across a continuum of multiple variations that provides a deeper understanding the informal support network to be discussed in Chapter IV.

<div align="center">**Rigor**</div>

Glaser and Strauss (1967) maintained that the assurance of rigor in grounded theory is dependent upon credibility, plausibility, and trustworthiness. Credibility refers to the confidence that the findings are true (Rodwell, 1998). Plausibility refers to the value of the theory in its application for generalizability. Trustworthiness refers to the conceptual soundness from which the value of qualitative research can be judged (Marshall & Rossman, 1995).

According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), a well-constructed grounded theory meets the following seven criteria related rigorous positivistic research:

- Criterion #1: How was the original sample selected? What grounds?
- Criterion #2: What major categories emerged?
- Criterion #3: What were some of the events, incidents, actions, and so on (as indicators) that pointed to some of these major categories?
- Criterion #4: On the basis of what categories did theoretical sampling proceed? That is, how did theoretical formulations guide some of the data collection? After the theoretical sampling was done, how representative did these categories prove to be?

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- Criterion #5: What were some of the hypotheses pertaining to conceptual relations (that is, among categories), and on what grounds were they formulated and tested?

- Criterion #6: Were there instances when hypotheses did not hold up against what was actually seen? How were these discrepancies accounted for? How did they affect the hypotheses?

- Criterion #7: How and why was the core category selected? Was this collection sudden or gradual, difficult or easy? On what grounds were the final analytic decisions made? (p. 253).

Additionally, the empirical grounding of this study was designed to meet the following seven criteria:

- Criterion #1: Are concepts generated?

- Criterion #2: Are the concepts systematically related?

- Criterion #3: Are there many conceptual linkages and are the categories well developed? Do they have conceptual density?

- Criterion #4: Is much variation built into the theory?

- Criterion #5: Are the broader conditions built into its explanation?

- Criterion #6: Has process been taken into account?

- Criterion #7: Do the theoretical findings seem significant and to what extent? (pp. 254-257).

While Strauss and Corbin (1990) provided some guidelines to assure rigor of the research process, strategies provided by Creswell (2007) and Padgett (1998) further enhanced the rigor of this study. Although Creswell (2007) recommended using two strategies for a study, seven were

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chosen for this study because of their feasibility and consistency with grounded theory. The detailed means by which rigor was addressed in this study are described below.

Prior Ethnography & Prolong Engagement

This project was possible through the prior ethnography (Spradley, 1979) the researcher conducted before the start of the project in the Richmond, Virginia Asian American community. The researcher currently serves on the board of the Organization for Chinese Americans – Central Virginia Chapter (OCA-CVC) and the Asian American Society of Central Virginia (AASoCV). The OCA-CVC holds monthly board meetings and regular events to which members of the organization as well as the greater Richmond population are invited. The AASoCV also holds monthly meetings and is comprised of 16 different subgroups of Asian Americans in the area. The AASoCV board of trustees is made up of representatives of the following subgroups: Bangladeshi, Bhutanese, Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Indonesian, Indian, Japanese, Kazahkstani, Korean, Malaysian, Pakistani, Singaporean, Sri Lankan, Thai, and Vietnamese. The researcher is one of the three members on the board representing the Chinese American community. Both of the Asian American organizations are recognized by the mainstream as an important group of leaders representing the Asian American population in the Richmond metropolitan area as demonstrated by the recruitment of organization leaders to serve on mainstream boards and commissions, as well as many requests for assistance or outreach by leaders to their ethnic communities. Membership with the two Asian American organization boards as well as organizing and participating in various community events, provided the researcher unique access to potential participants and gatekeepers who connected the researcher to other leaders who are not actively involved with these two organizations in the greater Richmond Asian American community.

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Prolonged engagement (Padgett, 1998) with the context was maintained through the researcher's attendance of monthly board meetings with the two community organizations, participation in events and committee work with other board members, and other interactions with members of the community. Being involved in the Asian American community exposed the researcher to the culture of the community, which hopefully, contributed to the research being done in a more culturally sensitive and appropriate manner. As a young Asian American woman, the researcher used appropriate gatekeepers to overcome possible barriers due to her age and gender. Prior ethnography and prolonged engagement contributes to the study's credibility (Rodwell, 1998).

Clarifying Researcher Bias through Memoing & Methodological Journaling

Clarifying researcher bias, which started prior to the interviews, allows readers to understand the assumptions and perspectives of the researcher (Creswell, 2007). As suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990), the researcher kept a journal related to her biases and assumptions from the inception of the research process until the final writing of the research products. When necessary, memos were added to help the researcher clarify the differences between preexisting bias and what was found in the data. In addition to the assumptions journal, the researcher also kept a methodological journal to document major decision rules and other details of the research process as it unfolded (Rodwell, 1998). The methodological journal ensures objectivity and transparency.

In grounded theory, memos are essential to the development of theory. They served multiple purposes within the project such as for clarification, category saturation, theoretical development, and transparency. The researcher wrote memos in ATLAS.ti throughout data analysis to clarify interpretations made when merging or splitting categories. Memo writing was

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used to push her thinking forward to develop abstract thoughts into more clearly thought-out ones. Strauss (1987) encouraged researchers to discuss ideas conceptually in memos as a way to push them to think more broadly about possible properties and dimensions of the emerging theory. In the project, the researcher also used memos to think about the possible properties and dimensions of each category during data analysis. Memo writing helped her become more analytical and reflective. It also helped to retain and elaborate thoughts and ideas, which in turn helped to develop theoretical codes. Consequently, the researcher kept memos of emerging theoretical reflections and ideas with a focus on the conceptual level. Memos were used during axial coding for the building of theoretical models and during selective coding for theory construction. These memos were shared with the peer reviewer (discussed below) throughout the project to demonstrate grounding of the theory to the data. The memo writing process provided the key components of the theory building process, which contributed to plausibility. Memos also tracked the links between data and the theory, which contributed to trustworthiness.

Visual Aids

Strauss and Corbin (1990) recommended the use of visual aids in grounding the theory. Visual aids were compiled to demonstrate the data analysis process and its transparency. Visual aids are graphic representations of the research and theory development process. Documentation of the various drafts of theoretical models was kept to capture key points in the research journey. This was done after a major coding session and after any significant changes to the structure of the project. Documentation of theory development also captured how theoretical models changed over time in the network of associations between categories. Different versions of the resource matrix were also produced to demonstrate the researcher's conceptualization of the matrix over time. Drafts of theoretical model and resource matrixes were shared with the peer

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reviewer and cultural interpreter throughout the project. These visual aids for this project demonstrated key elements of theory building, which contributed to plausibility. The visual aids also linked data to theory, which contributed to trustworthiness.

Member Checking

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), member checking is a crucial technique for establishing trustworthiness. The authors also stated that member checking is "the most crucial technique for establishing credibility" (p. 314). Member checking allows participants to review analysis of data and offer feedback. The process is a testing of information with the participants for validation (Rodwell, 1998). In addition to validation of the true value of data collected and theory developed, this process also serves as a check on cultural sensitivity. Member checking helped the researcher maintain reflexivity by encouraging self-awareness and self-correction. This strategy was used at the end of each interview to determine the accuracy of the researcher's attempt to capture the salient points of the interview. Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggested allowing a few participants to offer input by reviewing the categories as they develop. Rather than limiting review to the categories, the researcher recruited nine participants from a variety of subgroups to meet with the researcher. The researcher provided a visual of the theoretical model and a narrative explanation. This was followed by the researcher asking participants for comment on what they thought and whether the model seemed to fit with their understanding of the informal support network. The member checking process provided participant validation of the findings.

Peer Reviewer

Padgett (1998) recommended peer debriefing to attest to the credibility of the research process and product. A peer reviewer is someone who is not involved with the project but is

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knowledgeable about the methodology (Rodwell, 1998). The peer reviewer for this project

reviewed the researcher's memos and visual aids to assure that the theory developed was

grounded in the data collected. Another critical role of the peer reviewer for this project was to

evaluate the general research process and the empirical grounding of this study using the criteria

set out by Strauss and Corbin (1990) presented earlier in this section, which contributed to

trustworthiness.

Dr. Justin Lee served as the peer reviewer for this study.   He is an experienced

researcher who has conducted grounded theory research using Strauss and Corbin (1990) and

with whom the researcher has a good working relationship.   Justin is also familiar and has

experience with Strauss and Corbin's (1990) evaluation process.   The researcher and peer

reviewer communicated on a regular basis throughout the study in order for the peer reviewer to

provide feedback, challenge the researcher, explore next steps, support the researcher, and listen

to the researcher (Rodwell, 1998). Briefings of the communication were recorded by the

researcher and peer reviewer in a journal, which at times also connected to the memoing process.

See Appendix D for a statement from Dr. Lee's evaluation of the emergent research and theory

development process.

Cultural Interpreter

Yet another method to enhance the rigor of this project was the inclusion of a cultural

interpreter to ensure the research process and outcome is culturally appropriate to the target

community. A cultural interpreter is someone who is not involved with the project but is

knowledgeable about the community and the culture of the community (Pochhacker &

Shlesinger, 2007). Eric Lin agreed to be this project's cultural interpreter. Mr. Lin has lived in

Richmond since he was four years old. He has been exposed to the Richmond Chinese

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community since his childhood because his father was one of the founders of Organization for Chinese Americans – Central Virginia Chapter (OCA-CVC) as well as one of the local Chinese language schools. His connection to the community continued as his mother served as a principal for the Chinese language school. Mr. Lin's childhood exposure to the Chinese community gives him a historical perspective of how one of the bigger subgroup communities has evolved over time in Richmond.

According to Mr. Lin, as he got older and settled down in the Richmond area, his parents passed on many of the community responsibilities to him. Mr. Lin himself was a leader of the Chinese American community through two terms of service as the President of OCA-CVC. These terms were crucial because he was the bridge between his parents' generation and the next generation of Chinese American members.   In 2007, Mr. Lin was appointed by OCA-CVC as the Chinese American community's representative on the Asian American Society of Central Virginia (AASoCV) board. Through his five years on the AASoCV board, Mr. Lin has expanded his knowledge of the different subgroup communities in the area. Since August 2011, he was served as AASoCV's community relations director, an elected position. In that capacity, Mr. Lin represents the Asian American community to the mainstream society, including in areas of cultural education and exchange.

Mr. Lin's leadership and knowledge of the Asian American community was recognized through his appointment by the Governor to the Virginia Complete Count Committee for the 2010 United States Census as a Regional Asian Community specialist. He was identified as someone who is knowledgeable about the community and could properly assist the Census Bureau in collecting census data from the Asian American community. He was also appointed to the Governor's Virginia Asian American Advisory Board to provide feedback in relation to

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cultural appropriateness of policies and regulations; to give guidance in how the state government can better work with the Asian American community; and to advocate for the Asian American community.

Mr. Lin has also been the Chinese Community Liaison to the WhatIfCreditUnions Dragon Boat Festival and Asian Community recruiter. He was recently appointed to the Bon Secours St. Francis Hospital Advisory Board as an expert on the Asian American Community to aid St. Francis Medical Center's efforts in serving the growing Asian American population. Mr. Lin was selected as a panelist representing the Asian American Community on the Leadership Metro Richmond sponsored telecast "Start the Conversation - Multiculturalism and the Growth of Our Region." Finally, he was recently elected to the Leadership Metro Richmond Board of Directors as a Community Leader and representative of the Asian American Community.

As cultural interpreter for this project, Mr. Lin reviewed the study design as it emerged to ensure that it was culturally appropriate to the Richmond Asian American community. This process included examining the interview guide throughout the drafting process to determine its relevancy to the Richmond Asian American community as well as the proper order of questions. Mr. Lin served as the main gatekeeper for this project and assisted the researcher in recruiting potential participants; directing the researcher to other gatekeepers based on the criteria laid out for maximum variation; and facilitating establishing the order of people to interview for cultural appropriateness while theoretical sampling was undertaken.

No participant identifying information was revealed to the cultural interpreter; his knowledge of potential participants ended at the recruitment stage, so he did not know who did or did not eventually participate. During the interview process, Mr. Lin was available to help the researcher better understand the nuances of the recruitment and interview process when the

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researcher faced difficulties that included reaching participants and scheduling interviews with certain individuals. The cultural interpreter further assisted this project through his involvement during the data analysis process by reviewing drafts of the products. Finally, Mr. Lin reviewed both project findings to ensure they were culturally appropriate and relevant to the Richmond Asian American community. The use of a cultural interpreter for this project contributed to the credibility and plausibility of this study. See Appendix E for a statement from him attesting to the cultural appropriateness of the process and product.

Products

This study resulted in two tangible products. The first was a needs/resources matrix (which actually became several matrices) that represents the existing Richmond, Virginia Asian American needs and resources by subgroup. The second was a theoretical model showing interrelationships of categories and propositions derived from the model for future quantitative testing. Both products are accompanied by a narrative representation to describe the findings of this project. Together, the products demonstrate and facilitate an understanding of the complexity of the Asian American informal support network development. The quality of the products of this study contributed to the trustworthiness of this project.

Because this study focused on informal support networks, one may wonder why the researcher did not conduct a network analysis of the social network. Analyzing a social network requires an examination of the type of assistance, frequency, density, and range of an individual's social system (Burt & Minor, 1983). This analysis is based on individuals in the social network rather than from a community perspective as was the goal of this project. Collecting information on type of assistance, frequency, density, and range is more detailed than what was possible for the purposes of this project because of its more exploratory nature.

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Additionally, the informal support network in the Richmond Asian American community was assumed to be relatively small compared to the size of networks studied in the literature. The size of the network is important to note because the network metrics used for analysis are sensitive to size and density (Anderson, Butts, & Carley, 1999). Therefore, it would be inappropriate to compare the informal support network in the Richmond Asian American community with other networks of different sizes and densities (Dunn & Westbrook, 2011).

Asset mapping is another way of identifying valuable resources in the community (Dorfman, 1998). The reason asset mapping was not undertaken for this study was that the fundamental component of mapping is the compilation of a list of existing resources that can be used by all stakeholders (Griffin & Farris, 2010). Because of the heterogeneity of the Asian American community and the size of the subgroups, at this stage it was uncertain whether resources used in one subgroup are appropriate or useful for all other subgroups. Community asset mapping consists of three levels of assets to consider: 1) gifts, skills, and capacities of individuals in the community; 2) citizen associations; and 3) institutions present in the community, including businesses, local governments, hospitals, and human service agencies (Griffin & Farris, 2010). The three levels of mapping were not consistent with the scope of this project because individuals' contributions were not being assessed and formal resources were excluded in an attempt to study the Asian American community's informal support network.

Needs/Resources Matrices

Although not part of Strauss and Corbin's (1990) guidelines, as part of the researcher's contribution to the Richmond Asian American community, a portion of the data collected for this project was also used to identify the needs and resources available in the informal support network and produce a summary needs/resources matrix. Although a formal needs assessment of

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the Richmond Asian American community had been implemented, the results were not available at the time of the study. Additionally, no directory existed that could provide a list of resources for assistance in the Richmond, Virginia Asian American community. Prior ethnography included outlining the available structural resources. These structural resources included Asian American restaurants, other businesses, and cultural organizations that were visible to the community and general public.

The detailed matrices by social system provide a between and within comparison of specific needs and resources by subgroup. Within each subgroup, data are provided to indicate, based on the leaders' perceptions, the needs that should be addressed and the resources that are available. The data also provide a general idea of needs compared to resources per social system. The summary matrix gives an overview of needs compared to resources by subgroup, by social system to provide a view of the Asian American community as a whole, which includes data suggesting whether there are more resources than needs, less than needs, or are undeterminable relative to need expressed at the time of the project. Overall, the matrices show differences and similarities between the subgroups to suggest future direction for network development.

Theoretical Model

The development of the theoretical model is essentially theory building in which testable sets of propositions are derived from the complete network of variables and interrelationships (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The theoretical model product from this project provides the interrelationships of categories resultant propositions regarding informal support networks for future testing. To accompany this theoretical model, a narrative representation is presented to describe the findings. The narrative complements the visual aid with additional details gained

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from data analysis. Together, they provide an understanding of the complexity of the Asian American informal support network in Richmond, Virginia.

Due to the emergent nature of the grounded theory method, multiple versions of the theoretical model evolved over time. That progression enhanced the researcher's understanding of relationships among categories that developed throughout this project. To ground the theory in the literature, the first version was developed based on gaps identified in the literature as well as input from the researcher's dissertation committee. To ground the theory in the data of the project, categories were added and deleted as data collection and analysis proceeded as demonstrated in the different iterations of data analysis in ATLAS.ti. Additionally, the assumed relationships between the categories also changed throughout the process. The various theoretical models documented the theory development process, with each version becoming increasingly abstract, complex, and, hopefully, more sophisticated.

The theoretical model is intended to move the phenomenon of interest from mere description to an integrated set of relationships among the variables. Drawn from multiple elements, the theoretical model is a network of variables and their connections, accounting for the "how" and "why" of the phenomena under study for theory building. In the case of this project, the model shows both the type and direction of associations in the development of an informal support network (fully discussed in Chapter IV). The final theoretical model is intended to clearly illustrate the theory graphically, showing the relationship between the central categories. The model should facilitate the researcher's future testing of the theory.

Human Subjects Protection

All ethical considerations related to this project were consistent with institutional review board (IRB) protocol and all documents used with participants during the study received prior

approval from the IRB for human subject protection. Additionally, as a social worker, the researcher also strictly adhered to the core values and ethics of the profession. Finally, following methods outlined for rigor, specifically, member checking and peer reviewing, contributed to an ethical research process (Rodwell, 1998).

At the beginning of each interview, the researcher described the study verbally. The participant was then asked to review and sign the consent form (Appendix F). With the permission of the IRB, phone participants were asked to give a verbal consent which the researcher then documented in the field notes. All questions and concerns were addressed prior to obtaining informed consent. A copy of the consent document was given to participants upon request. The interviews were conducted following the interview guide.

Strengths & Limitations of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the informal support network in the Asian American community. Strauss and Corbin's (1990) grounded theory method was followed to develop a theory and its categories. This exploration resulted in a theory that is testable for generalizability. The study also produced needs and resources matrices representing the existing informal support network in the Richmond, Virginia Asian American community that showed the needs and resources among the subgroups. Together, the products convey the complexity and sophistication of the phenomenon under study. The needs and resource matrices demonstrate a clear description of the existing resources that can serve as a focus for future development. The theoretical model expresses a clearly outlined theory with categories and propositions that can be transformed into testable hypotheses for future research.

True to grounded theory, the study design was emergent. This was important because it allowed for flexibility as the project developed during the data collection and analysis phases.

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Despite the emergent nature of the research design, the project was guided by a structured framework that consisted of a sampling strategy, interview guide, data analysis plan, and products that were produced at the end of the study. An example of the emergent nature of the study was the changing of probes within the questions in the interview guide within subgroup members from one interview to the next based on a thematic analysis of the data collected. Changing the probes allowed the researcher to focus more precisely and to gather additional data to add to the complexity of the phenomenon under study. The rigor of this study was maintained through strategies recommended by Strauss and Corbin (1990), Creswell (2007), and Padgett (1998). Creswell (2007) suggested following two strategies but this study followed seven because of their relevancy and appropriateness for study design.

Gaining access to an invisible community like the Asian American, one that is dispersed throughout the Richmond area, was difficult. The prior ethnography by the researcher helped by creating relationships with the many gatekeepers who were able to connect the researcher to the leaders of the community, thus making the recruitment process more productive. Rather than engaging in convenience sampling by interviewing whomever the researcher could recruit, this access opened the door to many potential participants allowing the researcher to follow purposive sampling for maximum variation, as well as theoretical sampling when needed. Of particular note is the variation of subgroups represented in this study and its proportionality to current census data. This suggests at least beginning level representation for a fully Asian American study.

This project entailed the engagement with people of different cultures. As such, care was taken to ensure cultural safety of the participants. Cultural safety means having participants feel comfortable and protected in the research process they are a part of. Being mindful of cultural

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safety, when the researcher encountered situations in which she was unsure, she consulted with her cultural interpreter and her committee members. Cultural safety also means the researcher must have knowledge about the diversity of the population being studied (Papps, 2002). The development of ethnic diversity knowledge was ongoing and the researcher continued to learn about the diversity of the Asian American population through prolonged engagement with her community in activities, service work throughout the project, and the help of cultural interpreter.

While multiple strengths exist for this project, there are several limitations that should be noted. First, while the goal of this study was to develop a theory that can be tested in the future for generalizability, the generalizability of the current results is limited given the sample size of 39. Furthermore, this study only focused on one locality (Richmond, Virginia) and one group (Asian Americans). To that end, the scope of this study is limited to the conditions perceived by participants regarding the Asian American community in the Richmond area. Each community has unique realities that contribute to what makes the community function. The circumstances involved in the informal support network that resulted in the final theory may not be relevant or available in other communities.

Another limitation of this study is the large number of Asian American subgroups. The number of leaders interviewed for each Asian American subgroup was proportional based on the subgroup population size and identifiable leaders in the community. While the larger subgroups are more likely to have a more developed informal support network and identified leadership, it is also important to understand the informal mutual support provided by smaller subgroups. The exploration of network development by smaller subgroups is limited because of the few leaders that have been identified in the Asian American community. This was further limited by the researcher's potential bias because of her involvement in the Asian American community

through a pan Asian American organization (AASoCV) and only one subgroup organization (OCA-CVC). While the researcher was exposed to other subgroups through attendance at community events, those events are often organized by the larger subgroups that have the resources needed. This suggested that true access to smaller groups was missing for even handed representation.

While an outside audit was not enacted, confirmability and credibility were adequately addressed by the other measures undertaken. The overall quality of the rigor was attested to by the peer reviewer (see Appendix D) and the cultural sensitivity was assured and attested to by the cultural interpreter (see Appendix E).

A final limitation of this study is that although purposive sampling guidelines are in place for maximum variation with theoretical sampling when needed, the researcher's involvement with the Asian American community and use of a well-known cultural interpreter may have contributed to selection bias. The relationships developed with leaders may have influenced who was selected and who was willing to be part of the study. The relationships also influence how much the researcher knew about the individual leaders, which may have resulted in those who she knows better being included in the study, rather than the "true" leaders.

Chapter IV – Findings

The purpose of this study was to examine an emerging informal support network in the Asian American community in the new South in order to develop a theory that can be tested in the future. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with leaders of the community in Richmond, Virginia by following an interview guide (see Appendix A) to maintain consistency while also allowing for emergence. The findings presented here may be more complex than the questions listed in the interview guide for three reasons. First, the questions asked were open-ended with no restrictions as to how participants would answer. Second, within each subgroup, a thematic analysis was conducted between the interviews to change probes as a means to gain complexity in the information gathered. Finally, to create fully grounded findings, they are based on the responses, not on the questions asked.

This chapter presents the findings of the study separated into two sections related to the products of the study. The first product is needs/resources matrices, which begins with an expansion of the definition of Müller's (1958) social systems framework for an Asian American community context. It is followed by a discussion of the study sample as it relates to this expanded definition. The next part of the needs/resources section entails a detailed review by each social system that is followed by a summative matrix. The section ends with a comparison of leaders' background to needs and resources.

The second product of this study is a theoretical model. This section begins with an overview of the categories and subcategories and the distribution of units. True to the nature of

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grounded theory, a detailed discussion of the categories follows to construct the theory of an emerging Asian American informal support network. The theoretical model is then presented. This section and the chapter end with propositions for future theory testing.

Müller's (1958) Framework Expanded for the Asian American Community Context

Chapter III discussed the use of and the need to expand the definition of Müller's (1958) social systems to categorize leaders' backgrounds as well as to assure that findings related to the needs and resources of the informal support network were ethnically sensitive. For this chapter, this expansion of meaning is presented first to provide a context for the rest of the findings. It is important to note that the 14 social systems remained, but were adjusted to reflect participant understanding of them in the context of the Asian American community. The following are Müller's (1958) social systems and their intent followed by how they were expanded for this study as a beginning step in the grounding of the theory:

▪ Kinship—Generation refers to the assuring that there will be a future.

   ▪ Kinship refers to a connection with children, though not limited to an individuals' own children but youth in general because they are the future. It includes anything that has to do with investment or security of future generations or ways to invest in the future. It refers to the transfer of capacities from now to the future from one generation to the next as well as the development or contribution to something that establishes the capacity to take care of a group for the future. More practically, if an individual founds an organization with kinship in mind, there is a desire for the organization to operate beyond the near future. Individual participants are thinking about legacy and the impact beyond themselves.

▪ Health—Health refers to a health system supportive to good health.

- ▪ Health is related to medical care, practitioners, holistic health, mental health, and medication. One aspect is supporting health and entities supporting health such as institutions and practitioners. Another aspect is the focus on problems such as illnesses and addressing the problems or developing the resources available to address the problems. A third aspect is the idea of balance in lifestyle and living well with a holistic approach to mental as well as physical health.

- ▪ Maintenance—Sustenance refers to basic and concrete resources needed to stay alive.
  - ▪ Maintenance is related to fundamental elements of living such as basic necessities for survival, but also includes the elements needed to maintain a certain type of lifestyle. Maintenance includes the infrastructure that allows people to do what they need to do, such as transportation. In the community context, maintenance also includes resources such as cultural entities or gatherings so that individuals can be connected to a community as a way to maintain their cultural identity.

- ▪ Loyalty/Connectedness—Love refers to connection so that one feels included and responsible.
  - ▪ Loyalty/connectedness refers to relationships with others as the cornerstone for what they are looking for in terms of deep relationships found among family and close friends. It is about the connections people create with each other because they value the relationship and recognizes the responsibility of being a part of the relationship. Loyalty/connectedness is more focused on attending to the people in the relationships and building a strong lasting relationship rather than completing task at hand or having fun.

- ▪ Recreation—Happiness refers to having a balance in order to have fun and enjoy life.

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- Recreation is related to life balance with a focus on happiness. This means engaging in something outside of the day to day grind. The recreational connections people make are more about the present and the near term to make one happy and/or to satisfy recreational needs. It is not necessarily important to create lasting recreational relationships. Enjoyment of an activity does not depend on who else is there. It is about the activity and involving people to have fun. There is an emphasis on activities outside of work and school that contributes to fun and joy.
- Communication—Knowledge refers to the power of being informed.
  - Communication focuses on communication methods and the importance of sharing and receiving information. It is giving and receiving messages within the group and between groups. Communication can help to achieve a goal or it can facilitate connection and learning. Communication is also used as a vehicle to influence people, to open channels of communication, and to amplify people's voices. With communication, there is a certain amount of value placed on the current time, what is happening now, and the facts of today.
- Education—Wisdom refers to preparation needed to be a good citizen and a wise person.
  - Education provides context and historical information for building knowledge over time. Education is about gaining knowledge from a variety of sources as a way of determining what is important, what are the best practices, and what are the lessons to be learned. It is also includes disseminating information over time to the smaller and wider communities. There is a focus on youth, progression, and building of knowledge for the future in order to facilitate change. Education is for the individual, the family, and the community with learning and growth the expectation for all levels.

- Ownership—Possession refers to having sufficient resources to feel comfortable.
    - Ownership is the acquisition of wealth and/or leveraging what one possess to achieve more and may include trading what one owns to get to the next level. It is acquisition of assets, property, business, and other valuable items. Wealth is related to money, but also the idea of money and its ability to buy things relates to power. Wealth provides comfort, security, and safety as well as ease and convenience of daily living. Outside of the individual, ownership is focused on the responsibilities of giving to others or teaching or encouraging others to acquire certain assets.
- Production—Usefulness refers to the work of the individual and community in which the individual feels valued and the community is functional and useful.
    - Production emphasizes individuals completing tasks and being active with the goal of having tangible outcomes. Production utilizes and encourages others to be productive and puts others to work. There is a synergy in working together that is better than what individuals can do alone. At the community level, production is focused on activities having a goal of achieving the welfare and betterment of the smaller, but also larger community.
- Religiosity—Spirituality/Holiness refers to meaning making and answering questions about the meaning of life.
    - Religiosity is related to spirituality and belief in power that is beyond the individual. This spirituality and belief can be connected to a formal religious institution where a person spends time or energy. It can also be connected to respect for individuals who represent a higher being. Religiosity can be related to a culture in which people demonstrate honor and respect for the dead and/or ancestors.

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- Safety—Safety refers to not just physical but also cultural safety and security.
    - Safety includes individuals feeling comfortable with who they are, where they come from, where they are, and how they live. It is about living in an environment without physical, emotional, and mental threat of harm. Safety means there is not a need for protection from external forces. Safety also means the ability to move about in order to live and function without fear. Lastly, safety means individuals feel empowered to communicate discomfort or harm.
- Politics—Government/order refers to power in relation to decision making that includes rules and order; can be formal or informal.
    - Politics refers to decision making to establish rules and maintain order. The decision makers have the power to establish a system requiring adherence. They also defend the rules. Order is achieved by a hierarchical system where authority figures are recognized and accepted for their importance and wisdom. The communication flow and decision making occurs with hierarchy reflecting power and the authority to make decisions on behalf of others. Political power also comes with the responsibility of representing and defending those who have less voice.
- Justice—Fairness refers to what constitutes that which is fair. Justice refers to equal treatment between individuals and different groups.
    - Justice is about fairness and equal treatment. Justice is also about equal access to opportunities and resources as well as the creation of that access. Justice involves speaking up or taking action against inequality. It includes the recognition of the need for equality and eliminating the perceived differences between people. On an individual level, justice is about treating and seeing everyone as the same.

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- Respect—Self-respect refers to respect of self and others.

  - Respect is related to self and others. Self-respect comes from self-identity, knowing and liking who you are. Respect for others is treating them with respect as you believe they should treat you; but also respecting others for their wisdom, age, power, accomplishment, and position in life. Additionally, respect includes protecting who you are and where you came from. It is feeling responsible for your actions and accomplishments.

These extended meanings for the 14 social systems were considered in the categorizations of leaders' backgrounds as well as in the construction of needs and resources matrices in the Asian American community that follow. They are present, but feature less prominently in the theory that emerged except as it relates to needs and resources.

Description of Sample

For this study, 39 leaders in the Richmond, Virginia Asian American community were interviewed with saturation being reached in all major categories emerging in the project. To assure maximum variation in the sample, demographic information collected for each participant consisted of gender and subgroup membership.

Of the 39 participants, 21 were male and 18 were female. Previous assumptions that patriarchal notions in Asian cultures would be a factor in the development of the informal support network were not found by this study when comparing data provided by males and females. Proportional representation was undertaken based on the Asian American population in Richmond. As for subgroup membership, among Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese subgroups, four leaders were interviewed in each subgroup. Three leaders from the Indian subgroup were interviewed. Two leaders who are Bhutanese, Malaysian, Pakistani,

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Singaporean, and Thai were interviewed. Subgroups in which one leader was interview include

Bangladeshi, Burmese, Cambodian, Indonesian, Laotian, and Sri Lankan. Of special note is that

one Malaysian, one Vietnamese, and two Singaporean leaders identified themselves as having

come from their respective countries, but also as being ethnically Chinese. Further analysis of

their data suggested maintaining the country of origin designation for these participants was

more representative of the data.

Using the extended definition of Müller's (1958) 14 social systems, Figure 3 below

shows participant distribution in the social systems based on leaders' discussion about their

backgrounds, experience, and leadership emphasis in the community. The number of social

systems represented by each leader was not limited, thus the numbers of systems represented are

significantly more than the 39 participants in this study, with each participant representing at

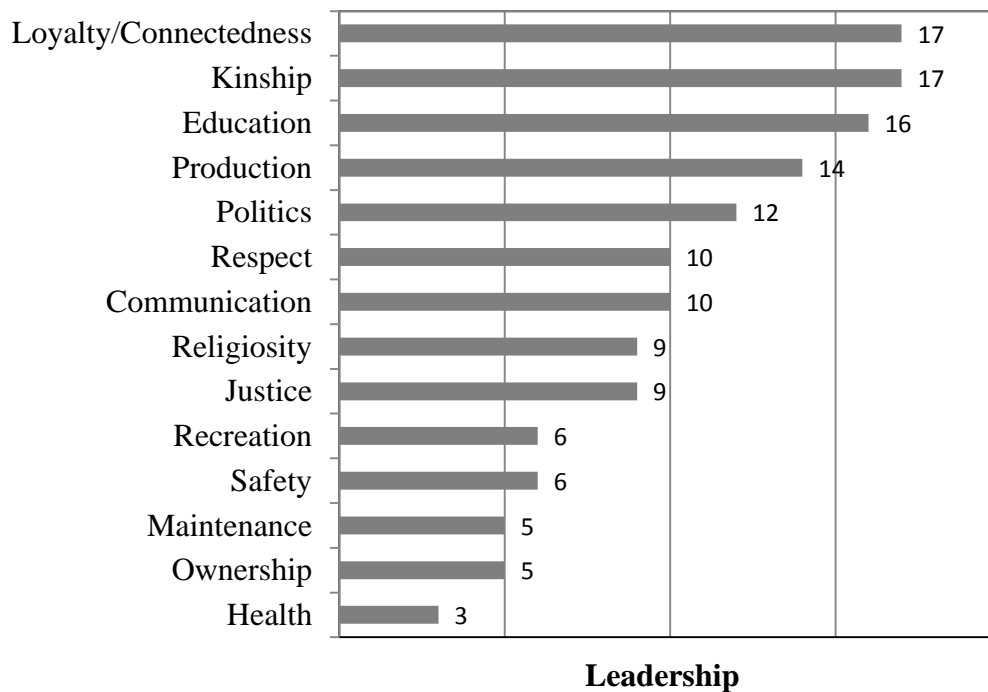least two systems in which they exerted leadership to as many as five systems.

Leadership

Figure 3. Description of Sample: Social Systems Categorization

Figure 3 above is in rank order of highest social system represented to lowest. The top social systems are loyalty/connectedness (17), kinship (17), and education (16). With connections to establish relationships as a crucial aspect of the informal support network, high representation of leaders related to loyalty/connectedness was expected. Related to loyalty/connectedness, the high representation in kinship is also expected as it suggests a way to build the support and community for future generations. It is also not surprising that education is highly represented because, as a newer community, leaders want to assure education for their own members but recognize the need to educate larger mainstream society about the Asian American community.

The least represented social systems are maintenance (5), ownership (5), and health (3). It is interesting to see maintenance and ownership with low representation among leaders because as a new community, it would be assumed that leaders focus on maintenance and ownership to establish themselves and the community and assist other members in establishing themselves in the community. The lower leaders' representation in health should also be noted, perhaps due to heavy emphasis of western medicine given the influence of Medical College of Virginia (MCV) in Richmond.

All systems had leader representation. Based on this information, it was expected that the resources present and developing in the informal support network would be similar to the leadership profile presented here.

<center>**Needs & Resources Among Subgroups**</center>

While the leaders may have provided socially acceptable statements, their perspective is important to an understanding of their perceptions about the Asian American community's network of social support because it is at least one starting point for future development. To gain a better understanding of the informal support network, participants were asked about the needs

and resources within their communities. This section starts with a detailed comparison of the needs and resources per social system between subgroups. From the detailed examination, the summary matrix follows in an attempt to help identify what may be working and what should be the target of additional resources for the future for the Asian American community as a whole. This section ends with a comparison of the leaders' social system leadership categorization with the existing resources as an aid for future focus on both leadership and other resource development.

Comparison of Needs & Resources: Between Group Differences

Using the expanded definition of Müller's (1958) social systems presented at the beginning of this chapter, identified needs consisted of 336 units while resources represented a total of 822 units. What follows is a detailed list of needs compared to resources for the subgroups for each social system. Multiple matrices are presented to show the differences between subgroups related to Müller's (1958) social systems. The counts reflect the total number of leaders who made the detailed statements. The percent resources column is a calculation of the proportion of responses that are resources compared to the total number of responses. A decision was made from a strengths-based perspective to report the systems in the order of highest to lowest percent resources. Within each system, the order of the subgroups is also presented from the highest to the lowest proportion of resource responses to total responses. Within the subcategories, the needs and resources are listed from highest to lowest to represent importance.

Table 6

Religiosity

Groups	Need		Resources		Percent Resources
	Subcategory	Count	Subcategory	Count	
Korean		0	▪ Religious entities and supporting them (4) ▪ Helping addressed through spiritual means (3) ▪ Bringing community together (2) ▪ Spiritual practice (1)	10	100% (Resources at least twice needs)
Chinese		0	▪ Spiritual practice (2) ▪ Helping addressed through spiritual means (1) ▪ Religious entities and supporting them (1)	4	100% (Resources at least twice needs)
Indian		0	▪ Religious entities and supporting them (3) ▪ Spiritual practice (1)	4	100% (Resources at least twice needs)
Vietnamese		0	▪ Bringing community together (1) ▪ Religious entities and supporting them (1) ▪ Spiritual practice (1)	3	100% (Resources at least twice needs)
Filipino		0	▪ Helping addressed through spiritual means (1) ▪ Spiritual practice (1)	2	100% (Resources at least twice needs)

Small Subgroups	▪ Lack of religious center (3)	3	▪ Spiritual practice (3) ▪ Religious entities and supporting them (2) ▪ Helping addressed through spiritual means (1)	6	66.7% (Resources at least twice needs)
Total		3		29	90.6%

Note. The Total row above summarizes all the rows above it in the table. For the Count columns, this row is the sum of all response counts, both for Needs and Responses. For the Percent Resources column, the value is the percent of total responses for all subgroups that are Resources – the same calculation done for this column in the other rows in this table. This note applies to all the Total rows in the other 13 social system matrices as well, Tables 7 through 19.

Only one need was reported by participants in relation to religiosity. Three leaders from the small subgroup noted a need for a religious center. This is an indication that the larger groups have met religious needs. The leaders within the small subgroups are representatives of groups who are fairly new to Richmond and are still in the process of establishing themselves.

Four resources were identified by participants in the religiosity social system. The first was the existence of religious entities and the fact that those entities provide support. The second was the existence of spiritual practices that contribute to the spiritual needs and enhances the spiritual leaders' willingness to participate in the informal support network. The third resource was how the community is brought together through religious entities, thus allowing for networking. This networking is important to hearing about needs and learning about resources. Finally, leaders noted how spiritual means addressed some needs.

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Table 7

Politics

Groups	Need		Resources		Percent Resources
	Subcategory	Count	Subcategory	Count	
Vietnamese		0	▪ Organization and structure (1)	1	100% (Resources at least twice needs)
Chinese	▪ Lack of organization & formal structure (1)	1	▪ Building of alliances (2) ▪ Donating or volunteering for political causes or organizations (2) ▪ Organization and structure (2)	6	85.7% (Resources at least twice needs)
Filipino	▪ Lack of organization & formal structure (1)	1	▪ Organization and structure (3) ▪ Responsiveness, communication, and/or adaptability (2)	5	83.3% (Resources at least twice needs)
Korean	▪ Lack of organization & formal structure (1)	1	▪ Organization and structure (3) ▪ Building of alliances (1) ▪ Donating or volunteering for political causes or organizations (1)	5	83.3% (Resources at least twice needs)

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Indian	▪ Lack of organization & formal structure (1)	1	▪ Organization and structure (2) ▪ Building of alliances (1) ▪ Donating or volunteering for political causes or organizations (1)	4	80% (Resources at least twice needs)
Small Subgroups	▪ Lack of organization & formal structure (2) ▪ Lack of involvement in politics (1)	3	▪ Responsiveness, communication, and/or adaptability (4) ▪ Building of alliances (3) ▪ Organization and structure (1)	8	72.7% (Resources at least twice needs)
Total		7		29	80.6%

Two subcategories of concerns were presented in the politics social system. With the exception of the Vietnamese subgroup, leaders in other subgroups noted a lack of organization and formal structure within the internal Asian American community entities. This issue for the Vietnamese subgroup may be related to the unexpected loss of a community leader which has required reorganization and reprioritization. The other concern identified by a leader in the small subgroup is related to lack of involvement in mainstream politics. The smaller subgroups may lack the structure necessary to involve their members in politics at this point.

Four resources were identified by participants related to the politics social system, both internal to the Asian American community and external to the mainstream community. Leaders reported building of alliances with others, which they saw as important aspect of networking. Donating or volunteering for political causes or organizations was another resource noted by all participants from the larger subgroups, perhaps indicating a developing attitude to politics external to their ethnic communities. Leaders identified the existence of responsiveness,

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communication, and/or adaptability of the Asian American community entities related to politics.

Finally, the presence of organizations and their structure in relation to politics was noted by

leaders, again, all of whom are from the larger subgroups. These participants identified

organization and structure as important when it comes to community responses to needs that

cannot be resolved willingly by individuals.

Table 8

Recreation

| Groups | Need | | Resources | | |
	Subcategory	Count	Subcategory	Count	Percent Resources
Filipino		0	▪ Ethnic entity organized gatherings (4) ▪ Organizing gatherings (3) ▪ Activities for youth (2) ▪ Activities for seniors (1) ▪ Informal gatherings (1) ▪ Encouraging recreation (1)	12	100% (Resources at least twice needs)
Chinese		0	▪ Ethnic entity organized gatherings (3) ▪ Activities for seniors (2) ▪ Organizing gatherings (1)	6	100% (Resources at least twice needs)
Indian	▪ Too many groups with similar purposes (1)	1	▪ Ethnic entity organized gatherings (3) ▪ Activities for seniors (1) ▪ Activities for youth (1)	5	83.3% (Resources at least twice needs)

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Small Subgroups	▪ Lack of opportunities to engage in or awareness of events (3) ▪ Inadequate time (2) ▪ Lack of participation (2) ▪ Lack of transportation (1)	8	▪ Informal gatherings (10) ▪ Ethnic entity organized gatherings (9) ▪ Organizing gatherings (5) ▪ Activities for youth (1)	25	75.8% (Resources at least twice needs)
Korean	▪ Inadequate time (1) ▪ Lack of opportunities to engage in or awareness of events (1) ▪ Lack of transportation (1)	3	▪ Ethnic entity organized gatherings (4) ▪ Activities for seniors (2) ▪ Activities for youth (1) ▪ Organizing gatherings (1)	8	72.7% (Resources at least twice needs)
Vietnamese	▪ Lack of resources (2) ▪ Lack of opportunities to engage in or awareness of events (2)	4	▪ Ethnic entity organized gatherings (4) ▪ Organizing gatherings (2) ▪ Activities for seniors (1)	7	63.6% (Neither resources nor needs twice the other)
Total		16		73	79.7%

Participants reported six subcategories of needs that are related to the recreation social system. Leaders suggested community members do not have adequate time to devote to recreation. A leader in the Indian subgroup noted there were too many groups within the Indian American community with similar purposes that competed for the same resources and engagement of community members. Leaders also reported lack of participation among community members when recreational activities are organized. Lack of transportation was a reason noted for lack of participation in recreational activities. "Lack of opportunities to engage" or "awareness of events" are other reasons mentioned for lack of participation. Finally, two Vietnamese leaders noted lack of funding resources to have recreational activities.

Six subcategories of resources were identified for the recreation social system. Gatherings organized by leaders as well as by ethnic entities were noted. Leaders also reported

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informal gatherings for recreation, with a majority of these being among the small subgroups, since they tend not to have ethnic entities to organize and sponsor large gatherings. Encouragement of recreation activities was reported by a Filipino leader. Leaders identified activities organized for older adults largely to overcome isolation and to provide information about old age and aging. Lastly, recreational activities were identified that teach youth about the Asian culture and keep them engaged in the community.

Table 9

Loyalty/Connectedness

	Need		Resources		
Groups	Subcategory	Count	Subcategory	Count	Percent Resources
Chinese		0	▪ Connecting people in the network (3) ▪ Loyalty to culture (2) ▪ Promoting unity (2) ▪ Connecting with the mainstream (1) ▪ Resource brokers (1)	9	100% (Resources at least twice needs)
Vietnamese		0	▪ Loyalty to culture (2) ▪ Resource brokers (2) ▪ Promoting unity (1) ▪ Connecting people in the network (1) ▪ Connecting with the mainstream (1)	7	100% (Resources at least twice needs)
Filipino	▪ Inadequate networking (1) ▪ Weak sense of community (1)	2	▪ Connecting people in the network (4) ▪ Loyalty to culture (3) ▪ Promoting unity (2) ▪ Resource brokers (2) ▪ Connecting with the mainstream (1)	12	85.7% (Resources at least twice needs)
Indian	▪ Inadequate networking (2) ▪ Weak sense of community (1)	3	▪ Connecting people in the network (3) ▪ Loyalty to culture (3) ▪ Promoting unity (2) ▪ Resource brokers (2)	10	76.9% (Resources at least twice needs)

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Small Subgroups	• Weak sense of community (8) • Inadequate networking (5)	13	• Resource brokers (11) • Connecting people in the network (10) • Loyalty to culture (6) • Connecting with the mainstream (4) • Promoting unity (4)	35	72.9% (Resources at least twice needs)
Korean	• Religious entities providing help only to members (2) • Inadequate networking (1) • Weak sense of community (1)	4	• Connecting people in the network (3) • Loyalty to culture (2) • Promoting unity (2) • Resource brokers (1) • Connecting with the mainstream (1)	9	69.2% (Resources at least twice needs)
Total		22		82	78.8%

Three types of needs were noted by leaders in relation to loyalty/connectedness. A weak sense of community among community members was expressed by leaders. When speaking about the future of the informal support network, leaders emphasized the need to increase engagement of community members. Leaders also stated there is inadequate networking in the informal support network. This is important because this study found that people are helped based on who they know. Increasing networking may mean more people will be helped. Finally, leaders in the Korean subgroup worried that religious entities provide help only to their members. This is a concern because it suggests those not connected to the religious entities within the Korean subgroup are isolated from that community and may not get the help they need.

Five resources were noted by participants related to loyalty/connectedness. Leaders assert that all groups connect people in the network and that the helping process is relationship based. Leaders noted connecting people with mainstream services, but it is infrequent. All subgroups had leaders who expressed a loyalty to their culture. This suggests influence of Asian culture in the informal support network. Leaders promoted unity within and among subgroups.

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This is important in order to have a voice in the community. Finally, leaders served as resource

brokers, suggesting they may be important gatekeepers to the helping process.

Table 10

Ownership

Groups	Need		Resources		Percent Resources
	Subcategory	Count	Subcategory	Count	
Vietnamese		0	▪ Business ownership (2) ▪ Financial expertise (2)	4	100.0% (Resources at least twice needs)
Filipino		0	▪ Wealth and financial resources (1)	1	100.0 (Resources at least twice needs)%
Small Subgroups	▪ Lack of community investment (1) ▪ Loss of community entities (1)	2	▪ Financial expertise (3) ▪ Wealth and financial resources (3) ▪ Assistance with business (2) ▪ Business ownership (2)	10	83.3% (Resources at least twice needs)
Korean	▪ Ethnic-specific retirement facility (1)	1	▪ Assistance with business (2) ▪ Business ownership (1) ▪ Financial expertise (1) ▪ Wealth and financial resources (1)	5	83.3% (Resources at least twice needs)
Indian	▪ Ethnic-specific retirement facility (1)	1	▪ Business ownership (1) ▪ Wealth and financial resources (1)	2	66.7% (Resources at least twice needs)
Chinese	▪ Ethnic-specific retirement facility (2) ▪ Lack of community investment (1)	3	▪ Assistance with business (1) ▪ Business ownership (1) ▪ Wealth and financial resources (1)	3	50% (Neither resources nor needs twice the other)

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Total		7		25	78.1%

Three subcategories of needs were reported for the ownership social system. Leaders expressed a need for an ethnic-specific retirement facility from the Chinese, Indian, and Korean subgroups. Leaders suggested a lack of community investment to the informal support network. Lastly, one leader identified loss of community entities such as an ethnic grocery store or ethnic association as a problem because ownership indirectly supports the informal network because of bringing the community together.

Resources for the ownership social system consisted of four areas. The first two resources related to business ownership and assistance of businesses even though losses of businesses were identified as a problem; what remained is a resource. Sharing of general financial and business expertise were also reported by leaders. Lastly, wealth and financial resources for communities were noted by leaders in all subgroups except the Vietnamese subgroup.

Table 11

Communication

	Need		Resources		
Groups	Subcategory	Count	Subcategory	Count	Percent Resources
Filipino	▪ Lack of interpreters (1)	1	▪ Network of contacts (4) ▪ Use of technology (3) ▪ Word of mouth (3) ▪ Printed media (2)	12	92.3% (Resources more than twice needs)

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Indian	▪ Lack of communication between or within groups (1) ▪ Limited English proficiency (1)	2	▪ Interpreters (2) ▪ Network of contacts (2) ▪ Word of mouth (2) ▪ Printed media (1) ▪ Advocacy/addressing stigmatized issues (1) ▪ Youth involvement (1)	9	81.8% (Resources at least twice needs)
Small Subgroups	▪ Limited English proficiency (6) ▪ Lack of interpreters (2) ▪ Depending on family for translation (1) ▪ Lack of communication between or within groups (1)	10	▪ Interpreters (8) ▪ Word of mouth (8) ▪ Assistance with English learning (7) ▪ Network of contacts (6) ▪ Printed media (4) ▪ Use of technology (4)	37	78.7% (Resources at least twice needs)
Vietnamese	▪ Limited English proficiency (2) ▪ Depending on family for translation (1) ▪ Lack of interpreters (1) ▪ Lack of communication between or within groups (1)	5	▪ Assistance with English learning (3) ▪ Word of mouth (3) ▪ Interpreters (2) ▪ Network of contacts (2) ▪ Printed media (2) ▪ Use of technology (1)	13	72.2% (Resources at least twice needs)
Chinese	▪ Limited English proficiency (3) ▪ Lack of interpreters (1) ▪ Improved knowledge of technology (1)	5	▪ Interpreters (3) ▪ Word of mouth (3) ▪ Network of contacts (2) ▪ Printed media (2) ▪ Use of technology (1) ▪ Assistance with English learning (1)	12	70.6% (Resources at least twice needs)
Korean	▪ Depending on family for translation (2) ▪ Limited English proficiency (2) ▪ Professionals who speak native language (1)	5	▪ Network of contacts (2) ▪ Printed media (2) ▪ Use of technology (2) ▪ Word of mouth (2) ▪ Advocacy/addressing stigmatized issues (1) ▪ Interpreters (1)	10	66.7% (Resources at least twice needs)
Total		28		93	76.9%

Five subcategories of needs were reported for the communication social system. With the exception of the Filipino and Indian subgroups, a problem expressed by leaders regardless of ethnic group represented is limited English proficiency of community members, which for the leaders may be a barrier to using mainstream services. Limited English requires interpreters which are also limited. This lack of interpreters is also seen as a problem by leaders in accessing mainstream services. With the exception of the Filipino and Indian subgroups, leaders in all subgroups expressed needs related to English language. One leader expressed a need for service professionals who speak native languages. This may be one of the ways to address the language barrier. Leaders also thought the dependence on family members to translate is a problem. Often, the family members used for translating are children, who may learn inappropriate information. For them, this role changes the dynamics within the family. In addition, leaders expressed the need to improve communication between and within groups. Finally, one leader noted a need to learn technology in order to improve communication.

Participants noted eight types of resources related to communication. Leaders mentioned interpreters being available, which contradicted other leaders who noted the absence of interpreters. If mainstream services are not taking advantage of available interpreters, it may be a communication problem between the Asian American community and the mainstream services. Additionally, assistance with learning English is provided in the community as well as in the mainstream that are utilized by Asian Americans. Word of mouth and print media is a method of communication used by subgroups.

Table 12

Education

Groups	Need		Resources		Percent Resources
	Subcategory	Count	Subcategory	Count	
Indian		0	▪ Assistance in learning English (1) ▪ Education of culture (1) ▪ Education of resources (1) ▪ Facilitate/promote education (1)	4	100% (Resources at least twice needs)
Chinese	▪ Mental health needs & stigma (1)	1	▪ Assistance in learning English (2) ▪ Education of culture (2) ▪ Education of individuals related to higher education (2) ▪ Education of resources (1)	7	87.5% (Resources at least twice needs)
Korean	▪ Barriers to accessing education or information (1)	1	▪ Assistance in learning English (2) ▪ Education of culture (1) ▪ Education of resources (1)	4	80% (Resources at least twice needs)
Small Subgroups	▪ Barriers to accessing education or information (3) ▪ Mental health needs & stigma (3) ▪ Difficulty passing native culture to future generations (2) ▪ Disparities in education or low educational attainment (2) ▪ Formal education center (1)	11	▪ Education of culture (10) ▪ Assistance in learning English (6) ▪ Education of resources (5) ▪ Prioritization of education (5) ▪ Facilitate/promote education (3) ▪ Education of individuals related to higher education (2)	31	73.8% (Resources at least twice needs)

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Filipino	▪ Barriers to accessing education or information (2) ▪ Disparities in education or low educational attainment (2) ▪ Difficulty passing native culture to future generations (1)	5	▪ Education of resources (2) ▪ Facilitate/promote education (2) ▪ Prioritization of education (2) ▪ Assistance in learning English (1) ▪ Education of culture (1) ▪ Education of individuals related to higher education (1)	9	64.3% (Neither resources nor needs twice the other)
Vietnamese	▪ Barriers to accessing education or information (2) ▪ Disparities in education or low educational attainment (1) ▪ Difficulty passing native culture to future generations (1)	4	▪ Prioritization of education (2) ▪ Education of culture (2) ▪ Assistance in learning English (1) ▪ Education of individuals related to higher education (1) ▪ Facilitate/promote education (1)	7	63.6% (Neither resources nor needs twice the other)
Total		22		62	73.8%

Leaders spoke about barriers to accessing education or information. Some of these

barriers include disparities in education or low educational attainment. In terms of cultural

education, difficulty transferring their native culture to future generations was identified. This

was a concern because it may cause intergenerational differences within the family. Additionally,

leaders expressed a need for mental health education because for them, it is an important method

to overcome the stigma.

Six types of resources are related to the education social system. Existing assistance in

learning English and cultural education were noted by all subgroups though need remains.

Higher education of individuals as well as prioritization of education in general was also noted as

community resources by leaders. Facilitating and promoting education was reported by leaders.

Finally, resource education was identified by some leaders as being particularly important for the

informal support network because it informs individuals who are available as resources in the

helping process.

Table 13

Production

Groups	Need Subcategory	Count	Resources Subcategory	Count	Percent Resources
Filipino	▪ Lack of involvement (1)	1	▪ Leadership development (4) ▪ Desire to contribute (3) ▪ Sharing of resources/expertise (3)	10	90.9% (Resources at least twice needs)
Indian	▪ Lack of involvement (1)	1	▪ Sharing of resources/expertise (3) ▪ Leadership development (2) ▪ Desire to contribute (1)	6	85.7% (Resources at least twice needs)
Vietnamese	▪ Scarcity of resources (1)	1	▪ Desire to contribute (1) ▪ Leadership development (1) ▪ Sharing of resources/expertise (1)	3	75.0% (Resources at least twice needs)
Korean	▪ Lack of involvement (1)	1	▪ Desire to contribute (2)	2	66.7% (Resources at least twice needs)
Small Subgroups	▪ Lack of involvement (5) ▪ Lack of leadership (3) ▪ Scarcity of resources (3) ▪ Lack of organization (2)	13	▪ Leadership development (8) ▪ Desire to contribute (5) ▪ Sharing of resources/expertise (3)	16	55.2% (Neither resources nor needs twice the other)
Chinese	▪ Scarcity of resources (1)	1	▪ Leadership development (1)	1	50% (Neither resources nor needs twice the other)

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Total	18	38	67.9%

Because the focus of this research was on the informal support network, few ideas were related to labor, employment, and producing salaries. Instead, the focus was on the production of informal supports. There were four needs subcategories identified by the participants related to production. Leaders stated lack of involvement by community members. The majority taking this position were from the small subgroups. In addition to involvement, these leaders also suggested a lack of leadership and organization within the communities. Lack of involvement, leadership, and organization may be due to the small subgroups being smaller in population size and newer to Richmond so the network is less well developed. Leaders suggested scarcity of resources and expertise for production was a problem because development of helping resources is prevented.

Resources related to the production social system include a "desire to contribute" noted by leaders in all subgroups except the Chinese subgroup. Another resource is leadership development reported by leaders; it is notable that all four Filipino leaders expressed this resource while none of the Korean leaders did. Finally, sharing of resources and expertise was identified as important to the functioning of the informal support network.

Table 14

Maintenance

Groups	Need Subcategory	Count	Resources Subcategory	Count	Percent Resources
Filipino	▪ Adaptation (2)	2	▪ Adaptation assistance (3) ▪ Help by ethnic entities (3) ▪ Sharing of resources (3) ▪ Volunteering or fund raising (3) ▪ Knowledge of available resources (2) ▪ Help by religious entities (2)	16	88.9% (Resources at least twice needs)
Indian	▪ Lack of professional resources (1) ▪ Transportation (1)	2	▪ Help by ethnic entities (2) ▪ Help by religious entities (2) ▪ Adaptation assistance (1) ▪ Knowledge of available resources (1)	6	75.0% (Resources at least twice needs)
Chinese	▪ Lack of funding (2) ▪ Lack of professional resources (1) ▪ Lack of time or availability to provide help (1)	4	▪ Help by religious entities (3) ▪ Sharing of resources (3) ▪ Help by ethnic entities (2) ▪ Knowledge of available resources (2) ▪ Adaptation assistance (1)	11	73.3% (Resources at least twice needs)
Korean	▪ Lack of resources/ economic concerns (2) ▪ Adaptation (1) ▪ Lack of professional resources (1) ▪ Lack of time or availability to provide help (1)	5	▪ Help by religious entities (4) ▪ Help by ethnic entities (3) ▪ Knowledge of available resources (1) ▪ Sharing of resources (1) ▪ Volunteering or fund raising (1)	10	66.7% (Resources at least twice needs)

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Small Subgroups	• Lack of funding (5) • Lack of resources/ economic concerns (5) • Transportation (4) • Adaptation (3) • Employment (2) • Lack of professional resources (2) • Work ethic and need for productivity (1)	22	• Adaptation assistance (9) • Knowledge of available resources (9) • Resources available (6) • Sharing of resources (6) • Volunteering or fund raising (4) • Help by companies (4)	38	63.3% (Neither resources nor needs twice the other)
Vietnamese	• Lack of funding (3) • Lack of resources/ economic concerns (2) • Employment (1) • Lack of time or availability to provide help (1) • Transportation (1) • Work ethic and need for productivity (1)	9	• Help by ethnic entities (2) • Help by religious entities (2) • Sharing of resources (2) • Knowledge of available resources (1)	7	43.8% (Neither resources nor needs twice the other)
Total		44		88	66.7%

Eight subcategories of needs were expressed by leaders in relation to the maintenance social system. From their perspectives, lack of funding was a concern for developing or maintaining cultural and religious entities. Even though these entities may not focus on providing maintenance assistance, they provide it in indirect ways. Lack of professionals for this purpose within the informal support network was also noted by leaders. Finally, leaders thought lack of time or availability of community members to provide help was a problem.

For participants, with respect to community members, maintenance needs involved resources and other economic elements that may affect community members' daily living. Similarly, lack of employment or underemployment among community members was also seen as a problem. Leaders also worried about community members' work ethic and their recognition of the need for productivity that contributes to their maintenance. Transportation was a need

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stated by leaders as a necessity for maintenance. Finally, leaders had concerns about community members' adaptation to life and maintaining their wellbeing in the United States.

Seven resources were reported for the maintenance social system. Knowledge of available resources for the purpose of maintenance was noted by leaders. In addition to knowledge about resources, according to them, there is also sharing of resources. To maintain the functioning of the informal support network, leaders stressed the importance of knowing what is available and sharing that information. Volunteering and fundraising were identified as available for maintenance of the community as a whole. To maintain the community, leaders reported ethnic entities and religious entities provide help within the informal support network. Foreign companies located in Richmond whose employers transferred to the area were also noted by leaders. Finally, assistance for adaptation to life in the United States and Richmond was mentioned as an important resource.

Table 15

Respect

| Groups | Need | | Resources | | Percent Resources |
	Subcategory	Count	Subcategory	Count	
Indian	▪ Intergenerational conflicts (1) ▪ Pride preventing help-seeking/ resistance to change behavior (1)	2	▪ Cultural norms (2) ▪ Cultural pride (2) ▪ Charitable acts and community support (1) ▪ Taking care of and respect for elders (1)	6	75.0% (Resources at least twice needs)
Chinese	▪ Pride preventing help-seeking/ resistance to change behavior (1)	1	▪ Charitable acts and community support (1) ▪ Cultural norms (1)	2	66.7% (Resources at least twice needs)

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Small Subgroups	▪ Loss/rejection of native culture (4) ▪ Pride preventing help-seeking/ resistance to change behavior (2) ▪ Intergenerational conflicts (1)	7	▪ Cultural pride (6) ▪ Sensitivity to culture (3) ▪ Expectations and obligation to community (2) ▪ Cultural norms (2) ▪ Taking care of and respect for elders (1)	14	66.7% (Resources at least twice needs)
Korean	▪ Pride preventing help-seeking/ resistance to change behavior (2) ▪ Intergenerational conflicts (1)	3	▪ Cultural pride (2) ▪ Cultural norms (1) ▪ Expectations and obligation to community (1) ▪ Taking care of and respect for elders (1)	5	62.5% (Neither resources nor needs twice the other)
Vietnamese	▪ Pride preventing help-seeking/ resistance to change behavior (2) ▪ Intergenerational conflicts (1)	3	▪ Cultural pride (2) ▪ Charitable acts and community support (1) ▪ Cultural norms (1) ▪ Taking care of and respect for elders (1)	5	62.5% (Neither resources nor needs twice the other)
Filipino	▪ Intergenerational conflicts (2) ▪ Loss/rejection of native culture (1) ▪ Pride preventing help-seeking/ resistance to change behavior (1)	4	▪ Charitable acts and community support (2) ▪ Cultural norms (2) ▪ Cultural pride (1) ▪ Sensitivity to culture (1)	6	60% (Neither resources nor needs twice the other)
Total		20		38	65.5%

Three subcategories of needs were expressed by participants for the respect social system. Leaders in all subgroups reported concerns about the influence of respect for the Asian culture on community members, which prevent them from seeking help. To them, this resistant to change in their help-seeking behaviors is an important matter to overcome because it affects the helping process and the wellbeing of individuals and their families. Respect or lack of it is also related to intergenerational conflicts that likely affect the dynamics of the family. Finally, some

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of the loss/rejection of native culture was reported by leaders with suggestions that this may or may not lead to intergenerational conflicts.

Within the respect social system, there were six types of resources mentioned. Leaders in all subgroups reported respect for cultural norms. While seen as a resource, this respect was also connected to resistance in seeking help, particularly around stigmatized issues like mental health and domestic violence. Cultural pride was identified as a resource among leaders from all subgroups except for the Chinese subgroup. Additionally, sensitivity to culture by community members was noted. Leaders reported expectations and obligations to the community based on respect that contributes to their involvement as leaders. For them, demonstration of respect was through charitable acts and community support. Finally, leaders reported that community members take care of and respect elders, which is in line with Asian cultures.

Table 16

Kinship

Groups	Need Subcategory	Count	Resources Subcategory	Count	Percent Resources
Vietnamese		0	▪ Willingness to help for future of community (2) ▪ Youth involvement (2) ▪ Continuation of culture (1) ▪ Sense of community (1)	6	100% (Resources at least twice needs)
Filipino	▪ Intergenerational relationships (2)	2	▪ Youth involvement (3) ▪ Continuation of culture (2) ▪ Willingness to help for future of community (2) ▪ Preserving language (1) ▪ Sense of community (1)	9	81.8% (Resources at least twice needs)

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	Resources		Needs		
Korean	▪ Caring for the older generation (1) ▪ Intergenerational relationships (1)	2	▪ Sense of community (2) ▪ Willingness to help for future of community (2) ▪ Continuation of culture (1) ▪ Desire for children to have better opportunities (1)	6	75.0% (Resources at least twice needs)
Small Subgroups	▪ Connection to native country (5) ▪ Intergenerational relationships (2) ▪ Community involvement of younger generation (2) ▪ Social issues (e.g. drugs, gangs, etc.) (1)	10	▪ Continuation of culture (5) ▪ Youth involvement (3) ▪ Preserving language (2) ▪ Willingness to help for future of community (2) ▪ Desire for children to have better opportunities (1) ▪ Sense of community (1)	14	58.3% (Neither resources nor needs twice the other)
Indian	▪ Caring for the older generation (2) ▪ Connection to native country (1) ▪ Social issues (e.g. drugs, gangs, etc.) (1)	4	▪ Continuation of culture (2) ▪ Sense of community (1) ▪ Willingness to help for future of community (1) ▪ Youth involvement (1)	5	55.6% (Neither resources nor needs twice the other)
Chinese	▪ Connection to native country (2) ▪ Caring for the older generation (1) ▪ Intergenerational relationships (1)	4	▪ Continuation of culture (2) ▪ Willingness to help for future of community (1)	3	42.9% (Neither resources nor needs twice the other)
Total		22		43	66.2%

In the kinship social system, leaders worried about the younger generation losing their

connection to their native countries because they saw this as important for the preservation of the

Asian American community. For them, disconnection from the native country may be related to

problems with intergenerational relationships that also were noted. With the younger generation,

leaders also worry about social issues like drugs and gangs. Lastly, caring for the older generation was a concern.

Leaders expressed consensus regarding six subcategories of resources available for the kinship social system. One was related to continuation of culture among generations. Leaders identified preserving native country language in the younger generation a tie to native culture. Another resource was the engagement of you, which aids learning about Asian cultures and contribute to continuation of their involvement in the community and its support structure. A general willingness to contribute to the community as a way to help the future of the community was communicated by leaders of all subgroups. Finally, leaders expressed efforts to develop resources for children to have better opportunities in general.

Table 17

Health

Groups	Need		Resources		Percent Resources
	Subcategory	Count	Subcategory	Count	
Filipino	▪ Lack of health insurance or care (1)	1	▪ Free healthcare options (2) ▪ Healthcare professionals (2) ▪ Assistance with resources (2) ▪ Adequate health insurance (1) ▪ Awareness of health issues (1)	8	88.9% (Resources at least twice needs)
Indian	▪ Aging adult population (3) ▪ Lack of awareness of health conditions or resources (1)	4	▪ Free healthcare options (2) ▪ Healthcare professionals (2) ▪ Awareness of health issues (1) ▪ Mental health professionals (1)	6	60.0% (Neither resources nor needs twice the other)

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Vietnamese	▪ Aging adult population (2) ▪ Lack of awareness of health conditions or resources (1) ▪ Reluctance to discuss mental health (1)	4	▪ Healthcare professionals (2) ▪ Awareness of health issues (1) ▪ Free healthcare options (1)	4	50.0% (Neither resources nor needs twice the other)
Small Subgroups	▪ Reluctance to discuss mental health (4) ▪ Health status of immigrants/ refugees (3) ▪ Lack of health insurance or care (3) ▪ Lack of awareness of health conditions or resources (3) ▪ Difficulty discussing & having health problems (2) ▪ Aging adult population (1)	18	▪ Assistance with resources (4) ▪ Healthcare professionals (4) ▪ Free healthcare options (3) ▪ Adequate health insurance (2) ▪ Awareness of health issues (1) ▪ Mental health professionals (1)	15	45.5% (Neither resources nor needs twice the other)
Korean	▪ Aging adult population (2) ▪ Reluctance to discuss mental health (1)	3	▪ Assistance with resources (1)	1	25.0% (Needs at least twice resources)
Chinese	▪ Lack of health insurance or care (2) ▪ Aging adult population (1)	3		0	0.0% (Needs at least twice resources)
Total		33		33	50.0%

Leaders from all subgroups except the Filipino subgroup are concerned about the health of the growing older adult population. Leaders also thought reluctance to discuss mental health was a problem. Leaders also believe there is a lack of awareness of health conditions or resources to respond to those conditions. Similarly, leaders stated lack of health insurance to support care as a problem. Leaders from the small subgroups expressed a concern for the health of immigrants and refugees and suggested these groups have difficulty discussing what health

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problems they may have. Finally, one leader in the Indian group believes there are important

misconceptions around healthcare generally.

Participants reported six subcategories of resources related to the health social system.

Adequate health insurance, if accessed, as well as assistance with identifying resources for health

care was reported by leaders. Level of awareness of health issues among community members

was mentioned as a positive resource. Leaders also reported finding connections to free

healthcare options for those who need them. Finally, the availability of ethnic healthcare and

mental health professionals was noted.

Table 18

Justice

Groups	Need		Resources		Percent Resources
	Subcategory	Count	Subcategory	Count	
Filipino	▪ Devaluation of native country education & experience (1)	1	▪ Advocacy & political participation (1) ▪ Coalition building (1) ▪ Presence of organizations (1)	3	75.0% (Resources at least twice needs)
Indian	▪ Culturally insensitive services (1)	1	▪ Presence of organizations (2) ▪ Ability to exert pressure (1)	3	75.0% (Resources at least twice needs)
Chinese	▪ Invisible/issues not being addressed/taken advantage of (2) ▪ Culturally insensitive services (1) ▪ Lack of involvement or representation (1) ▪ Promoting unity (1) ▪ Racial discrimination (1)	6	▪ Ability to exert pressure (2) ▪ Presence of organizations (2) ▪ Advocacy & political participation (1) ▪ Coalition building (1)	6	50.0% (Neither resources nor needs twice the other)

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Vietnamese	▪ Culturally insensitive services (1) ▪ Invisible/issues not being addressed/taken advantage of (1) ▪ Lack of involvement or representation (1)	3	▪ Presence of organizations (2) ▪ Advocacy & political participation (1)	3	50.0% (Neither resources nor needs twice the other)
Korean	▪ Culturally insensitive services (3) ▪ Invisible/issues not being addressed/taken advantage of (2) ▪ Promoting unity (1)	6	▪ Presence of organizations (3) ▪ Advocacy & political participation (2)	5	45.5% (Neither resources nor needs twice the other)
Small Subgroups	▪ Lack of involvement or representation (5) ▪ Racial discrimination (4) ▪ Invisible/issues not being addressed/taken advantage of (2)	11	▪ Advocacy & political participation (4) ▪ Presence of organizations (2) ▪ Coalition building (1)	7	38.9% (Neither resources nor needs twice the other)
Total		28		27	49.1%

With respect to the needs in the justice social system, leaders felt mainstream society treated their communities as "invisible," did not address their issues, and/or allowed the communities to be taken advantage of. Leaders thought lack of involvement or representation in mainstream government was a problem, the possibility related to the justice challenges. Leaders, mostly from the small subgroups, believed racial discrimination from mainstream society was also a problem. One leader from the Filipino group saw devaluation of native country education and experience as a problem, leaving professionals without possibilities of pursuing their profession in this country. Specifically related to mainstream services, leaders characterized existing services as culturally insensitive. For them, the issues related to mainstream services may contribute to reluctance of the Asian American community to access services or to partner with the mainstream to improve the informal support network. Lastly, leaders from the Chinese

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and Korean subgroups saw a need to promote unity within their own communities. Unity was seen as needed to contribute to the work needed in addressing the justice issues perceived by the leaders.

Four subcategories of resources were noted by leaders for the justice social system. The first was the community's ability to exert pressure on the mainstream through a united voice. The second was advocacy and political participation by members reported by leaders in all subgroups, except the Indian subgroup. The third was coalition building among groups. Finally, presence of ethnic-specific organizations was expressed by leaders as a source for justice.

Table 19

Safety

Groups	Need		Resources		Percent Resources
	Subcategory	Count	Subcategory	Count	
Filipino	▪ Stigmatized issues (domestic violence, etc.) (1)	1	▪ Collaboration with mainstream services (1) ▪ Connecting to help in the network (1) ▪ Professionals in the community (1)	3	75.0% (Resources at least twice needs)
Indian	▪ Crime and violence (1) ▪ Stigmatized issues (domestic violence, etc.) (1)	2	▪ Connecting to help in the network (1) ▪ Professionals in the community (1)	2	50.0% (Neither resources nor needs twice the other)
Vietnamese	▪ Racial discrimination, marginalization & invisibility (1) ▪ Stigmatized issues (domestic violence, etc.) (1)	2	▪ Collaboration with mainstream services (1)	1	33.3% (Needs at least twice resources)

Small Subgroups	▪ Stigmatized issues (domestic violence, etc.) (2) ▪ Racial discrimination, marginalization & invisibility (1)	3	▪ Connecting to help in the network (1)	1	25.0% (Needs at least twice resources)
Korean	▪ Crime and violence (1) ▪ Racial discrimination, marginalization & invisibility (1) ▪ Stigmatized issues (domestic violence, etc.) (1)	3		0	0.0% (Needs at least twice resources)
Chinese	▪ Crime and violence (2) ▪ Racial discrimination, marginalization & invisibility (1) ▪ Stigmatized issues (domestic violence, etc.) (1)	4		0	0.0% (Needs at least twice resources)
Total		15		7	31.8%

Three types of needs were reported by participants connected to the safety social system. Racial discrimination, marginalization, and invisibility of the community were stated by leaders as problems needing to be addressed. Leaders also noted crime and violence against community members as a concern. Finally, safety was a concern among leaders from all groups when considered in the context of community stigmatized issues such as domestic violence.

Three subcategories of resources were mentioned as available in relation to the safety social system. First, collaboration with mainstream services around safety was reported by two leaders. It is important to note the small number as yet another indication of the infrequent referral by leaders to mainstream services. Second, connecting to help in the network was noted by three leaders, perhaps to suggest that on the whole, although the informal support network exists, it is unable to address all needs, particularly in the area of safety. Lastly, the existence of

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service professionals in the community was mentioned by leaders as a resource that might be able to overcome resistance in the community to seek help from the mainstream.

Summary Matrix

To summarize the needs and resources presented in the above matrices for each of Müller's (1958) social system by subgroup, Table 20 below was constructed. As in the social systems matrices above, the summary matrix is in rank order of highest to lowest resource percentage. Following the test of meaningful difference outlined in Chapter III, a positive "+" sign indicates at least twice as many resource responses than need responses (representing less need). A "+/-" sign in a light gray box means that neither the number of resource responses nor the number of need responses is twice the other. This suggests that further investigation is needed to determine if additional resources are needed for the subgroup in relation to the system. A negative "-" sign in a dark gray box suggests a meaningful difference based on the fact that the number of need responses was at least twice the number of resource responses. This is an indication that more resources may be necessary in the system for the particular subgroup to meet the identified needs.

Table 20

Summary of Needs & Resources

	Small Subgroups	Indian	Filipino	Korean	Vietnamese	Chinese
Religiosity	+	+	+	+	+	+
Politics	+	+	+	+	+	+
Recreation	+	+	+	+	+/-	+
Loyalty/Connectedness	+	+	+	+	+	+
Ownership	+	+	+	+	+	+/-
Communication	+	+	+	+	+	+
Education	+	+	+/-	+	+/-	+
Production	+/-	+	+	+	+	+/-
Maintenance	+/-	+	+	+	+/-	+
Respect	+/-	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+
Kinship	+/-	+/-	+	+	+	+/-
Health	+/-	+/-	+	-	+/-	-
Justice	+/-	+	+	+/-	+/-	+/-
Safety	-	+/-	+	-	-	-

Given this analysis, all groups seem to have adequate resources to meet identified needs in terms of the *religiosity, politics, loyalty/connectedness,* and *communication* social systems. There are several social systems in which the difference between needs and resources are not meaningful for some groups and will require additional exploration. The Korean and Chinese subgroups do not seem to have adequate resources in the *health* social system. In the *safety* social system, the Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese, and small subgroups do not seem to have adequate resources to meet the needs identified by the participants. Below is a brief discussion of the social systems that may require additional resources.

Only the Vietnamese subgroup may require additional resources to address needs in the *recreation* social system. This group seems to be in need of funding and human resources to organize activities. With these resources in place, it may address the other need of opportunities for community members to engage in events.

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Among the subgroups, only the Chinese subgroup may lack resources for the *ownership* social system. Given the many fast food Chinese restaurants in the community, resources to help develop the businesses seem adequate. What is needed in terms of ownership is related to the Chinese American community. Specifically, one leader identified lack of community investment as a concern. Lastly, two leaders expressed a need for an ethnic-specific retirement facility.

For the *education* social system, the Filipino and Vietnamese subgroups may have a need to develop additional resources to promote education. Both subgroups face barriers in accessing education and information, disparities in education attainment, and difficulty passing the native language to the next generation. Resources seem to be in place to address all these concerns but may still be inadequate.

In relation to the *production* social system, the Chinese and small subgroups may need additional resources to address specific needs. For the Chinese subgroups, development of resources, particularly related to leadership is suggested by the leaders. For the small subgroups, while some groups already have leadership development, other groups seem to need it. Some groups are also in need of organization and general resources. Lastly, lack of involvement by community members is a concern identified by five leaders in the small subgroups.

Only the Vietnamese and small subgroups may require additional resources to address needs in *maintenance* social systems. *Maintenance* needs may be related to the fact that some Vietnamese Americans - though they have been in the United States for many years after arriving as refugees - are still trying to establish themselves. Similarly, the groups within the small subgroups may be newer to Richmond, especially the refugee groups, and they are also trying to establish themselves.

The Vietnamese, Korean, Filipino and small subgroups leaders' perceptions suggest additional resources related to the *respect* social system may be necessary. The theme expressed centers on people's respect for the Asian culture, which in turn prevents them from seeking help, particularly due to stigmatizing issues like mental health and domestic violence and the need for saving face in most areas of life. At the same time, this expected respect for Asian culture seems to have resulted in intergenerational conflicts with different generations disagreeing on the degree to which one's native country's culture should be maintained. Intergenerational conflict seems to be a concern for all these subgroups. Different from intergenerational conflicts, but connected to the respect for Asian culture is the apparent loss/rejection of native culture expressed by the Filipino subgroup.

For the *kinship* social system, the Chinese, Indian, and small subgroups seem to have a need to develop additional resources to promote kinship. For the Chinese and Indian subgroups, this is not surprising because, currently, both subgroups appear to be focused on older adults and the focus on children may not be sufficiently present. With some small groups being recent arrivals in Richmond, they may be focused on establishing themselves.

Resources seem to be inadequate in the *health* social system specifically for the Chinese and Korean subgroups and possibly for the Vietnamese, Indian, and small subgroups. The Chinese leaders identified the growing older adult population, the lack of health insurance, and the lack of health care as specific needs in the health social system. These leaders could not identify any resources for this social system. Among the small subgroups, there exists a perception of more health needs than resources. Because of the construction of this grouping, there may exist within specific groups higher needs than others. Specific attention may be requested for health status of immigrants and refugees; the health of the growing older adult

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population; and the reluctance in addressing mental health needs. In general, the health of the increasing older adult population is a concern for all the other subgroups as well. Among the Vietnamese and Korean subgroups, there seems to be reluctance in addressing mental health. Finally, among the Indian and Vietnamese subgroups, there seems to be a lack of awareness of people's health conditions as well as resources to respond to health needs.

Additional resource may be necessary for the *justice* social system among the Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese and small subgroups. Needs here are both in mainstream society as well as within the Asian American community. With regard to mainstream society, lack of justice is perceived with the existence of the cultural insensitivity of services; in being treated as invisible; in being taken advantage of by mainstream community members; in the devaluing of native country experience and education; and through racial discrimination. Within the Asian American community, the perception of lack of justice seems connected to lack of unity in the Asian American community and lack of community member involvement in the support system and the community in general.

Finally, a concern for s*afety* was emphasized for the Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese, and small subgroups and may be necessary for the Indian subgroup. Among the Chinese and Korean leaders, they were particularly concerned about the local businesses that encounter crime and violence. Safety was also understood as connected to the perception of racial discrimination faced by individuals and marginalization of some subgroups. Finally, individual needs in the safety system are related to feeling unsafe due to crime, domestic violence, and other similar situations.

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Comparing Leaders' Background to Community Needs & Resources

At the beginning of this project, it was assumed that the existence of identified leadership in systems would be related to the general functioning of systems within the informal support network. The thought was that leaders would use their leadership to influence the development of the informal support network according to their experiences and that would be reflected in the perceptions of systems' functioning as understood through the needs and resources present. This suggested that the more identified leadership within a social system, the more resources and fewer needs would exist in the system.

Table 21 below compares leaders' backgrounds within systems to identified needs and resources as well as the calculated percent resources (calculation of the proportion of responses that are resources compared to the total number of responses). The order presented is from most leadership to least in the social systems based on the earlier analysis of leaders' backgrounds. if this assumption holds, the findings should be useful in decision-making about both leadership and systems development within the informal support network so that recruitment and development of future leaders could be more targeted.

Table 21

Comparison of Leadership with Needs & Resources

	Leaders with Experience	Resource Responses	Need Responses	Percent Resources
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
Loyalty/Connectedness	17	82	22	78.8%
Kinship	17	43	22	66.2%
Education	16	62	22	73.8%
Production	14	38	18	67.9%
Politics	12	29	7	80.6%
Communication	10	93	28	76.9%
Respect	10	38	20	65.5%
Religiosity	9	29	3	90.6%

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Justice	9	27	28	49.1%
Recreation	6	63	16	79.7%
Safety	6	7	15	31.8%
Ownership	5	25	7	78.1%
Maintenance	5	88	44	66.7%
Health	3	33	33	50.0%

The table above and the figures below can be used to show the degree to which the original assumption about the relationship between leadership and the presence of resources and/or needs in the community is consistent with the results reported in the matrices. The expectation was that the social systems (column A) with more leadership (column B) would have higher numbers of resource responses (column C), lower numbers of need responses (column D), and consequently a higher percentage of total responses that are resources (column E). In the discussion that follows, each of these relationships is depicted with a separate scatter plot (Figures 4, 5, and 6). For each scatter plot, the x-axes represent the number of leaders in each social system. The difference between the scatter plots is seen in the y-axes, which represent the number of resource responses, the number of needs responses, and the percent of responses that are resources in, respectively. Each scatter plot also contains a least squares fit trend line. A trend line that slopes upward to the right indicates a positive relationship between leadership and the y-axis metric and a trend line that slopes downward to the right indicates a negative relationship.

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Figure 4. Relationship Between Leadership and Resource Responses. The least squares fit trend line above indicates a slight <u>positive</u> correlation (R^2=5%) between leadership and resource responses, consistent with the hypothesized relationship.

The first observation that was expected was a positive relationship between leadership and resources. Figure 4 shows leadership and resource responses with the trend line sloping slightly upward to the right indicating a positive relationship. This is consistent with the pre-study expectations. Several of the data points are far away from the trend line, the reason for a very low R-squared. This is an indicator that other factors besides leadership are influencing resources.

Figure 5. Relationship Between Leadership and Need Responses. The least squares fit trend line above indicates a slight <u>negative</u> correlation (R^2=2%) between leadership experience and resource responses, consistent with the hypothesized relationship.

The second observation that was expected was a negative relationship between leadership and needs. Figure 5 shows the data for leadership and need responses with trend line slopes slightly downward to the right indicating a negative relationship. This is consistent with the expectations prior to the study. The relationship, however, is weak given the very low R-squared also indicating other factors besides leadership is influencing needs.
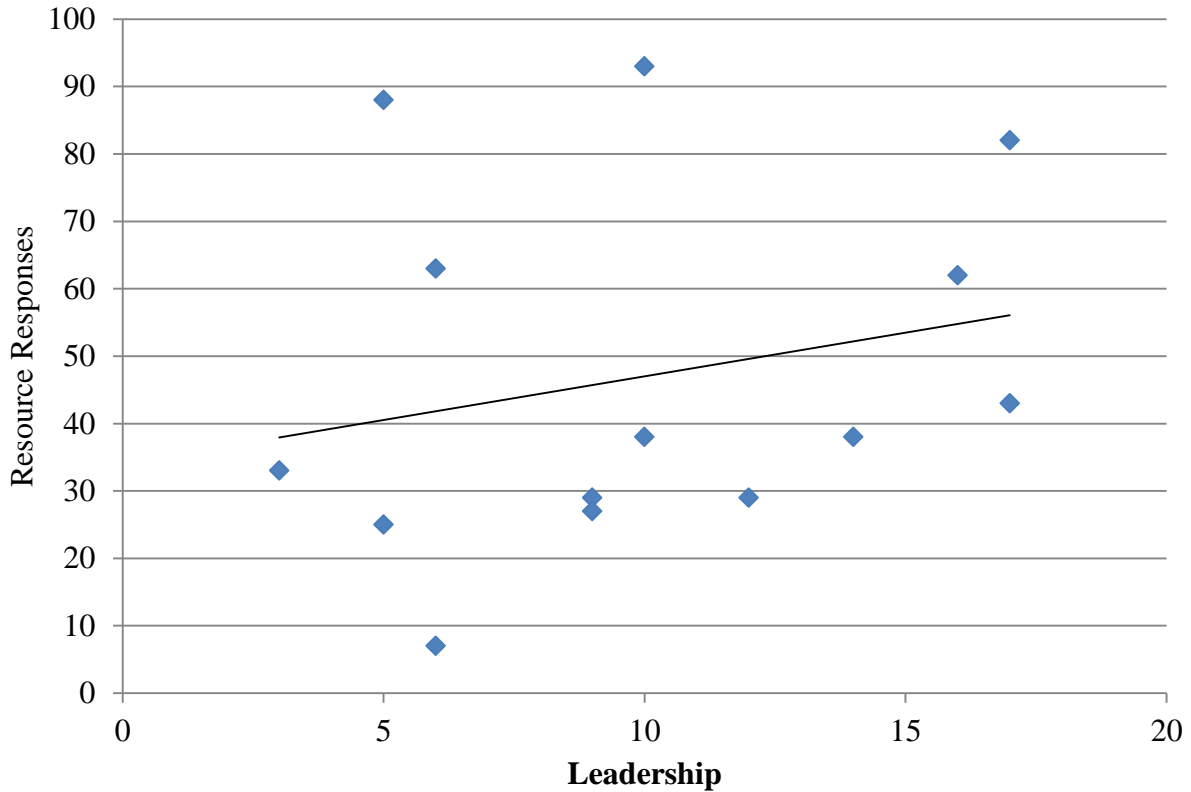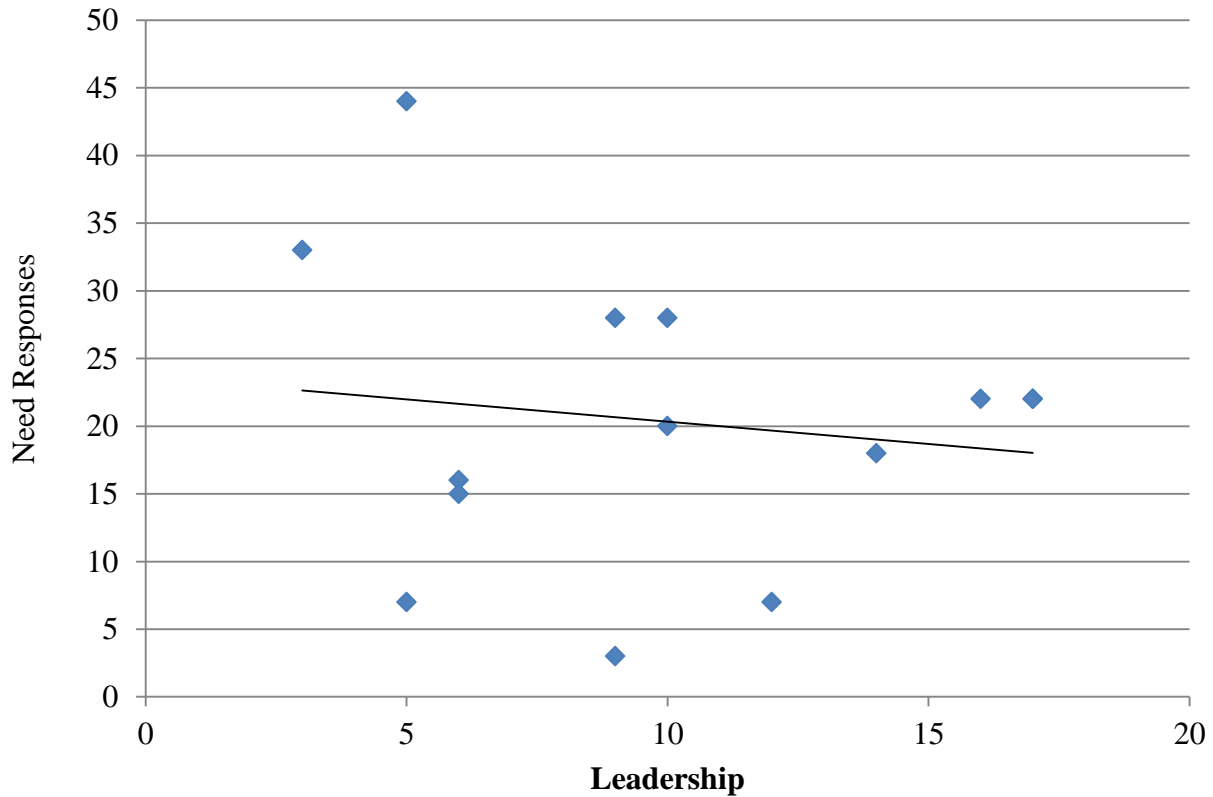
175
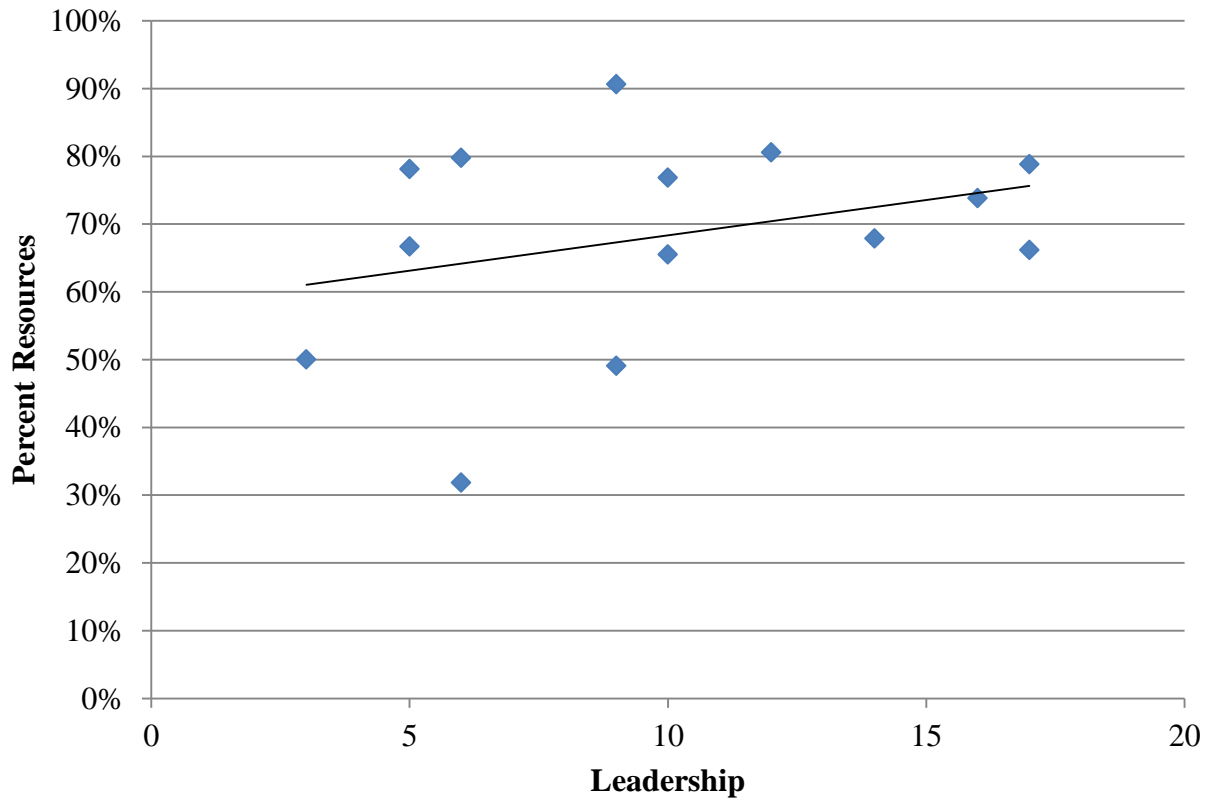
Figure 6. Relationship Between Leadership and Percent Resources. The least squares fit trend line above indicates a slight <u>positive</u> correlation (R^2=10%) between leadership and resource responses, consistent with the hypothesized relationship.

Lastly, one pre-study expectation was that the existence of a gap between resources and needs would be influenced by the presence or absence of leadership within the community and its fourteen social systems. Using the metric of the percent of resource responses of the total responses, introduced earlier to identify when resources or needs were meaningfully different, the strongest relationship in these three plots emerged. In this case, the trend line in Figure 6 sloped upward with an R-squared value of 10 percent. This is consistent with the expectation that more leadership would lead to relatively more resources than needs.

Theory Construction

The needs and resources matrices allowed the researcher to understand the specific needs in the Asian American community and the responses to those needs. This knowledge provided

the researcher a context for the theory development process. This section focuses on the construction of the theory. It starts with a narrative representation of the theory's major categories, including quotes from participants to enrich the understanding of the categories. Each quote includes a code showing the participant number in the process and the unit number within the interview. For example, 5:31 means the quote belonged to the fifth participant and it is his/her 31st unit. The categories are summarized with a pictorial theoretical model later in this chapter. A comparison between the theoretical model to the one developed prior to data collection is also provided. Propositions that outline the relationship between the categories for future theory testing conclude the chapter.

The categories identified prior to data collection that contributed to the interview guide (Appendix A) were the "needs," "development of resources," "helping process," and "informal support network," which were as derived from the literature as well as based on feedback from the researcher's dissertation committee members. It was assumed that the categories needs, development of resources, and helping process contributed to the development of the informal support network.

True to grounded theory, following Strauss and Corbin's (1990) constant comparison process, all interviews were unitized and categorized. The distribution of major categories and their subcategories are presented in Table 22 below. The subcategory unit counts represent the properties and dimensions of the particular category. The categories are ordered from least total number of units to most, this serving to ground the core category of the informal support network. Within each category, the subcategories are also ordered from least to most number of units. In the discussion that follows, each category is first grounded by the overview information and then follows the distribution order presented in the table. The "overview" subcategory captured

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general information about the category and provides context to understand the remaining

subcategories and the overall category.

Table 22

Distribution of Categories

Category (Total # of Units)	Subcategory	# of Units
Mainstream services (278)	Infrequent help	50
	Future – partnership with mainstream	58
	Mainstream services overview	79
	Inaccessibility of mainstream services	91
Asian culture & community (451)	Richmond Asian American community	86
	Asian culture & community overview	95
	Reinforcement of culture - stigma	170
Needs (571)	Consequences of needs	61
	Needs not present/necessary to address	76
	Hearing about needs	115
	Needs reaching community level	131
	Needs overview	188
Helping process (904)	Self	27
	Infrequent referral to formal services	34
	Discrete help	60
	Helping process overview	77
	Family & friends	177
	Leaders	257
	Community help	272
Informal support network (1095)	Networking	87
	Informal support network overview	107
	Network over time	155
	Inadequacy/challenges of network	182
	Future of help	236
	Network differences	328

Mainstream Services

Mainstream services are defined as available services established by and through

relationships with mainstream nonprofit agencies, religious institutions, and government. The

discussion around this category largely revolved around the condition under which mainstream

services would be used by members of the Asian American community. Issues of whether or not

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individuals are willing to go to mainstream services centered around how long they have been in the United States and the presence of feelings of shame. According to one leader, "for those who are here a long time, they may think about using social services, …but they're quiet about it and are ashamed" (10:52). Other leaders suggested more acculturated, second generation Asian Americans may not have the same cultural barriers as the first generation and may be more willing to use mainstream services. As an extension of the stigma of asking for assistance, leaders noted that individuals will not go to mainstream services for sensitive issues that they would be embarrassed to share with anyone. On the other hand, other leaders suggested mainstream services as a good resource for help about sensitive issues, if the individual does not want the Asian American community to know about the problem.

Infrequent help. The subcategory of *infrequent help* is defined as the rare occasions in which mainstream services provide help to meet the needs of the Richmond Asian American community. Participants outlined the reasons that contribute to the infrequency of help by formal services. The first is related to barriers that prevent individuals from seeking services directly ranging from lack of knowledge about available services to the stigma of seeking services. The second reason that contributes to mainstream services' infrequent help is that mainstream services are mainly used as a last resort, generally when informal network resources are exhausted. One leader stated that, "instead of going to the mainstream for help, Asians would rather go to their circle first" (35:44). The last reason why mainstream services infrequently help is because individuals do not use them. A religious leader suggested:

Usually they have gone to family and friends, then me, but not social services usually because of language problems and not knowing what's available and also a lot people in need are not legal. When we visit people, they won't give me their real name. Unless

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you win their trust, they won't tell you. (16:70)

Future - partnerships with mainstream. Despite the infrequent help by mainstream services, leaders expressed the desire to partner with those services when considering the future of the informal support network. The *future-partnerships with mainstream* subcategory is defined as reasons and suggestions for mainstream services and the informal support network to work together. Some participants believed partnerships with mainstream services may be a potential solution for the unresolved needs in the informal support network. The main argument for the partnership by participants is that services in the mainstream population already exist, with argument focusing on the fact that the informal support network does not have the know-how or the ability to provide services that would meet all the needs.

In addition to expressing reasons for partnering with mainstream services, participants also explored what that partnership and how that partnership might look. One participant expressed a need for what they called "true partnership:"

Let's say there's a group that is willing to help the community in light of the issues. The concern would be that this group needs an open honest conversation. The community needs to open up. Failure to do so, by not opening up to the trained professional group, if we haven't done a decent job of education, the partnership will fail. The willingness to get help is important. The desire to be helped needs to be there, it's an educational process, we need to do that. The onus is on both parties, it needs to be a true partnership. (20:68)

Another participant in agreement stated that, "we need to help mainstream services be more understanding, reach out to local governments so they understand us better, move to provide help when things happen, having localities support us and understand us better" (15:18). Yet, another

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leader suggested "it takes time for people to trust the mainstream and for the mainstream to reach out, we got to meet somewhere" (29:93).

On the part of the mainstream, one leader felt that service providers need to do outreach in order to teach and encourage Asian Americans about how to seek help (29:91). According to them, while some efforts have been made in the past, mainstream services have not gained access to the Asian American community in need of help (29:94). Another aspect of the work mainstream services need to do is to incorporate culturally appropriate ways of providing services (29:96). Suggestions included involving spiritual leaders and activity/social focus groups that are not stigmatizing (29:96). Leaders agreed that attention to privacy and confidentiality is needed because of the cultural stigma of asking for help from outsiders. Leaders thought that one successful attempt by mainstream services in their work with the Asian American community is the Bon Secour hospital healthcare van.

Inaccessibility of mainstream services. The discussions of future partnerships with mainstream services are occurring because currently there are multiple challenges that result in mainstream services being inaccessible to Asian Americans. *Inaccessibility of mainstream services* subcategory was defined as barriers and challenges in accessing and utilizing mainstream services. Several reasons were shared by participants about why services provided by the mainstream are not used by the Asian American population presented below in the order of most mentioned to least mentioned.

- Language problems due to interpreters not being readily accessible and heavy dependence on family members as interpreters (n=19).
- Stigma of using services (n=17).
- People not knowing about the available services (n=14).

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- Transportation to service providers (n=11).

- Some people not qualifying for services such as the middle class or the undocumented (n=6).

- Mainstream processes delaying the response to need, including having to go to multiple locations and complete extensive paperwork (n=5).

- Food not being sensitive to Asian American tastes (n=4).

- Mainstream services not being responsive to the concerns of the Asian American community (n=3).

- The need to pay for services such as completion of certain paperwork that can be accomplished free of charge in the informal support network (n=2).

- Caseworkers not being part of the community and not being readily available (n=1).

- Mainstream employees not being part of the culture and Asian Americans not seeking help from people they do not know (n=1).

Leaders expressed concerns regarding the continued inaccessibility of mainstream services. These include the mainstream not being able to work with the Asian American community on more complicated issues like mental health because of its cultural stigma. Another concern is Asian Americans abusing the resources of mainstream system that may prevent mainstream services from willing to provide services to other Asian Americans. A third concern is that mainstream services may not be the best option because services will continue to be inaccessible to some parts of the Asian American community including the undocumented and the middle class.

Asian Culture & Community

The inaccessibility of mainstream services is also partly due to the influence of Asian culture and the reinforcement of the culture in the Asian American community. The category of *Asian culture & community* is defined as values and characteristics influenced by native Asian countries that are present in the Richmond community composed of individuals who have come together to share their commonalities of the Asian culture in a defined geographical area.

Participants described the development of the community as natural due to cultural influences. One leader described it this way: "Being connected to the [subgroup] community didn't take any effort. We automatically came together because we had so much in common" (1:93). Influenced by similar experiences and expectations, participants saw themselves being different from "Americans" and wanted to spend time with people who were similar to them (26:45). In addition, according to another participant, the formation of the community is cultural in that people grew up influenced by their native cultures and wanted to be part of the community where people share similar backgrounds (15:88). One leader explained that people from the subgroups came together because there is a cultural benefit, that when they see other subgroup families, they "…understand the culture and language" (36:25).

Beyond the developing the Asian American community in Richmond, participants also maintained connections to their native countries, another example of cultural influences. Participants are still connected in different ways. For one subgroup, their school receives supplemental funding from the native country government (5:65). For others, they mentioned going back to their native country to visit relatives and following current events.

In reference to native cultural influences and how that relates to life in Richmond, a participant stated his subgroup is "…very family focused…" (26:43). Another participant talked

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about the respect and higher status of older people so by being here in Richmond, "if there's a problem, we're all very respectful and help the older people. That's part of our culture" (38:31).

Richmond Asian American community. Participants have brought their Asian cultures to Richmond and have greatly influenced the development of the Asian American community. The subcategory of *Richmond Asian American Community* is defined as the geographical area in which Asian Americans have formed a community. Asian Americans have settled in Richmond for a variety of reasons, but the most common is their own or their spouses' employment, including company transfers. Even though most participants have lived in other cities in the United States prior to settling in Richmond, they were not involved in community activities there because they were busy with school or jobs. Others who were involved in their communities or through their universities prior to settling in Richmond have brought those experiences with them.

The size of the subgroup communities in Richmond facilitates the informal helping process. According to one leader, "because we're a small community, we're a close knit community, so we know the needs and who is capable of helping with what and who we can refer people to" (29:66). Particularly with refugee subgroups, they tend to live near each other after having come from the same refugee camps. At the same time, leaders acknowledge that real ethnic enclaves do not exist in Richmond. Being spread out geographically has contributed to the difficulty of bringing the community together.

Despite the geographic dispersion and the difficulty in bringing the community together, some Asian Americans feel they have formed a further extension of their extended family in Richmond. Many Asian Americans are used to having an extended family in their native country, but with little or no family in Richmond, people connected with others with similar backgrounds

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who then developed into friends. For one participant, "I got involved with my community because of the need to link to my own country and the familiarity: people who share the same culture, value, same way of being brought up" (19:8). Likewise, wherever another participant moves within the United States, he "…always ends up hanging out with…" people from his native country or people with similar cultures (26:8). One participant stated, "people in the [subgroup] community in Richmond gathered as a necessity to find a support system due to the language barrier and we look different so they looked for help from people who share their own experience" (8:7). Finally, among some groups, "the church is the extended family concept" and is like home where you speak the native language; eat native food; and where members are similar to their extended family (7:38).

Reinforcement of culture - stigma. While Asian cultures have contributed to the formation of the Asian American community, negatively it also influences stigmatization of some issues present in the community that should be addressed. As such, *reinforcement of culture - stigma* is defined as cultural influences that contribute to or detract from help seeking and the helping process. Leaders acknowledge that if people need help, they have to ask in order for others to provide assistance. They generally characterize Asian Americans as neither telling others nor asking for assistance if they have problems. Leaders described their subgroup's people as "private" (34:82), wanting to "keep to ourselves" (10:45), and not believing in "opening ourselves up" (35:40). Part of the cultural influence of being "private" about problems is that people worry about what the community will say; being the center of gossip; losing their social standing in the community; or losing face.

Issues that are considered stigmatized mentioned by participants include mental health, domestic violence, AIDS, disability, sexual orientation, and substance abuse. These issues are

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not talked about. People are not educated about them. People are not open minded about them.

Help related to these issues is often inadequate. For example, with mental health, one participant

noted that people "don't think that if you become depressed, you may need help and it's beyond

a person's control" (2:79). For domestic violence issues, not only are there practical issues like

where they would go, but it is also "…very hush hush and taboo to talk about abuse" (36:16).

Additionally, abused women tend to be "…told to be quiet and the siding is with the men, a lot

of shut up and put up…" (36:16). In relation to sexual orientation, a participant stated, "I see

there are same sex couples but people ignore the elephant and see them as individuals. We don't

acknowledge it because of culture" (2:122).

Part of the difficulty in addressing community needs because of stigma is knowing what

the problems are. The consequences of stigma are that "the issues are being brushed off…"

(20:41) and people are not sharing their problems (4:18). If people are reluctant to share their

problems, leaders stated that it becomes difficult to respond to the need. Despite the desire to go

for help, leaders feel that people will remain reluctant to seek assistance about sensitive issues,

thus, contributing to the inaccessibility of mainstream services. According to one leader,

community members need to accept the issues first before help is sought or provided.

Needs

Despite the influence of Asian culture in community members' reluctance in seeking help,

needs do exist. *Needs* are defined as issues and problems faced by individuals in the community

that may affect the well-being of the individual. Much of the overview for this category is

relates to types of needs explored in detailed in the earlier needs and resources matrices

reflecting the 14 systems for a functioning community.

Consequences of needs. In addition to sharing the needs of the Richmond Asian American community, participants emphasized the consequences of needs if they are not addressed. *Consequences of needs* is defined as what may result if needs are not met. For one participant, if individuals' financial problems are not solved, "…that will create anger and frustration and lead to other problems" within the family (1:45). One participant mentioned that if children learned to speak their native language, it would help them better communicate with their parents (18:34). Without transportation, individuals are not able to go to work and provide for the family (25:13). Learning from refugees in other parts of the United States, one participant stated, "if we weren't here to help the new refugees learn about the new things when they first came here, they would have gotten very confused, some would have committed suicide" (22:21). Finally, without a network, people would be more isolated from the Asian American or subgroup community and lose their culture; not have friends; or be isolated, which may lead them to being stressed and unhappy.

Needs not present/not necessary to address. While some participants noted the needs and their consequences, others talked about why needs do not exist or do not need to be addressed in their subgroup communities. The subcategory of *needs not present/not necessary to address* is defined as the lack of needs or the lack of attention required to address needs. One aspect of this absence is immigrants' expectation of hardship, their resiliency, and their will to endure and adapt as necessary. Some leaders appear not to be aware of problems in their communities. In many cases, the absence of needs statements are made about other groups other than the leader's own. For example, comparing Asians Americans to other racial groups, one participant believes Asian Americans are not "suffering" as much as others (20:21). Other participants compared the needs of the second generation to the first and stated that the second

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generation's needs are much less. Leaders also compare needs among subgroups and generally believe their groups have less need than the refugee groups.

Hearing about needs. Some participants may believe needs are not present because they do not hear about needs. Other leaders stated that needs are identified through informal means. The *hearing about needs* subcategory is defined as ways in which needs of individuals are learned by leaders in the community. The top ways in which leaders learn about needs are through networking, observation/asking in the community, being approached directly, and referrals from contacts in that order. Other ways leaders hear about needs include as a result of their work as interpreters; hearing announcements at gatherings; and by accident. Leaders stated that it was important to learn about needs in order to provide help in the informal support network.

Needs reaching community level. Part of leaders learning about needs is that then the needs are considered at the community level. *Needs reaching community level* subcategory is defined as needs which reach the community consciousness and/or receive assistance through community efforts. If leaders keep hearing about the same issues, they may start to recognize the need to address the issue beyond the individual at the community level. According to one leader, when an issue first reaches the community level, "there was not a prior discussion or goal to help" (2:79). While procedures of the helping process may not be documented, as the same issues are encountered by the leaders, the responses become more standardized because they have dealt with similar issues before.

Another result of needs reaching the community level is that there develops community effort of a number of people working together to address the issue. These efforts range from

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brain storming sessions to food sales. According to them, during discussions of assistance, the conversation turns into how "we" help instead of "I" help.

Helping Process

Armed with an understanding of the needs in the Asian American community, this section reviews the sources of help in response to those needs. The category of *helping process* is defined as ways in which individuals' needs are met.

According to one participant, the helping process starts when there is a need (9:32). In general, a help-seeking pattern exists in which individuals attempt to address the need themselves. If the individual is unsuccessful, close family and friends are asked to help, then other informal individual leader or network supports are sought, and finally, perhaps they seek mainstream services.

Self. To meet needs, individuals with needs take care of them by themselves. *Self* has 27 units and is defined as individuals meeting their own needs. This solution is exemplified by one leader who said, "in our culture, we try to manage" (11:43) and another leader who noted that "...you have to struggle until you cannot and then you ask for help" (35:28). Additionally, a participant reported that "people think they can solve problems themselves" (36:16).

Infrequent referral to formal services. The infrequent referrals of individuals in need to mainstream formal services are both the cause and the result of mainstream being considered last in the help-seeking pattern. The *infrequent referral to formal services* subcategory is defined as level of assistance provided by formal mainstream entities.

In the informal support network, depending on need, a helping group is formed on an ad hoc basis. In general, when attempting to help, leaders use the same help-seeking pattern as individuals in need where the leaders attempt to address the need themselves. Failing that, they

then reach out to family and friends in the Asian American community that might include ethnic entities. Finally, participants report that perhaps they would recommend mainstream services. This final step tends to be the last step when all other informal resources have been exhausted. Additionally, leaders refer people to mainstream services if they are themselves knowledgeable or know someone who is knowledgeable about the available resources and how to access help (13:53).

     Discrete help. Leaders emphasized help provided in discrete ways in the informal support network. *Discrete help* is defined as helping carefully to protect the privacy of the individuals in need. As part of stigma, when help is provided, it is done in discrete ways, and helpers "…need to know how to be tactful" (10:46). One leader stated, "I'm very careful, especially in [subgroup] community with word of mouth, things spread like wild fire so I need to protect the identity of people getting help" (13:75). One leader described the process of confidentiality within an ethnic association: "If someone in need approaches [association name], whoever has been approached finds out to what extent the information needs to be confidential, maybe [association name] can talk among themselves but needs to not identify the person who requested the help" (15:82). For one group that is providing help to abused women, the help is anonymous:

> We have a [subgroup name] lady who is a psychiatrist, she doesn't help the women as a professional and it's anonymous. [Subgroup organization] doesn't ask for reports because of the stigma attached to the issue. For us, statistics are irrelevant as long as the responsibility of helping the women is being accomplished. The help is anonymous, only the psychiatrist knows who the women are. The structure is very loose, we don't formalize it purposely. Many women will be hesitant to ask for help if it's formalized.

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We want to keep this resource low key because the [subgroup] community has issues of

accepting it as a problem. Keeping it low key is more conducive to good results. Many

women who want the help don't want to be identified. We talk about it as if it's like

women bonding. We don't want to know who is getting help. Being low key will make

the women in need more willing to get help. (2:46)

Leaders are aware that, because of the stigma of asking for help in general, and sensitive issues

in particular, any help provided must be discrete or they risk losing or embarrassing the

individuals seeking assistance.

Family & friends. In the identified help-seeking pattern, family and friends are

approached after individuals are not able to address their needs themselves. The *family & friends*

is defined as family and friends meeting needs of individuals. According to participants, family

and friends are, because of culture, often the first and primary source of support for Asian

Americans after they cannot handle the issue themselves. According to one leader, when in need,

individuals would "…rather go to family first because Asians are family oriented. We're taught

family first…" (35:44). Another participant added: "We're used to receiving help from family;

it's a duty and an obligation for the family to help" (10:38). For some community members,

because of migration, "with no family here, friends became the first people to go to when we

needed help" (1:94).

Leaders. In times of need, when individuals cannot manage themselves, and their close

family and friends are not able to help, they or their contacts may look to the leaders in the

community for assistance. According to one leader, "the request for help is usually a chain that

eventually gets to us who are the leaders of the community" (29:51). *Leaders* subcategory is

defined as individuals in the Asian American community who are sought out to provide

assistance in times of need; who identify themselves as part of the community; and who are giving back to the community in some way. Reasons why leaders were sought out include: word of mouth that they can help or know who can help; their role in the community; referral from friends or family; or professional expertise.

Participants described what constitutes a leader in the informal support network. To help others, leaders need to be "…unselfish enough to help" (32:40). Another aspect of being a leader is someone "…who has been here for a while…" (19:27). Whether they can help or not, leaders are "…someone who people go to and are able to point people to the right people for help" (34:45). A leader is also described as someone who "knows everybody" (6:53) so that for "anything that comes up, she lets the community know what is needed" (36:39). Essentially, the leaders, then, are the connectors between the individual in need and the people who can help.

Leaders' ethnic identity contributes to the development of an Asian American community. Participants report being more explicitly aware of their identity in the United States than in their native countries. The reminders of their identity are imposed by society every time they are asked where they are from because they look physically different, have an accent, or struggle when filling out forms. Another type of reminder is being treated differently. One leader who is a physician provided an example of patients who requested another physician because they did not want to be touched by an Asian American (3:9). In addition to their subgroup membership, participants also stressed their membership among the Asian American population as a whole because they saw the need to have a united voice and Asian American representation in the mainstream. Participants also discussed differences in their identity by living here longer than in their native country or being born in the United States. This has resulted in identifying more with mainstream society and feeling more "Americanized." For other participants, length of

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time in the United States has not made them feel more American, but they do feel more connected and comfortable with their ethnic counterparts because of their commonalities. For others, their identity has gone back and forth in their lives as to whether they feel more like an American or like a member of their subgroup but all seemed able to manage between Asian American and American cultures.

Leaders have a variety of reasons why they are responding to the Asian American community, here called "giving back." The top reasons include: cultural influence; to maintain ethnic identity; sense of obligation/responsibility; being part of a community; responding to an observed need in the community; and willingness to help others. Leaders viewed giving back as largely supporting the Asian American community and its members. Giving back also meant educating the Asian American community about the help available and about living in the United States to prevent isolation so that "they have better jobs and better education" (17:49). It also means "…helping inspire others to help as well" (17:47). Giving back also encompasses helping the native country, particularly in times of natural disasters, as a way of not forgetting their origins. From being somehow part of the mainstream society, leaders and ethnic subgroups feel a need to also give back to the larger mainstream society.

In general, when leaders hear about a need, the first step is often to learn more. The second step is to determine the resources needed and the level of confidentiality necessary. After understanding needs, leaders try to help by themselves, then reach out to family and friends in the Asian American community, then ethnic entities, and finally maybe mainstream services. This is exemplified by a participant who said "first of all, if you hear somebody is in trouble, maybe you can initiate the help yourself. If you can't help by yourself, then ask friends and family to help. If not, then go further out the circle, place of worship, or [ethnic] association"

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(10:23). Whether or not leaders refer individuals to mainstream services is dependent on leaders' knowledge about available services and the connections they have with individuals who work in mainstream services.

Community help. Leaders play a crucial role in the assistance provided by the Asian American community to members in need within the informal support network. The subcategory of *community help* is defined as informal assistance provided by the Asian American community, including ethnic associations and ethnic religious entities.

One leader explained the helping process as a "chain" and the need to tap into the "network" because "one person can't do it all" (29:55). When the need reaches the community level, the leader contacted is usually the person who coordinates the help (15:49). The helping process starts "…when people report to us or ask us for help" (13:52). The leader continued by stating that "…we call people, we come together to eat and make a plan to solve problems and how to help people" (29:76). Similarly, according to another participant, "the way we help is totally like a network… We have contact information for all of our people. If someone is busy, we refer them to someone else, there's at least one person to help (33:34).

One leader stated that the existence of a temple was the start of the help: "When we built the temple, slowly, we were moving towards helping community members, reaching out to where they needed help" (2:145). Another leader stated that when help is needed in the informal support network, one leader would contact individuals for support, and the leader would then assign people specific tasks to provide the help (35:35). Similarly, within ethnic associations, the helping process is often divided among the leaders based on availability, expertise, and experience (17:50). For another leader, solicitation for help is sent by email on a weekly basis through her ethnic association and whoever has the time and ability to help would respond (6:39).

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If the ethnic association is not able to help, they refer it to another group, most likely an ethnic religious entity (6:39).

Because individuals treated aspects of the informal support network as an extended family, the helping process is also treated as "…a family concept of helping each other" (7:51). As a result of the developed relationships, people treat and help one another like they would help family and the informal support network becomes very strong (37:46). One leader noted the naturalness of the helping process: "The help was very natural as if family members needed something like your brother or sister needing help so without thinking I'm losing my 5 hours on this, you just help. You think, it's my people, as if they're family, people have no problems with helping others like they are family" (7:49).

Informal Support Network

The helping process that is comprised of self, family/friends, leaders, and the Asian American community are all part of the informal support network. The category of *informal support network* is defined as informal connections within the community that provide support to its members in times of need.

No matter the source, participants stated that help is provided by people known to individuals through people they know in the informal support network. For example, one leader stated, "I think it's the same for all Asians. We're ashamed to come out and ask for help. If I know you well enough, I will tell you I'm in trouble and you will connect me to people you know who can help" (2:58). Even when going to the informal support network for help, "…they'll go to people who they trust and already have a relationship" (1:39). Similarly, the help provided is dependent on people's network and their relationships to one another. According to one participant "someone who they don't know well may not help or convey the

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same information in the same way. If I don't know you well enough, I may not help you" (8:8).
In other words, one's help depends on the individual's connections in the network because "if
you are sociable, you know a lot of people; you have friends; you have more people to help you"
(12:51).

Ethnic entities serve as an important connector within the informal support network.
Participants of this study were involved in founding and/or running ethnic entities. Leaders were
part of the initial group who started the ethnic entities that include ethnic associations, religious
entities, and ethnic schools. They contributed financially to the endeavors; or they currently run
the ethnic entity. Leaders spoke about several reasons why ethnic entities were started.

The reasons help to provide a context for the informal support network. For example, the
reason for having a home away from home and getting together with people who share the same
language and background suggests the development of a community that is culturally based.
Another reason for education and preservation of culture suggests the attempt to sustain native
cultures. Establishing an ethnic identity helped in having a united community with a collective
voice to have an ethnic identity. Building the network was based on getting together socially in
and in doing so, building a more developed network.

Networking. As a part of the informal support network, opportunities to network among
community members are necessary. The *networking* subcategory is defined as ways and
attempts of members of the Asian American community connect with one another. One leader
stated that networking is crucial because it allowed for pockets of the community to connect and
learn from others (36:48). Part of forming the network or providing opportunities to network is
through gatherings at festivals, events, celebrations, parties, and religious activities where people
form connections with one another and develop existing relationships (19:26). While many of

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the gatherings are seen as social events, they are also places where people share problems (3:81) and provide support (8:7). Leaders expressed the benefits of connecting to others in the community to build camaraderie, reduce isolation, increase participation, help with socialization, and engage in networking (29:39). If one part of the network is not able to address a need, it gets passed on to another (6:52).

After the immediate need is met, the informal support carries on and the individuals who were helped become part of the network: "we visit the people we help from time to time, eventually become friends and they become loyal members in the society" (3:67). After connecting to the network, "when you come to know one person, you know the whole community" because "everyone knows everyone else" (34:17). According to one leader, "the chain of helping started because more people moved into the Richmond area. …[W]ithout the networks, we wouldn't be able to help as much" (29:59).

Network over time. The informal support network has changed over time. The *network over time* subcategory is defined as changes within the network over time. The growth in the Asian American community has resulted in negative as well as positive consequences to the informal support network. The negative aspect of the community growth is that it has resulted in leaders hearing about needs, responding to needs, and more people being identified as needing help. It has also resulted in more difficulty getting things done because some people have settled in and become disengaged with the community, thus ceasing as a resource for problem solving. Another consequence of a larger community is the divisions within the subgroup with "…different organizations with concentration on their own goals" (3:11), potentially diluting the capacity of the existing informal network.

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There are also positive consequences to population growth within the Asian American community. For one, individuals no longer "…stood out" because people no longer "asked where you're from" on a regular basis (6:10). Also, the growth over time means communities have:

> …gotten larger, which provided for more connectivity. Over time, there's more people who are able to meet others and form groups so they feel more at home. In the past, it was difficult; it was very lonely because you didn't have anything more than your neighbors and no other kids in school from the native country. (38:46)

For some leaders, growth in the network over time has resulted in help being required as people learned to live and adjust to life here. For one leader, "more people in the community means more people to help but people will also grow and be able to help others" (17:52). Even though some parts of the Asian American community are fragmented, leaders also talked about other segments that are well integrated. Despite the fragmented groups, leaders suggest there is usually an overall inclusive entity of which many of the smaller groups are a part.

As the Asian American community changed over time, the helping process within the informal network has also changed. Over time, leaders are seeing that more people are willing to ask for help. The help available also "evolved over time" (2:101) and "developed very slowly" (14:40). The network has expanded over time with technology and as leaders inspired others to help and become aware of more resources (24:33). Some leaders believed the help is more organized (10:55). Lastly, one participant believed this larger effort of the community's coming together to provide help meant people's needs are being addressed (33:71).

Inadequacy/challenges of network. While some needs within the informal support network may be addressed, leaders also identified existing challenges in the network that

contribute to the network's inadequacy in providing help in other cases. The subcategory of *inadequacy/challenges of network* has 182 units and is defined as the inability or challenges of the informal support network in the helping process in meeting the needs of the community. Below is a list of the challenges:

- Lack of a system for support (n=16).

- Lack of financial and human resources (n=14).

- Help available provided by volunteers and limited (n=13).

- Help by volunteers also contributes to the help being sporadic and dependent on certain individuals (n=9).

- As volunteers, those helping can choose who they want to help, making those with more connections to the system favored in the helping process (n=8).

- The ethnic entities are limited in their ability to provide social services because most of them do not have a focus or budget for addressing social issues, this providing help on a situational basis when volunteer resources are able and available (n=5).

- Individuals who help are not professionally trained (n=5).

- While some networks may be formed as a "home away from home," the younger generation who were born or grew up in the United States cannot relate to this sort of system because the United States became "home" (n=2).

Future of help. In thinking about existing challenges in the informal support network, the participants were also asked about the future of the helping process within the Asian American community. The *future of help* is defined as those concerns and suggestions related to the future of the helping process for the Asian American community in general, and the informal support network specifically. Leaders discussed the future of the helping process within the

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Richmond Asian American community focusing on partnerships with mainstream services (explored earlier in this chapter) and/or on the formalization of the existing informal support networks (explored here).

Whether going the route of more intentional partnerships with already existing mainstream services or formalization, certain concerns including overcoming cultural challenges and developing resources for the helping process were offered by the participants. In addition to overcoming cultural and resource challenges, no matter which path the Richmond Asian American community selects, leaders stressed the need to do community outreach to educate the community about the needs and resources issues. Also of concern was the need to reach out to those who are isolated from the community. Several others thought having the right leaders to head the process would be crucial to the future.

To overcome the cultural challenges specifically related to stigma about seeking help, leaders emphasized the importance of educating community members about overcoming the stigma with one leader suggesting, members must want the help for services to be provided (37:68). Many leaders placed the hope with future generations who were either born or raised in the United States because they may not be as concerned about losing face. They may be without the cultural baggage of elders, which might allow a change in outlook. Other leaders suggested providing services through non-stigmatizing alternative activities such as knitting groups or cultural social gatherings as a way to expand services.

Resources represent another challenge in moving forward in the Asian American community's helping process. Because the Asian American community is so spread out in the Richmond area, "the cost is prohibitive" in terms of addressing needs (32:52). Leaders recognize contributions from the community take time for the awareness and trust to be built (6:75; 31:69).

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Rather than or in addition to pooling money from the community, leaders suggested applying for grants and positioning to receive government assistance for services. Another leader suggested combining resources and efforts because potential funders, including community members and government entities, will not want to fund many of the same projects (8:41). According to one leader, "the younger generation knows how to raise money and could do it a lot faster with technology" (18:49).

To overcome lack of participation in general, one leader suggested education of the "…community to be more community conscious, more community oriented, and more giving of their time" (23:16). Another leader thought if more people were involved, others would get involved as well (34:45). Additionally, several leaders from differing ethnic groups believe community involvement, cultural awareness, cultural pride, and education would increase with community centers. Regardless of how the network evolves, leaders from both generations expressed the need to have the younger generation be part of the community and develop as leaders.

Leaders expressed the need and suggested ways to formalize the informal support network. One participant stated that "we need to identify groups of people in each geography who can be activated reliability when there's help needed. Right now, it's the same people being called on" (3:89). Another leader described a network of professionals that could provide services (2:133). One leader suggested securing help from Asian Americans outside of Virginia where there are already bigger communities with expertise in addressing some of the identified issues or for raising money (39:33). For one participant, in favor of formalization looks for establishment of a formal relationship between existing ethnic entities as a way to connect some aspects of the informal network in order to combine resources (7:41). Another leader

recommended an existing umbrella organization take the lead in combining the existing resources throughout the Asian American community so that individuals could receive support from one entity (2:89).

When thinking about an aspirational future, leaders suggested an ideal nonprofit community center with a "solid structural place" constructed with capabilities to raise needed funds to support the services with appropriate people to run the organization. The center would provide direct social services, referrals, and a place where people come for social functions and education (8:56). Similarly, other leaders expressed the need and vision for a space similar to an adult day care center for the elderly with a structure and support staff to help the elderly. One participant suggested adding a day care center for children to provide an intergenerational connection (10:50). Also, for older adults, leaders expressed the need to have ethnic senior citizen residential center with cultural activities and ethnic foods (16:60). Another participant recommended combining the residential center with the community center (8:36).

What seemed apparent was a wish for more formalization in the network. Describing what formalization of the informal support network would entail, participants also shared why formalization is necessary. For one leader, moving toward formalization means moving beyond helping those with whom we have relationships (17:56). One participant believed formalization would result in more people getting the help they need (38:42). Leaders suggested formalization may mean the burden of helping would be expanded so that it does not fall on the same few people. Another reason for formalization network versus the alternative of accessing mainstream services is that people who understand the culture will provide the help (36:26). Leaders support ethnic services based on an assumption that Asian Americans will be more comfortable with services provided in a cultural context (27:42). Another participant believed that the Asian

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American community should have trained Asian American professionals because "it's important we do that because the language becomes an issue, culture, and ethnicity. They open up more if help is from the same part of the world, culture, and share language" (20:66). Similarly, another participant gave an example of preference for ethnic health providers "…because they can communicate and people think they can better care for patients. Even though some ethnic health providers don't speak [ethnic language], people still prefer them because they have the same culture" (10:24). In reference to having a community center, one participant believed:

> Having a central location would increase efficiency instead of all the network trying to find answers and recruit volunteers. The service provided would also be more equal and dependable for people needing help rather than based on word of mouth and relationships with people with a better network getting better help. Additionally, having a central location for services will provide a positive influence on the community. (8:64)

At least one participant recognized with informal support, a concern is the liability but with formalization, there will be awareness and processes to deal with liability concerns (2:148).

Leaders acknowledged that formal services will be difficult to set up and implement (15:34). Part of the challenge to the formalization process is making people feel okay about seeking help in any form (2:116). One participant believed that some unresolved needs are not addressed because:

> We ignored the problem because we haven't set up a structure. We haven't acknowledged the problem. I don't know why we haven't thought about it. Partly we don't want to be in other people's family problems. Even if there's confidentiality, they'll know what's going on. Because of societal perceptions, there's a lot of reluctance. We don't have a structure that makes people feel okay about it. (2:116)

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To overcome the small community confidentiality and privacy concerns, the same leader suggested setting up a referral system in which members of one subgroup help another so that cultural understanding still remains (2:123). For some leaders with pragmatic insights, formalization is dependent on the size of the community. For them, there is uncertainty if Richmond has the critical mass (34:57).

Network differences. In thinking about the future of help within the Asian American community, the network differences among the subgroups was considered. The subcategory of *network differences* is defined as differences of the network among subgroups. Formation of ethnic-specific networks may be divided among subgroup ethnic lines, country of origin, religion, and place of employment (19:45). Not all subgroup networks are the same.

In the Korean community, all four of the Korean leaders agreed that the church is the main provider of support and is the focal point of the informal support network with regular gatherings to facilitate networking. In addition to the church, two leaders also use the network outside of the churches to provide help.

One attempt at bringing the Asian American community together as a whole was the formation of an umbrella organization. The purpose was to have a united Asian American voice, but it has also functioned as the bridge between parts of the network and has allowed groups to learn from one another. The organization also plays a large role in connecting its board members as interpreters for mainstream entities. Leaders acknowledged the help of Asian Americans using their mainstream connections to get the support of mainstream leaders to get the organization off the ground. One aspect of it is through having relationships with leaders in the mainstream and the ability to reach out to them. Another aspect is having a tangible event such

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as the Asian American festival. Leaders are proud of what they have built to bring the community together.

The leaders in the Vietnamese subgroup agree that religious and nonreligious ethnic entities exist to help people in need. One leader believes that one of the ethnic entities unites the community and provide connections to parts of the network despite its division among religious beliefs through festivals. Another leader stated the entities were formed as a "home away from home" but with the second generation being part of the leadership, generational differences in leading the community are present. The leader who gets the need request usually tries to help first and then reaches out to the network, similar to the help-seeking pattern of self, friends/family, and then community. Another leader stated that there is a weekly communication about needs via email.

Two leaders in the Chinese subgroup spoke more about the informal support network. They both talked about elder support groups and ethnic entities bringing people together on a regular basis. One leader added that festivals were a main community gathering. This leader also saw generational differences in leading the community and acknowledged that referrals are based on connections and knowledge of available resources. Another leader stated the people who get the message for help are the ones who reach out to the community and coordinate the help. The same leader noted the help-seeking pattern of self, family/friends, and community, with which another leader agreed. Both leaders also agree that ethnic entities are available to provide help. A division exists among native country and language in the Chinese community but the community is connected through ethnic entities.

All three Indian leaders agreed that there is a division within the subgroup in terms of the region of the native country, language, and religion, but there are gatherings, including festivals,

on a regular basis that brings everyone together. All three leaders agreed that ethnic entities exist that provide help but help-seeking follows a pattern of self, friends/family, and then community. Among the ethnic entities, one leader believed that the religious entity is a focal point of the community. Another leader talked about the existence of an elder support group, providing help to other subgroups, and collaborating with and contributing to mainstream services.

Among the four Filipino leaders, all agreed that the existing ethnic entities that are either religious or nonreligious help with needs and they were formed as a home away from home. Help is provided on an ad hoc basis but it is prioritized based on urgency. The person who gets the help request tries to help first and then reaches out to the community, very similar to the help-seeking pattern of self, friends/family, and then community. Where individuals in need are referred, it is based on connections and knowledge of the leaders, including collaborations with mainstream services. Leaders have defined roles and responsibilities in the helping process based on their experience and knowledge. To promote networking, there are gatherings on a monthly basis and festivals are the main community gatherings. One leader thought that the community is close while another stated that the community is divided by region of native country but it does come together in times of need. Generational differences in leading the community were acknowledged. While the community has an elder support group, there is a need for a cultural center. Lastly, part of giving back among ethnic entities is donations to mainstream organizations.

There are similarities between the informal support networks of the larger subgroups and the smaller subgroups. The help-seeking pattern of self, friends/family, and then community used by Chinese, Filipino, Indian, and Vietnamese is also used by small subgroups. Like the Chinese, Filipino, and Vietnamese subgroups, one small subgroup leader stated that help is

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provided first by the person contacted and then that person reaches out and coordinates the help.

One leader characterized help by the community as being provided on an ad hoc basis, as also

stated by one Filipino leader. Also similar to the Filipino subgroup, small subgroup leaders

noted the division of roles and responsibilities in the helping process. Referrals are based on the

leaders' connections and knowledge that is also present in the Chinese and Filipino subgroups,

which suggests infrequent referrals if the leaders are not connected or knowledgeable about

formal services. Like the Indian subgroup, one group provides help to members of other groups

as well. As with the Filipino and Indian subgroups, two of the smaller subgroups also

collaborate with mainstream services. There is also division among the small subgroups that is

shared with the Chinese, Indian, and Vietnamese subgroups. Three small subgroups also have

ethnic entities that larger subgroups have. The small subgroups are also connected to the

informal support network but not necessary through the ethnic entities. To facilitate networking,

three of the subgroups also have regular gatherings. Similar to the Filipino group, two leaders

expressed a need for a cultural center.

Among the smaller subgroups, several aspects of the informal support network are unique

to them that the larger subgroups do not have. Leaders expressed difficulty in bringing the

community together. Four leaders expressed a need for leadership. One leader talked about a

need to differentiate their subgroup from others. One subgroup has a buddy system. Five

leaders stated that the informal support network is centered around foreign companies located in

Richmond that have transferred people here. Three subgroups are helped by mainstream

churches. On the other hand, one leader stated that mainstream services are not needed because

of the informal support network. Individuals' houses serve as the main gathering places for two

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subgroups. Unlike the larger groups with elder support groups, one of the smaller subgroups has a young mothers support group.

Theoretical Model

The initial theoretical model (see Figure 1 on page 98) was based on existing literature and contributed to the development of interview questions. It was important at the beginning of the project that initial categories be derived from an existing knowledge base. A discussion of Figure 1 in relation to the project findings will be explored in Chapter V. In keeping with grounding and the emergent design, the model that developed was substantially different than the one that guided the beginning.

As expected, the model increased in complexity with its dimensions, in application with its abstraction, and in sophistication with its ability to explain the phenomenon under study. In order to construct the theory, some of the subcategories became understood not as subcategories but as axial codes that established the relationships between the categories. The model demonstrates the development of an informal support network within an Asian American community in the new South. What the model shows is the influence of Asian American culture on the creation and sustaining of an informal system and also how and why it does not combine with or successfully collaborate with mainstream services.

This section presents the theoretical model and the assumed relationship of model categories, Figure 7 below. This section and this chapter conclude with propositions for future theory testing. Through many iterations of model development, the former axial codes are now labels that provide links to the categories in this study. Because the previous section discussed the categories and their dimensions in detailed, they will not be repeated here. Rather, this section will focus on the links between the categories. The links also represent systemic barriers

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in meeting the needs of the Richmond Asian American community. These are: 1) the
reinforcement of the Asian culture within the informal support network; 2) the inadequacy of the
informal support network; 3) the inaccessibility of mainstream services; 4) the infrequent referral
to mainstream services from the informal support network; and 5) the infrequent help provided
by mainstream services. All serve as systemic barriers in meeting the needs of the Richmond
Asian American community that paradoxically sustain the informal network and its development.
Each of these elements is highlighted and explored briefly below.
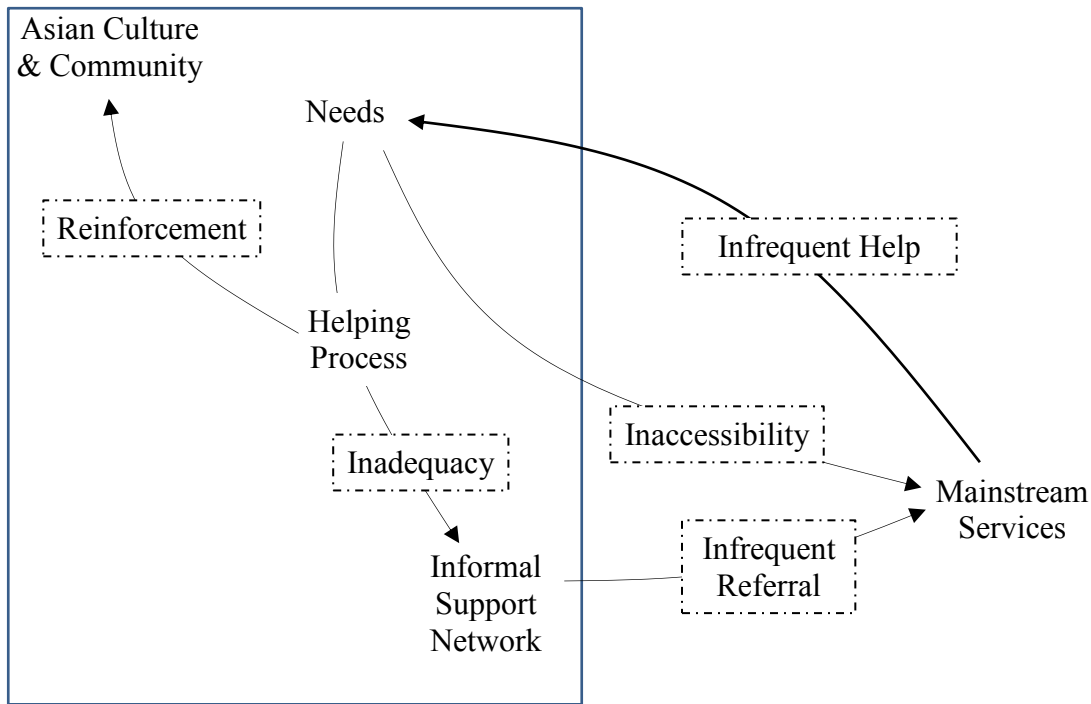
Figure 7. Theoretical Model of Informal Support Network Development

Reinforcement. The Asian American community that has developed in Richmond is
influenced by Asian culture as individuals from similar backgrounds came together to build a
home away from home and/or in an effort to maintain their native country's culture. For some,
the community became a further extension of an extended family through which help is provided
for one another. Additionally, in times of need, individuals tend to follow a familiar help-

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seeking pattern that includes self, family/friends, and other informal supports. Finally, because of cultural influences, there is a stigma to seeking help, particularly around issues such as mental health and abuse that largely prevents individuals from seeking help. These three factors contribute to the sustaining of the Asian culture and the community where members have developed the helping process while maintaining, each reinforcing the other.

Inadequacy. The informal support network is integral to meeting the needs of Asian Americans. Despite the existing informal help that is available, leaders expressed concerns about its limitations. Help is voluntary, limited, and dependent on certain individuals who are not trained. In addition, participants suggested that help is provided by familiar individuals or through people those individuals know. This relationship-based approach to providing help is problematic for those who may not be connected to the "right" people. This is particularly true when the help is provided on a voluntary basis. Another limitation within the informal support network is that the social services assistance is often beyond the scope of the resources and competencies of existing ethnic entities. In these communities, often financial and system development is directed towards other goals than service needs.

Inaccessibility. The model shows that individuals with needs are not going directly to mainstream services for help because of its inaccessibility. The top barriers in this study include: 1) lack of transportation to get to services; 2) language challenges for those who do not speak English; 3) stigma and shame of seeking services in general but domestic violence and mental health issues in particular; 4) insufficient knowledge about available services; and 5) insufficient knowledge on the part of service providers.

Infrequent referral. The model shows dependence on the informal support network for referrals to mainstream services. Leaders state that they follow the same help-seeking pattern as

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individuals in need in that when they are asked to help, they try to help by themselves first. If the leaders are not able to help, they then go to their friends and family. If that is also unsuccessful, leaders reach out to other informal supports such as the ethnic entities. Following the same pattern of help-seeking leads to mainstream services being recommended as the last resort by leaders. In addition, leaders serve as gatekeepers to mainstream services based on their knowledge and relationships with mainstream providers. Therefore, mainstream services are largely referred to when assistance in the informal support network has been exhausted; the problem remains unsolved; and only if leaders are knowledgeable about available services.

Infrequent help. Several factors contribute to mainstream services providing infrequent help to meet the needs of the Asian American community. First, multiple barriers exist in individuals accessing mainstream services directly. Second, leaders perceived the informal support network as the helping source of preference among Asian American community members. Third, mainstream services are seen as the last resort when the informal network has been exhausted. Finally, when the informal support network is not able to help individuals in need, they are infrequently referred to mainstream service due to leaders' lack of knowledge and some sense that mainstream services is not capable of helping.

In summary, the theory developed from this study (Figure 7) posits that the Asian culture and community influence how individuals within the community seek help in times of need and, in turn, the helping process developed within the informal support network is a reinforcement of the Asian culture and community. When individuals have needs, they look to the informal support network which was developed in response to those needs. However, the informal support network is not able to meet all the needs of the Asian American community. At times, though infrequent, when the informal support network cannot meet the need, individuals in need

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are referred to mainstream services. Where services provided are perceived to be inaccessible

and rarely successful and the informal support network serves as a gatekeeper to mainstream

services, needs go unmet in both the informal and mainstream services and will continue as such

without further attention to the relationship of both to the Asian American community.

Propositions for Theory Testing

The findings from this study set in Richmond, Virginia are intended to be applicable to

the Asian American communities in the new South, but further theory testing is needed. The

study discovered important categories and connections that contributed to a grounded theory on

the development of informal support networks in the new South. From these categories and their

linkages, propositions have been derived for the purpose of further testing. These propositions

are presented as follows:

1. Asian culture and community and the helping process reinforce one another.

2. The informal support network is inadequate in meeting the needs of the Asian American
    community.

3. Mainstream services are inaccessible in meeting the needs of the Asian American
    community.

4. The informal support network infrequently refers individuals to mainstream services.

5. Due to inaccessibility and infrequent referrals, mainstream services provides infrequent
    help in meeting the needs of the Asian American community.

6. To have a fully functioning informal support network, barriers represented by these five
    must be eliminated.

Chapter V – Discussion & Implications

Despite the vast amount of literature on social support, there is a paucity related to social support at the community level in general and informal support networks specifically. This dissertation used a grounded theory method to expand our knowledge of the development of informal support networks in the Asian American community. The research question for this study was: What are the dimensions of informal support network development in Asian American communities in the new South? The goals of this study were to develop a theory that would be testable for generalizability and to produce a needs and resources matrix for the Asian American community.

Asian American community leaders were the population of interest because of the role they play in construction of the informal support network in the Asian American community. Using interview guides, one-on-one interviews were conducted either in person or on the telephone based on each participant's comfort level and need. The researcher completed a thematic analysis of the extended field notes of the interviews to determine if probes in the interview guide needed to be changed and which leader to interview next to extend and test the emerging information. Upon the completion of data collection, data were then formally analyzed via constant comparison (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) using ATLAS.ti, a qualitative analysis software program.

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This chapter first presents a discussion of the study's findings linking them to the literature. Second, implications for the Richmond Asian American community will follow. Next, implications for social work will be explored in terms of practice, education, policy, and research. Finally, the chapter concludes with the study's contributions.

Discussion of Major Findings

This project resulted in two major findings. The first is the needs/resources matrices. The second is the theoretical model. This section will discuss the major findings of both, linking them to earlier empirical results.

Needs/Resources Matrices

Chapter IV detailed the needs and resources for each of Müller's (1958) social systems per subgroup, but the major finding is the summary matrix. When needs are compared to resources, 12 of the 14 social systems, according to the expanded definition of Müller's (1958) framework, are of little concern. Among these 12 social systems, all subgroups within the Richmond Asian American community seem to have adequate culturally appropriate resources to meet identified needs in terms of the *religiosity, politics, loyalty/connectedness,* and *communication* social systems. Only the Vietnamese subgroup may require additional resources to address needs in the *recreation* social system. Among the subgroups, only the Chinese subgroup may lack resources for the *ownership* social system. For the *education* social system, the Filipino and Vietnamese subgroups may have a need to develop additional resources to promote education. In relation to the *production* social system, the Chinese and small subgroups may need additional resources to address specific needs. Only the Vietnamese and small subgroups may require additional resources to address needs in *maintenance* social systems. The Vietnamese, Korean, Filipino and small subgroups leader's perceptions suggest additional

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resources related to the *respect* social system may be necessary. For the *kinship* social system, the Chinese, Indian, and small subgroups seem to have a need to develop additional resources to promote kinship. Additional resource may be necessary for the *justice* social system among the Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese and small subgroups.

The two social systems appearing to be of most concern are *health* and *safety*. Resources seems to be inadequate in the *health* social system specifically for the Chinese and Korean subgroups and possibly for the Vietnamese, Indian, and small subgroups. The needs within the health social system are physical health, mental health, and lack of insurance, all issues primarily attended to in some ways in mainstream society. The general populations of most concern for the leaders related to health are immigrants, refugees, and older adults because these populations often lack personal resources (e.g. low levels of education and income). Lack of resources has been found to have a negative correlation to mental and physical health in previous research (e.g. Bruce, 2001; Johnson & Wolinsky, 1999). For immigrant populations, the level of acculturation has been closely connected with mental and physical health functioning (Lee et al., 2000; Myers & Rodriguez, 2003). Among the refugee population, health may be a concern because of their lack of healthcare prior to coming to the United States, and mental health may be a concern due to the challenges of their adaptation to the new life. While formal services are used by many refugees, they often cease within a short period of the refugees' arrival in the United States (Patrick, 2004). Acceptability and access in Richmond seem to reflect the theme found in the literature.

Finally, a concern for s*afety* was emphasized for the Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese, and small subgroups and may be necessary for the Indian subgroup. Safety involves crime and violence that are predominately faced by Chinese and Korean businesses. Racial discrimination

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and marginalization related to one's physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing is another need related to the safety social system. The discrimination suggested in this study is consistent with the experience of Latinos in the South (Cravey, 1997). It is also important to note that discrimination has been linked to physical health (Gee et al., 2007; Gee et al., 2008). Lastly, stigmatized issues like domestic violence are a need voiced by leaders in all subgroups. The concern related to domestic violence is not a surprise as the issue within Asian American communities is explored in the literature (see for example Ayyub, 2000; Bui & Morash, 2007; Preisser, 1999). Leaders expressed concern about the wellbeing of individuals who are abused within their homes and do not know how to find help. If the victims seek help from others in the informal support network, leaders worried that they may be advised to stay because of the focus on family in Asian cultures that is reinforced in the Richmond Asian American community. Again, acceptability and access seem to be themes working against the service profession.

This study focused on 14 social systems that contribute to the functioning of a community (Müller, 1958). The mental health needs in the Richmond Asian American community support the vast amount of literature on this topic already. This study extends the literature on Asian Americans related other topics such as physical health, domestic violence, and discrimination. Additionally, the needs found in this study, in general, further serve to question the "model minority myth." This work suggests both areas of continued needs and why these needs are as of yet unaddressed in the emerging informal networks and mainstream services in Richmond.

Theoretical Model

The theory developed from this study posits that the Asian American community is influenced by Asian cultures. Combined, the Asian American community and culture seem to

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influence how individuals seek help in times of need and, in turn, the development of the helping process within the informal support network. The development of the community and the influence of Asian culture in its functioning may also reinforce the notion that Asians traditionally rely on the extended family, as suggested in the literature (Stopes-Roe & Cochrane, 1990). Without the family, they form relationships with others with a similar background. The development of a community with people from similar cultures also contributes to the ethnic identity literature related to self-identification, group membership, attitudes toward one's ethnic group, ethnic involvement, and cultural values and beliefs (Phinney, 1990).

Coming from similar backgrounds suggests that the informal support network overall and with subgroups has shared norms about needs and help-seeking as described by Gottlieb (1988, 2000). The help-seeking pattern found in this study may consist of self, family/friends, other informal support that includes ethnic associations, religious entities, schools, and then mainstream services. These sources are different from those identified by Delgado and Humm-Delgado (1982) of natural support systems in Latino communities that include family/friends, religion, folk healers, and merchant/social clubs. The help-seeking pattern identified in this study follows the frameworks found in the literature that include the substitution framework (Scott & Roberto, 1985), the hierarchical compensatory framework (Cantor, 1979), and the continuum of care framework. The pattern is also consistent with existing research in which self, family, friends, other informal supports, and then mainstream services (in that order) are sought in times of need (Shin, 2002; Uba, 1994; Ying, 1990).

The helping process in the Richmond informal support network may be a reinforcement of the Asian culture in which how one seeks help may be heavily influenced by shame and stigma. In general, the findings provide empirical support for this largely conceptual notion

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(Anglin et al., 2006; Tsang, 2004; Yip, 2005). Specifically, the findings provide empirical evidence from a community perspective for Green's (1982) help-seeking framework among minorities positing that a client would recognize and label an event as a problem in the context of personal cultural values and beliefs. When culture by its very nature manifests into stigma and feelings of shame in asking for assistance in times of need, it becomes a barrier to help seeking. This notion provides support to Berry and associates' (1998) suggestion that social networks can provide positive support, but they can also be negative. Specifically, with the Richmond informal support network, community members' help-seeking pattern and its reinforcement of the Asian culture may prevent or delay them from getting the help that they need.

The informal support network in Richmond suggests it was developed in response to needs. The possible existence of informal support networks in response to ethnic communities' attempts to meet the needs of its members supports notions in, and adds empirical evidence to, these elements in the literature (Bailey & Waldinger, 1991). The network aspect of the helping process seen in Richmond provides support from a community perspective for Abe-Kim and associates (2002). They suggested using a network episode framework of help-seeking to conceptualize help-seeking among Asian Americans because of its emphasis on relationship-oriented variables. This is supported by this study's finding that the help in the Richmond informal support network may be largely relationship based. The extensive use of informal support found in this study also contributes to Abe-Kim and associates' suggestion that informal services constitute an important resource for individuals in distress, as well as findings that the networks are the main source of support among diverse immigrant groups (Hernandez-Plaza et al., 2004) and newcomers (Leslie, 1992). The findings of the informal support network

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contribute to the literature on informal support networks specifically, as well as informal social support in general, because of the lack of literature in these areas.

However, the findings suggest the Richmond informal support network is not able to meet all the needs of the Asian American community. Whether or not informal support networks are adequate in meeting its needs has not been addressed in the literature. When the informal support network cannot meet the need, individuals are referred to mainstream services, though this is infrequently. Referrals to mainstream services suggest there is a possibility in Richmond that informal and mainstream services serve different purposes. This notion supports Litwak's (1985) task-specific framework that stipulates that informal and formal resources are qualified to accomplish different types of tasks. The referral mechanism found that the informal support network in Richmond serves as a gatekeeper to mainstream services. The gatekeeping aspect could also be viewed as another negative aspect of the informal support network in that the leaders' lack of knowledge about mainstream services may result in their failure to refer individuals in need to appropriate services in the mainstream no matter how culturally sensitive and accessible those services might be.

However, the model suggests that needs are rarely met directly by mainstream services because they are inaccessible. This is due to the multiple barriers that exist in accessing and seeking out services. Barriers to mainstream services have been vastly explored in the literature (i.e., Corrigan, 2004; Lo et al., 2007; Sue, 1988). The combination of inaccessibility of, and infrequent referrals to, mainstream services makes it impossible for mainstream services to provide consistent help in meeting the needs of the Asian American community. This suggests the informal support network may be preferred over mainstream services by Asian Americans. This also suggests the informal support network may be more culturally appropriate in providing

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help. Asian Americans' dependence on the informal support network to meet their needs is further suggested by the perception of infrequent help of formal services. This underutilization verifies findings that already exist in the literature (i.e., Choi & Severson, 2009). Also consistent with the literature is the lack of knowledge of formal services (Moon et al., 1998). Social work literature and practice is filled with discussions of cultural competence practice but little empirical data exists related to interventions (Davis, 2009). This study may provide direction about what the Asian American community and mainstream services might address in working together to try to achieve culturally appropriate services.

When comparing the theoretical models of Figure 1 (on page 98) that is based on the literature prior to data collection and Figure 7 (on page 209) that is based on the findings of this study, Figure 7 is much more dynamic and interactive. Figure 1 derived from the literature shows the needs resulting in the development of resources which then forms the helping process. In that model, the informal support network is comprised in a linear relationship of the needs, resources, and helping process. The model also contains needs, resources, and the helping process in a linear relationship. In Figure 1, resources are a category that contributes to the informal support network. In Figure 7, resources are not a major category but a subcategory of informal support network. The model shows the influence of Asian culture and community, the inadequacy of the informal support network, and the inaccessibility of the mainstream services to meet needs. Having data to support the acknowledgement that the Asian American community may have been influenced by Asian culture is an important finding because it provides the context in which the informal support network is developed and a target for extending both formal and informal service options.

In summary, the reinforcement of the Asian culture within the informal support network, the inadequacy of the informal support network, the inaccessibility and inadequacy of mainstream services, the infrequent referral to mainstream services from the informal support network, and the infrequent help of mainstream services all serve as systems barriers in meeting the needs of the Richmond Asian American community. These systems issues are unlike that of gateway cities in which ethnic-specific services exist within ethnic enclaves. The findings suggest that the system issues may be unique to Asian American communities in the South where the population size is less and individuals are more geographically dispersed. As such, culturally appropriate strategies in addressing the systems barriers may need to look different in the South compared to the gateway cities. Additionally, the capacity and resources likely do not exist to develop the ethnic-specific services in the South that exist in the gateway cities. The population size is currently not sufficient to invest in ethnic-specific services at this time. Given the findings of this study and the impossibility of the development of ethnic-specific services in the near future, below are implications for the Richmond Asian American community and social work.

Implications for Richmond Asian American Community

Needs/Resources Matrix

The information from the matrices provides a perspective from the leaders of the community. The findings may provide confirmation and clarity when the formal needs assessment underway is completed. At a minimum, this work can serve as triangulation to the other effort. The findings may also help to underscore preferences in allocating resources based on leaders' perceptions that may be different from the perspective of community members in the formal needs assessment, which could service to clarify future decision-making.

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In relation to needs and resources, the perception of the leaders of the Richmond Asian American community indicates that they are doing fairly well with its self-help approach. Putting the needs and resources in the context of the expanded definition of Müller's (1958) framework, the majority of the social systems were functioning for most of the subgroups, thus allowing the community to function as a whole. It appears that two social systems needing the community's attention are health and safety. Therefore, these will be the focus of the implication discussion that follows.

If these findings are truly grounded in the Richmond reality, with the exception of the Filipino subgroup, all subgroups, particularly the Chinese and Korean subgroups, have a need for additional health resources. In general, people are not aware of the resources available for addressing physical health needs. The groups of most concern for the leaders related to health are immigrants, refugees, and older adults. To address the physical health issues, the Asian American community should consider educating its members about the resources existing within the community. The education should include informing the mainstream health system about needs and appropriate responses because that is where most of the assistance can be provided. Specifically, information could be provided about free health clinics, Medicare, and Medicaid. In addition to lack of awareness about resources, it appears the Indian and Vietnamese subgroups have a lack of awareness of people's health conditions. It may be helpful to encourage yearly checkups. In other research, Vietnamese Americans have been found to report significantly worse physical health than other subgroups (Zhang & Ta, 2009). The Bon Secour health van has been identified as a good mainstream resource. They should be encouraged to help by focusing particularly on the immigrants, refugees, older adults, Vietnamese, and Indians.

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Health is not just about physical health but also mental health. The stigma of talking about and addressing mental health issues is recognized by the leaders of the community. For the overall wellbeing of the community, the stigma of mental health should be addressed. The existing but also growing older adult population is also a concern for many leaders in terms of their mental health due to assumed isolation. One of the suggestions by participants of the study to overcome stigma is education of the community. More details of this community education is explained below.

Safety is a concern for all communities except for the Filipino and possibly the Indian subgroups. One safety issue is related to stigmatized issues like domestic violence, which was expressed by all subgroups. Again, because the safety concern of domestic violence is a stigmatized issue, community education is needed and additional details are below.

Among the Chinese and Korean subgroups, the concern is mostly centered around the safety of the local businesses in terms of crime and violence against the business' personnel. Since the end of data collection for this project, Indian and Pakistani local businesses have also experienced violence. Furthermore, the Indian subgroup has expressed concerns about home robberies. Efforts by the Asian American community have been made to reach out to mainstream law enforcement agencies in times of need related to crime and violence. More work with local police is indicated, both in catching criminals and mechanisms for protecting businesses.

In addition to crime and violence, safety is also related to racial discrimination and marginalization by mainstream society. This was a concern expressed by leaders in the Vietnamese, Korean, Chinese, and small subgroups. To address needs in the safety social system in general and discrimination specifically, the Asian American community should consider an

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ongoing relationship with local law enforcement agencies. With Asian Americans mostly residing in Henrico county, Chesterfield county, and Richmond city, one community leader who resides in each of those localities can serve as a representative. These leaders can meet with local law enforcement agencies on a regular basis to update them about activities and concerns. The leader can also attend programs and activities by the law enforcement agencies to provide a voice for the Asian American community. This example of partnering with law enforcement can be implemented with all aspects of mainstream in which Asian American voices should be heard.

The partnerships like those with law enforcement require engagement of community members in the Asian American community. Studies have reported that individuals have a stronger sense of community and network when they contribute and help others (Hoffman et al., 2007; Smith et al., 1989). Therefore, to increase involvement, individuals should be asked to contribute their expertise and/or time to help others and to improve the overall functioning of the community. Among the first requests should be for new leaders who can contribute to the development and enhancement of the community focus on health and safety social systems. Initial tasks for new leaders should provide them with awareness about the needs of the Asian American community and the necessity for them to be involved. If successful, continued engagement should follow.

Theoretical Model

Rather than simply expanding the capacity of the social systems discussed above, the overall support network model identified in this study should be the target for improvement. The challenges are: 1) the reinforcement of the Asian culture within the informal support network; 2) the inadequacy of the informal support network; 3) the inaccessibility of mainstream services; 4) the infrequent referral to mainstream services from the informal support network; and 5) the

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infrequent help of mainstream services. If this model is truly reflective of the Richmond reality, all serve as systems barriers in meeting the needs of the Richmond Asian American community. These barriers seem to be prohibiting the informal support network and the mainstream from serving the needs of the Richmond Asian American community.

In general, because of the geographic dispersion of the Asian American community throughout the Richmond area, it is important to maintain communication among and within subgroups. Another strategy in addressing the systems barriers is to apply pressure to the mainstream to recognize the existence of and consider services for Asian Americans. This requires a united front developed when subgroups come together to voice their presence and concerns. Other implications should also be considered.

Reinforcement. To address the systems issue of reinforcement of the Asian culture and community in the helping process, managing of stigma and shame should be the focus. For this study, the most common areas of stigma and shame are mental health and domestic violence. Some leaders are suggesting an education program to educate about decisions for the areas and the need to seek help. First step is helping the community recognize that these stigmatized issues exist and members should no longer be in denial about them. Second, education programs should focus on each of the issues separately. For mental health, it would be well to include how mental health affects physical health because a large body of literature shows a positive association between stress, physical conditions, and psychological symptoms (see for example Brown, 1986; Flannery, 1986; Goldberg & Comstock, 1980; Patel, 1992). The focus on domestic violence should be on the victim's need for safety as well as the consequences to victim's physical and mental health due to abuse. Asian culture may dictate the unity of the

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family as a prime goal, but community members must learn that abuse within the home will only harm the family and the community in the long run.

In addition to the education program, resources must be identified and/or developed within the Asian American community as well as in the mainstream for those individuals who are willing to seek assistance. As part of the education program, acceptable resources to assist with issues of mental health and domestic violence identified and provided to community members. This study has identified the Vietnamese and Korean subgroups to be specifically reluctant in addressing mental health; it is recommended that education start with these two groups. For domestic violence, all subgroups have expressed concerns about the issue.

Inadequacy. To address inadequacy of the informal support network in general, the Richmond Asian American community, due to the geographical dispersion of its community members, will not likely have ethnic enclaves that can support ethnically-specific services. The lack of a central location in which people reside and function contributes to challenges in the helping process that must be addressed (Waters & Jimenez, 2005). The Indian subgroup has built a cultural center. Some subgroups have religious entities. Other groups have visions to develop such entities. These ethnic entities may need to be understood as mini ethnic enclaves and utilized in reaching out and helping community members in the particular subgroup network. On the other hand, as community members are scattered all over the Richmond metropolitan area, they are by necessity more incorporated into the mainstream. As such, developing partnerships with mainstream services, as suggested by leaders of the study, should be seriously considered as a way to overcome inadequate services.

In addition to partnerships with mainstream services, the other theme suggested by leaders is formalization of the informal support network. The definition of what is formal and

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informal support used in this project can provide some guidance in this discussion: *formal support* is provided by structured social service delivery systems; whereas, *informal support* is provided by people caring for each other through their natural helping tendencies (Hooyman, 1983). Thus, to formalize the informal support network can mean systematically developing the network so that the help provided is formally identified and structured (perhaps through the network of cultural centers) rather than people helping when and how they can. Because the Richmond Asian American community currently does not seem to have the capacity to formalize its informal support network, leaders should seek assistance from mainstream services. Finally, it is unclear whether or not informal support networks can address severe or long standing problems (Burke & Weir, 1981). This provides yet another reason to form partnerships with mainstream services.

Leaders expressed concerns about the mental health status of older adults due to isolation. Leaders suggested that existing resources within the informal support network are inadequate. To overcome isolation of the aging population, despite some subgroups' efforts in forming gatherings for this population through ethnic associations or religious entities, additional help should made available. Several subgroups are exploring the idea of community centers and residences for their older adult population. Because of the limited population numbers and resources in terms of funding and know-how in the development of such efforts, perhaps the subgroups can consider collaborating on their visions or, at least, serve as resources for one another. This effort could serve as a model for developing more structured approaches in other areas of need.

If the Asian American population continues to grow in Richmond and Asian Americans become more geographically concentrated, there is capacity and resources within the community

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to develop ethnic-specific services in the future. Building on the suggestion about responding to needs of the aging members, the efforts of collaboration can expand as resources allow.

Infrequent referral. This study found that leaders seem to serve as gatekeepers to mainstream services and make infrequent referrals. This is either because of dissatisfaction with services or lack of awareness about services. Either way, community members in need may not get the help that they need. The Asian American community should partner with mainstream services in a mutual effort of outreach and education. One resource that already exists in the mainstream is United Way's 211 system. The system is an easy to remember number that individuals can call for information and referral. The system acts as a central point of access for all human services. The Asian American community can partner with 211 to provide translators and informal support resources within the community to make it both accessible and useful for its community members. With knowledge of available services, community members choose to access mainstream services directly. When leaders are approached by members in need, they can refer them to the appropriate mainstream services.

Some leaders may be hesitant about involvement in partnerships with mainstream services as a way to increase the informal support network's ability to meet the needs of the community members. Even if the leaders are hesitant, the reality may be that they have no choice. If people view them as leaders, they are going to them expecting help. Therefore, leaders should take the responsibility of their position in the community as a way to extend community help and support beyond the current limits of the Richmond Asian American community.

Inaccessibility. Mainstream services should be helped to see how their services can be more accessible to the Asian American population in Richmond. Service providers need to

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know about the following barriers to services: 1) transportation for services; 2) language for those who do not speak English; 3) stigma and shame of seeking services in general but domestic violence and mental health issues in particular; 4) knowledge about available services. Leaders should meet with administrators of mainstream services to discuss these barriers and develop ways of overcoming them. To overcome the transportation barrier, one strategy is for the informal support network to create a carpooling system as a way of formalizing aspects of the network. To overcome the language barrier, familial translators should be avoided, as suggested by leaders in this study. Instead, the Asian American community should develop a list of volunteer translators shared with all service providers. Updating the list of translators could also be another mechanism for formalizing service aspects of the network.

Overcoming stigma and shame discussed earlier could be further addressed if service providers were informed about what the Asian American community is doing in addressing the issue. They could be asked to share their expertise to overcome lack of knowledge about available services. The responsibility is with both the Asian American community and mainstream services. The Asian American community should make efforts to learn about services and mainstream services need to make an effort to educate and adapt to needs. A great place to start would be a partnership with United Way because of the many agencies that are supported by United Way. Asian American leaders could also attend community fairs where mainstream services share information about themselves. The information can then be brought back to the Asian American community and shared in a systematic way. By addressing infrequent referrals and inaccessibility, mainstream services' could increase their ability to help and the network could increase its trust of the usefulness of that help.

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Implications for Social Work

Because of inadequate resources (e.g., volunteers, funding, and professionals) in the informal support network, the dependence on mainstream services among Asian Americans to address needs may be inevitable but also positive for Richmond and the nation. With the projected increase of Asian Americans in the South (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010b), it is important for social work practitioners, educators, policy makers, decision makers, and researchers to be aware of the informal support network that exist in the Asian American community. Specifically, social workers need to understand the need for an informal support network, how it is used, and the challenges it faces so that we are better educated about how to help Asian Americans and assure their wellbeing.

Whether it is practice, education, policy, or research, all efforts on the part of social workers must be culturally appropriate. Social workers must be aware of cultural values, religious beliefs, and adaption factors that impact Asian Americans. Issues of service and needs should be placed within a sociocultural context as responses are filtered through the specific value orientations and belief systems of the ethnic group being served or under study (Lien et al., 2004). Social workers should be aware that they can never be culturally competent but instead, create a situation of cultural safety for individuals they work with so that they feel safe to share and engage. To create this, social workers should ask for permission to enter into the individual's life and community. Only when the social worker authentically participates in individual's or community's life does she give voice to the unvoiced. Social workers must continually modify their approaches and assess each step based on the individuals, families, or communities they are working with. Social workers' success in helping their clients or

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population contributes to the effectiveness of their efforts as well as word of mouth in the community that social workers can actually help.

Implications for Social Work Practice

If the findings about informal support network hold, there are several of those findings that have implications for social work practice. The use of the informal support network to meet needs is an indication that individuals are willing to seek assistance. Social workers should not assume that Asian Americans prefer to manage without help, but rather that they prefer to seek help from informal sources prior to mainstream services. The discussion that follows focus on the same targets for change identified in earlier sections with a focus on formal professional practice rather than that of the informal network.

Reinforcement. Participants acknowledged stigma to be an enormous inhibiting influence on help seeking. Many stressed the need for education and/or looking to the next generation who have fewer stigmas with the issue. Social workers can partner with leaders in educating the community, in all generations. Although younger generations may not face the same cultural barrier of stigma as their parents or grandparents, culture continues to be a great influence among the members of the community. Social workers should work with leaders to educate one another to develop an educational program to overcome the cultural issues of stigma. Involvement by leaders in the educational effort would more likely result in community members being receptive to social workers' efforts. Leaders should play a large role in this education process because they are sought out in times of need. This position in the community conveys respect and assumes knowledge about available resources. As part of the education program development, leaders must be provided an opportunity to critically assess their own attitudes and beliefs about help seeking, particularly in relation to stigmatized issues that may

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hinder the community education process. Social workers can facilitate leaders' belief assessments because social workers are removed from the cultural influence. In general, education components delivered by both community leaders and social workers should target beliefs and attitudes; awareness of the existence of stigmatized problems in the community; and specific ways that can reassure how services can be provided in a discreet manner.

 Inadequacy. With the general belief of the insider doctrine by both Asian Americans and the mainstream (Iglehart & Becerra, 2011), Asian Americans should be involved in meeting the needs of their communities. In response to limited resources, community members can become paraprofessionals in the helping process. Especially in the beginning, paraprofessionals can also be trained in needs assessment and information and referral of services. Social workers can help by providing training, supervision, and group support for these paraprofessionals. In exchange, the paraprofessionals can serve as cultural brokers and/or educate mainstream organizations on outreach and serving Asian Americans. Informal community helpers and paraprofessionals have been identified as working successfully in refugee camps (Gong-Guy, Cravens, Patterson, 1991) and ethnic agencies (Holley, 2003). Egli (1987) found that paraprofessionals fulfilled multiple roles that included interpreter, case worker, cultural broker, community advocate, and outreach worker. Studies have found that paraprofessionals perform effective counseling with non-psychiatric populations (Nietzel & Fischer, 1981). A collaboration effort between Asian American community and mainstream organizations will result in better services for the Asian American population. Perhaps this can serve as a step in a professional social work career ladder for the informal community helpers and paraprofessionals.

 To build on these findings, the social work profession should consider the importance of informal support networks in their role of providing services in local Asian American

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communities. Mainstream service providers should understand the inner workings of the informal support network in order to appropriately partner with the Asian American community in providing services. The informal support network can provide insight for social workers about what Asian Americans prefer and might serve as a model for what works at least in terms of their help-seeking. To provide guidance for practitioners in Richmond, the researcher plans to develop a report based on this study that can be shared with stakeholders, both in the Asian American and mainstream community. Another way to gain insight is to observe the Asian American community by participating in their many festivals and getting to know community members. Yet another way to develop knowledge is by asking and learning from Asian Americans directly about their informal support network. Understanding the informal support network would allow social workers to determine how mainstream services can play a larger role in the help-seeking and service receiving process. The informal support network will always serve as a gatekeeper to mainstream services and mainstream services should not be the last resort when needs are more difficult to resolve.

With the knowledge of help-seeking patterns common among Asian Americans, to overcome the perception of inadequacies in services, it may be reasonable for social workers to assess existing support systems so that interventions can be developed to supplement rather than replace the informal support (Hatfield, Mohamad, Rahim, & Tanweer, 1996). Therefore, informal social support should be systematically integrated into needs assessment and service models. Delgado (1995) recommends a diagram of the client's social system as an assessment tool. This assessment might also validate individual's challenges and experiences in their help-seeking effort as well as broaden the social worker's knowledge of the situation. At the same time, individual's informal support network should be seen as a resource of personal and

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community strengths that can be cultivated and included in the service provision and could be part of intervention design.

Inaccessibility. The barriers to accessing mainstream services identified in this study are consistent with those found in the literature. These barriers were categorized in Table 2 by the researcher into types of barriers that include linguistic, cultural, economic, systematic, structural, governmental, and informational. The barriers that need specific attention found in this study are: 1) transportation for services; 2) stigma and shame of seeking services in general but domestic violence and mental health issues in particular; 3) language for those who do not speak English; 4) knowledge about available services.

To overcome the transportation barrier, the Bon Secour health van is a great example of bringing services to those in need and can serve as a model for other services. To overcome the cultural stigma issues, social workers should partner with leaders in the Asian American community to develop and implement an education program discussed earlier.

To prepare for Asian Americans who may come to use mainstream services, if bilingual professionals are not available, a system can be created in which the appropriate interpreters are contacted in the Asian American community and available upon request during the delivery of services. Because leaders largely serve as gatekeepers to mainstream services, they can be trained on assessment and referral skills (Delgado, 1995). Through training, leaders can learn when community members need additional services and where it is most appropriate to refer them. Leaders can continue to be part of the process, as found in this study, by making the contact with the service provider and following up with the community member.

To overcome the lack of knowledge about available resources, education and outreach campaigns are important (Waters & Jimenez, 2005). Practitioners can use existing avenues of

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communication within subgroups to dissemination information. Because leaders serve as gatekeepers to information, it is crucial to not only work with them on educating the community regarding stigma but also existing mainstream services to address needs. Involvement and education of more leaders means more individuals are able to contribute to the helping process. Considering the influence of many religious entities (Nicholson, 1989), leaders from those specific entities must be included in the outreach process. Leaders should be consulted at the start of any outreach planning process to ensure the materials, messages, and approaches are culturally appropriate.

Infrequent help. Participants from this study are clearly concerned about the future of the informal support network and its helping capacity. Whether it is formalization of services within the Asian American community or a partnership between the Asian American community and mainstream services that is suggested, social workers can be of assistance. The first step is building trust with the Asian American community leaders. From there, social workers may take part in the development of formal ethnic services or a partnership with mainstream services by taking the initiative in the conversation and working closely with the necessary Asian American community leaders.

One option to partner with the Asian American community and to provide more culturally appropriate services is to include a cultural broker in service planning and delivery, someone who is bicultural in terms of the dominant culture and the culture of the client's native country (Egli, 1987). The cultural broker's role would be to explain to the social worker and the client how things work and where the other is coming from. The cultural broker must remain objective throughout the process and not take sides in order to be an effective facilitator. Leaders have expressed concerns about the privacy of the clients in regards to cultural brokers.

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To address this issue, the cultural brokers should be trained with a professional understanding of the importance of their role in this process as well as the confidentiality and privacy that entails. Because the subgroup communities are small, perceptions of privacy and confidentiality may be a problem. To avoid this, to save face for clients who may know the cultural broker, and to gain the trust of those served, cultural brokers can be someone from a similar subgroup rather than the same subgroup. This idea comes from existing Richmond community practice where Korean Americans, no longer able to pay their mortgage, are listing their houses with Chinese American realtors. Similarly, the Chinese Americans in the same mortgage situation are not using the Chinese American realtors but going to people outside the subgroup community.

Additionally, efforts must be made to specifically recruit Asian American social workers into mainstream services or as consultants. With the limited number of Asian American social workers in general, creative means should be explored that may help alleviate the shortage. Asian American social workers should extend their own service to targeted volunteer efforts.

Implications for Social Work Education

Whether or not the findings here represent the reality of the informal support network, Asian Americans in Richmond have unaddressed needs that can be met by appropriately educating future social workers.

Practice implications for this study emphasize social workers to work with the Asian American community. Therefore, students should learn about the community by interacting directly with the community in a meaningful way. One strategy is through community service or learning projects via social work programs or social work courses. Students can organize and participate in activities in which they provide service while also directly interacting with Asian Americans. One example is volunteering for the planning of the Asian American Celebration

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hosted annually by the Asian American Society of Central Virginia. Another example is working with an ethnic entity to provide tutoring sessions for individuals who lack English proficiency or children who may be having trouble in mainstream schools.

Practice implications also suggest working with informal community helpers, interpreters, paraprofessionals, cultural brokers, and Asian American social work consultants. To develop this skill, social work educators can incorporate group work across the curriculum. Group work allows students to work with others who they otherwise may not work with. It also allows students to have to resolve potential conflicts in order to do well on the project. This is similar to having to resolve potential struggles working with clients in order to best serve the client.

In social work education, student reflexivity is highly encouraged so that students are aware of their own assumptions and biases (Cole, Weng, & Gray, 2013). In today's diverse world, it is inevitable that students will work with populations that are different from their own. Reflexivity is important to prevent stereotyping and assist students in learning how to be culturally sensitive and contribute to providing culturally appropriate services that are in line with the beliefs, values, and practices of different populations. Through awareness of one's own assumptions and biases, students can continue to build the skill of being open-minded about people who are different from them.

In addition to being taught how to provide services, students should also be taught about the various types of services utilized by different groups, including the informal support network by the Asian American community. Knowing about the informal support network will help students understand that Asian Americans underutilize formal services not because they do not have needs but because they prefer other sources of help. Knowing help-seeking patterns among

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Asian Americans may help students better comprehend their future role as a social worker and what they can do to improve access to services.

Finally, social work students are taught to take a biological, psychological, social, and spiritual view of clients' situations for a more comprehensive holistic approach to practice. As part of the holistic approach, educators should touch upon the nature and functions of informal support networks and the social support it may provide so that students learn to incorporate these existing helping strategies beyond human service agencies. This information can come from the human behavior and social environment and practice courses.

Implications for Policy

There are also findings from this study that have implications for social work policy. Policy in the context of this discussion can be federal, state, local, or organizational.

Federal, state, and local funding decisions and policies focused on prevention of stigmatization mental health and domestic violence should target Asian American communities. Rather than being the last resort when situations have gotten worse and more resources are needed to address the issue, prevention, education, and outreach can decrease the number of mental health and domestic violence cases. In order for local agencies to extend themselves to partner with Asian American communities, state and local governments need to recognize the needs of the population. Further, to be culturally appropriate, nontraditional means of implementing the prevention program should be allowed through policy and funding. For example, mental health prevention can be implemented through physicians because physical health is a more acceptable topic of discussion than mental health. Additionally, domestic violence prevention can be delivered via the message of public safety to groups of women as a way for women to bond and learn from one another.

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Federal, state, and local policies that affect immigrants and refugees are relevant to the Asian American community. The national debate on immigration influences the treatment of Asian Americans that include discrimination and violence (Millard & Chapa, 2004). One of the barriers to using mainstream services is policies and regulations that restrict services for immigrants (Min & Moon, 2006). Therefore, when reviewing and developing policies and regulations related to services, policymakers and decision makers should question the consequences of barriers for immigrants. Specifically with refugees, it is clear that the goal of the government and resettlement agencies is the independence of refugees (Patrick, 2004). Policies that specifically state the number of months refugees are given assistance should be reconsidered to be adjustable based on circumstances such as poor physical or mental health. Given healthcare reform, the focus on Medicaid might be best reviewed first because refugees arrive in the United States without much healthcare in their native countries or refugee camps and good health is crucial to becoming independent.

There is a lack of recognition by federal, state, local, and organizational policymakers and service providers about the extent and specifics of needs (Choi, 2001) in the Asian American community. When developing policies and regulations, existing needs assessments should be reviewed in consideration of the Asian American community. Policymakers and service providers should understand that not all communities are open to traditional forms of needs assessments and good data requires open-mindedness to more culturally appropriate ways to identify needs in the community. It should also be understood that Asian American subgroups, age groups, and their length of time in the United States may lead to different needs.

Mainstream services are noted to be inaccessible due to the many barriers Asian Americans face. Organizational program planners should assure that all policies related to

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programs are accessible to the Asian American community. Further, policies should be developed to overcome the many barriers faced by the population. Program planners should think creatively to overcome the barriers. Because the existing mobile medical services have been highlighted by several participants in this study as an example of something that works, policies at the federal, state, and local levels should support this type of creative problem solving.

In regards to organizational policy, decision-makers can strengthen informal support networks and their attempts to become more formalized by making guidelines regarding funding and staffing less restrictive and more inclusive of nontraditional ways of helping (Gong-Guy et al., 1991). Recruitment of local Asian Americans to assist in serving the Asian American population as staff, consultants, board members, and cultural brokers should be part of agency policy. This process may involve more education in the process of recruitment and training to get the recruited individuals familiar with their roles and responsibilities. This process may also involve a review of the required or expected level of education or experience for some positions to be more inclusive of immigrants' education and experience in their native countries as well as those in the United States. Inclusion of Asian Americans in various roles throughout mainstream agencies could contribute to policymaking and practice that is more culturally appropriate. Additionally, policies should allow agencies how to provide technical assistance to immigrant communities in their own efforts to assist their members.

Finally, as the United States policymakers consider how to care for the baby boomer generation, older Asian Americans need to be specifically considered by federal, state, local, and organizational policymakers as they may have different needs than the non-Asian baby boomers. For one, older Asian Americans may not have employment histories and cannot count on social security or other employment pensions for retirement (Kalavar & Van Willigen, 2005). For

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another, housing policies that limit the number of individuals living in one household should take into account the preference by some Asian American families for co-residency of multiple generations.

Implications for Social Work Research

This study has several implications for social work research. First, to overcome the limitations outlined in Chapter III, for future studies to test generalizability, a larger sample size will be required. Because the theory is related to the "new" South, inclusion of localities throughout the South in a multisite study may help. To maintain a true Asian American approach, it will be necessary for the sample to be fully pan-Asian. Multiethnic studies will allow for large scale comparisons between and within groups to understand the complexity and uniqueness between the subgroups. For subgroups with smaller populations, oversampling will be necessary. Similar to other studies on Asian Americans (i.e., Ahmad et al., 2009; Behnia, 2008; Holley, 2003) in which the samples were too small to allow for meaningful analyses of the groups critiqued in Chapter II, this study experienced the same problem in revealing specific findings from members of the smaller subgroups. In order to protect the identity of the leaders adequate representation was required and will be necessary in future testing of the theory. Aside from recruiting a large sample of leaders, analytic strategies that appropriately combine subgroups with similar needs might allow more reliable analysis of the developed resources and networks. Another analytic strategies could combine recent refugee groups (Burmese and Bhutanese), settled refugees who have been in the United States for a longer period of time (Cambodian and Laos), transfers from native country companies to work in Richmond (Japanese and Malaysian), and populations with similar socio-economic status like professionals who are employed and have benefits (Indonesian and Malaysian). In developmental stages, another

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option to overcome the problem with limited number of leaders in the subgroups, the criteria for sampling can be expanded to include non-leaders of certain types who have competence to participate in support network research. Finally, when appropriate, using random probability sampling would contribute to generalizability.

Chapter IV concluded with propositions that contain theoretical categories and assertions about how they relate to one another. They are repeated below in order to discuss implications for future testing:

1. Asian culture and community and the helping process reinforces one another.

2. The informal support network is inadequate in meeting the needs of the Asian American community.

3. Mainstream services are inaccessible in meeting the needs of the Asian American community.

4. The informal support network infrequently refers individuals to mainstream services.

5. Due to inaccessibility and infrequent referrals, mainstream services provide infrequent help in meeting the needs of the Asian American community.

6. To have a fully functioning informal support network, barriers represented by these five must be eliminated.

In general, the next step in this process is to convert the categories into operationalizable variables. An instrument that will reflect the variables and their relationships will be developed. DeVellis's (2003) guide for scale development can be used. Some of these categories and axial codes will be easier to convert to operationalizable variables than others. The researcher can take several strategies in defining the variables.

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Initial thoughts on testing the study's proposition are as follows. For proposition #1, participants can be asked to rank in order a list of helping sources within the informal support network as well as mainstream services to validate the help-seeking pattern found in this study. Participants can also be asked whether or not the helping sources were relationship based. For proposition #2, participants can be asked to rank in a Likert scale their informal support network's ability to meet their needs from not able to fully able. Similarly, proposition #3 can be tested by asking participants to rank inaccessibility of mainstream services from not accessible to fully accessible. Proposition #2 and #3 can be asked based on the participants' perception and/or on their experience. For proposition #4, participants can first be asked how frequently individuals are referred to mainstream services. To further probe this proposition, participants can then be asked the reasoning behind the referral. Lastly, to test proposition #5, participants can be asked the reasons behind the infrequent help of mainstream services.

Once the instrument is developed, a panel of experts related to the topic can be assembled to provide face validity of the instrument. These scholars should be experts in Asian Americans and the barriers in meeting needs, informal supports, informal support networks, and/or community and mainstream service partnerships. Another option, or in addition to the panel of experts to establish face validity is, to assemble a panel of community members who fit the profile of potential participants. The next step could be a pilot test of the instrument with a small sample to test the feasibility of the study. Steps would be taken to address any issues resulting from the pilot test prior to implementing a larger test. Lastly, similar to this study, a cultural interpreter who understands the local community and its culture would be recruited at the beginning of the project as an advisor and reviewer of the study and its materials to guide the researcher to be culturally appropriate.

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Aside from Asian Americans, another possibility of testing the theory is among the Latino American communities in the South due to some similarities with the Asian American population. Like Asians, Latinos are also heterogeneous with no single culture (Delgado, 1995). The migration experience to the United States affects the acculturation and ethnic identity of both groups (Lora, Gordon, Sharp, Fischer, Gerber, & Lash, 2011). A strong sense of familism and collectivism exists among both groups (Delgado & Humm-Delgado, 1982). Like the Asian American population, this strong attachment to family may also translate to strong reliance on the extended family for support (Lora et al., 2011). Lastly, similar to Asian Americans, literature also suggests informal supports are important in the Latino American communities (Delgado, 1995).

In addition to the future testing of the study's theoretical findings, there is need to respond to additional research questions that also emerged from this project. In relation to the social systems, the systems in which this study could not determine whether the needs outweigh the resources and vice versa could be further explored. Specifically with resources in the community, an examination into the importance of the existence of the available resources so that those that are identified as helpful are further developed and supported. Future studies could explore the reasons for the use of the informal support network. While it is clear that social support exists within the informal support network, future studies could also look into the types of support (i.e., emotional, instrumental, informational, and/or appraisal) provided in the Asian American support network as presented by House (1981) and how the types of support are provided. Because the Asian culture seems to influence informal support networks, it would be interesting to see how culture influences the types of support provided. Finally, the identifiable

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structural resources within the Asian American community could be identified and incorporated into the formalization of the informal support network.

The goal of this study was to develop a grounded theory qualitatively to allow further testing quantitatively for generalizability. As discussed in Chapter III, this study was positioned in the functionalist paradigm with respect to Burrell and Morgan's (1994) multiple paradigms framework. Another option to further explore the findings of this study is by moving to the interpretive paradigm. A future study in the interpretive paradigm could explore the meaning of the systems issues found in this study that have created barriers in meeting the needs of the Richmond Asian American community. Specifically, what does reinforcement of Asian culture in the informal support network's helping process mean? What is the meaning of inadequate services within the informal support network? What does it mean to work with mainstream services? Just as Müller's (1958) 14 social systems were extended beyond its original meaning for Asian Americans, an investigation from the interpretive paradigm could extend understanding of the systems barriers identified in this study. Research in the interpretive paradigm could clarify the value laden categories identified in this study.

Finally, social network analysis is limited in social work research (Ennis & West, 2010). When the Richmond Asian American community is more established with a bigger population that is similar in size to the communities studied in the literature, social network analysis can also become a future scientific inquiry to demonstrate patterns of interpersonal relations, interactions, and social integration of community members. Specifically, the inquiry can follow Hill's (2002) outline of four key features of social networks in terms of the structure of the network, network processes, function of the network, and the composition of the network to better understand the informal support network.

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Conclusion

An examination of the informal support network within the Richmond Asian American community provides a perspective on the ethnic community, its response to its self-identified problems, and its problem interventions. The informal support network appears to capture an interface between problem solving and individuals in need that blends service with community and ethnicity. The informal support network incorporates the social and cultural contexts of the Asian American community in their helping process. With the social work profession's focus on social justice, it is imperative that we recognize and understand informal support networks and their contribution to the social service delivery system. With this information, the social work profession can better understand and deliver preferred strategies for meeting needs and identify better ways of supporting the informal support networks.

Social work's emphasis on social justice and the people served suggests that all communities should have equal access to services and that these services should be offered in a culturally appropriate and relevant manner (Hyde, 2004). The informal support network can serve as a resource for service providers in their development of culturally appropriate services to more effectively serve the Asian American population. This is important to note because it helps social workers recognize that responses to human need in the Asian American community may take different forms than the traditional mechanisms social workers are familiar with from working in mainstream services and working with dominant populations. A better understanding of the informal support network may extend social workers' appreciation of the diversity of ethnic subgroups' experiences and improve their ability to meet their needs. It is also clear that leaders in the informal support network have a need to identify and better understand the formal system. Only then can they help to extend effective services in the formal system to the

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individuals and families they represent. Comprehending the role in which informal support works in the Asian American community will help social workers and leaders in the community better work with the population when they finally enter the formal service system.

While much of the literature focused on formal services, there remained a gap in the literature on informal services. Research on Asian Americans has largely been conducted in geographical areas in which the majority of the population has traditionally resided. This study fills these gaps by grounding understanding of informal services in the context of an Asian American community in the new South. Better understanding of the barriers and opportunities for community wellbeing was the goal. From the standpoint of this researcher and the leaders with whom she worked, this goal was achieved.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Interview Guide

This protocol is to be read aloud by Suzie Weng. Headings and words in italics will not be read aloud. Consistent with grounded theory, the below questions will remain but the probes under each question may change as the research unfolds.

Introduction

Good morning/afternoon/evening and thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. My name is Suzie Weng, and I am a PhD candidate at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. I am conducting this study under the supervision of my dissertation chair, Dr. Mary Katherine O'Connor to learn more about the dimensions of informal support network development in the Richmond Asian American community in general and your ethnic community specifically. Before we start the interview, let's review the consent form.

Questions

1. What help is available for those in need or with problems in your community?
2. How did your community know who needed help?
3. How did your community know how to help the people in need?
4. How did the helping process within your community get started?
    a) What was the step-by-step process?
    b) Who did what to create the helping process?
    c) Tell me about [*type of support mentioned in answering question 1 above*], how did that get started, why?
    d) How did members of the community get connected to the help?
5. What was the beginning of the helping process your community like?
6. What resources did your community have to provide the help that was needed?
    a) How did you/they find the resources?
    b) Did you/they use resources outside of your community?
        i) If so, where and how did you/they find the resources?
        ii) If not, why not?
7. How does the helping process work in your community?
    a) Who does what?
    b) Where do people go and when?
8. How has the help provided in your community change over time?
    a) Why did the change happen?
9. How is help provided in your community?
    a) If support is provided, when and under what circumstances?
    b) If support is not provided, why not?

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c) What types of support are provided for members of your community?
d) Are these supports used by other Asian American groups?
  i) If so, which other groups, under what conditions, and how do they use them?
  ii) If not, why not?

Appendix B

Recruitment Script Used by Student Researcher

Interested in Participating in Research on Informal Support Network?

Hi, my name is Suzie Weng, I'm a doctoral candidate from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). I'm conducting a research project for my dissertation on the dimensions of informal support network development in the Asian American community here in Richmond. Asian American community leaders from a variety of subgroups will be interviewed. I'm interested in hearing about your knowledge and experiences about informally helping members as a leader in the Richmond Asian American community.

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Appendix C

Recruitment Script Used by Gatekeepers

Interested in Participating in Research on Informal Support Network?
I would like to let you know about an interesting research project conducted by a doctoral candidate researcher, Suzie Weng, from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). This study will explore the dimensions of informal support network development in the Asian American community here in Richmond. Asian American community leaders from a variety of subgroups will be interviewed. The researcher is interested in hearing about your experiences as a leader in the Richmond Asian American community.

To learn more about the research and about participating in it, either:
- ♦ Email me your consent to give your contact information to the researcher who will contact you,
- ♦ Sign the form below and I will give the information to the researcher who will contact you, or
- ♦ Contact the researcher: **Suzie Weng; suzie.weng@gmail.com; 804-878-6313**

••

Permission to Release Contact Information

I, _____, give permission to the person who contacted me to release my name and contact information to the research staff of VCU IRB protocol # ____, Title: *Dimensions of Informal Support Network Development in the new South Asian American Community: A Grounded Theory.*
I give my permission for the person who contacted me to release to the VCU researcher my:

☐ First Name (specify):   _____

AND (at least one of the following)

☐ Phone Number (specify): _____

☐ Email Address (specify): _____

_____
Signature

_____
Date

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Appendix D

Peer Reviewer Statement

March 18, 2013

Regarding: Suzie Weng, Virginia Commonwealth University

Dissertation Committee:

As Suzie began the process of developing her dissertation research, she and I had several conversations about methodology. Suzie asked that I serve as her peer reviewer and I agreed for several reasons. First, I recently finished a research project using the same grounded theory text as a guide that Suzie used in her study. Additionally, I have some experience in working with immigrants and refugees and some experience related to the challenges that arise in this type of research. Finally, Suzie and I have developed a trusting and open working relationship based on trust and respect. This is key to the role that I was expected to play.

I acted in this role by maintaining consistent peer debriefing meetings and communications regularly throughout her research process. I asked difficult questions about her personal biases during the research design phase. I challenged her assumptions during data collection as she adjusted her probes and began initial data analysis. I asked for details about her organization strategy during the various stages of data coding and theory development. We discussed challenges with all aspects of her project. Additionally, I acted as a supporter and an advocate during stressful and challenging moments. This was often performed by listening and providing a sounding board for her reflections.

Several components of Suzie's theory development became central to the peer review debriefing sessions. One dimension of this study that we discussed at length was her recruitment strategy. Since the population she intended to study--and the phenomena of interest--were components of multiple, somewhat closed communities, recruitment was key to the success of the project. We discussed the challenges and benefits of ethnic matching and her previous work in establishing inroads with key informants. In addition to recruitment, data analysis was important to our peer review discussions. As I have no expertise on the particular research content, Suzie had to explain her logic and objectivity in basic terms, helping her to understand and explain it at multiple levels of abstraction. Finally, Suzie shared several iterations of her conceptual model throughout its development. I offered some feedback but mostly asked questions intended to push her to refine, broaden, and simplify her model.

Finally, a critical role that I played as peer reviewer was to evaluate the general research process and the empirical grounding of the study based on the criteria outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1990). I certify that this project meets those requirements. During our peer review relationship, we each kept a record--a journal that helped us maintain direction and continuity. Our records have been kept open to one another in order to increase transparency. As a result of

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this relationship, I am confident that Suzie's research project meets the requirements of rigor that pertain to the peer review process outlined by the research method she selected and outlined in this dissertation.
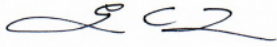
Regards,

Justin S. Lee

Justin S. Lee, Ph.D., MSW
Peer-Reviewer

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Appendix E

Cultural Interpreter Statement

I, Eric Lin, served as the cultural interpreter to Suzie Weng's dissertation titled "Dimensions of Informal Support Network Development in an Asian American Community in the New South: A Grounded Theory." I reviewed the study design, including the interview guide to ensure it was culturally appropriate for the Richmond Asian American community. To assist with Suzie's interviews, I recruited potential leaders, helped to determine the order of interactions so that it is culturally appropriate, and explained reasons for potential difficulties in getting some people to participate. Finally, I reviewed the products of the project through its many iterations as well as the project's implications to provide feedback on its cultural appropriateness and relevancy to the Richmond Asian American community.

Consent Form

RESEARCH SUBJECT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

TITLE: DIMENSIONS OF INFORMAL SUPPORT NETWORK DEVELOPMENT IN ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES IN THE NEW SOUTH: A GROUNDED THEORY

VCU IRB NO.: HM _____

This consent form may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask the study staff to explain any words that you do not clearly understand. You may take home a copy of this consent form to think about or discuss with family or friends before making your decision.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
The purpose of this research study is to learn about the development of informal support networks in the Asian American community.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are familiar with the informal support network in the Asian American community. The study will be conducted either in person or via phone interviews.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AND YOUR INVOLVEMENT
If you decide to be in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form if you are doing the interview in person or give your verbal consent if you are doing a phone interview after you have had all your questions answered and understand what will happen to you.

In this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview with the researcher. The researcher will take notes during the interview; any names or other information that could identify you will be left out of the notes. The interview will last for approximately an hour and a half to two hours. You will be asked about the informal support network in your community. You will be asked about the development of the network to how to improve the network. The researcher will interview up to 30 others familiar with the informal support network. After the researcher has analyzed the information from the interviews, she may ask you to review the findings.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS
Sometimes talking about these subjects causes people to become upset. Several questions will ask about how problems in your community are being address. You do not have to talk about any subjects you do not want to talk about, and you may stop the interview at any time. If you

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become upset, the study staff will give you names of counselors to contact so you can get help in dealing with these issues.

BENEFITS TO YOU AND OTHERS
The information we learn from participants in this study may help others who also wish to understand how the Asian American community help one another in order to help better meet its needs.

COSTS
There are no costs for participating in this study other than the time you will spend in the interview.

ALTERNATIVES
The alternative to participation in this study is not to participate. You may stop participating at any time.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Potentially identifiable information about you will consist of *interview notes*. Data is being collected only for research purposes. Your data will be identified by your initials and interview dates, not names, and stored in a locked research area. The researcher will not collect from you personal identifying information, and if you disclose any personal identifying information in the interviews, it will not be recorded in the notes. Access to all data will be limited to study personnel. A data and safety monitoring plan is established.

We will not tell anyone the answers you give us; however, information from the study and the consent form signed by you may be looked at or copied for research or legal purposes by Virginia Commonwealth University. Personal information about you might be shared with or copied by authorized officials of the Federal Food and Drug Administration, or the Department of Health and Human Services (if applicable).

What we find from this study may be presented at meetings or published in papers, but your name will not ever be used in these presentations or papers.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL
You may refuse to answer any questions and withdraw from the study at any time and your data will be returned to you.

QUESTIONS
In the future, you may have questions about your participation in this study. If you have any questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, contact:

Mary Katherine O'Connor, PhD	Suzie S. Weng, MSW
Professor, School of Social Work	Doctoral Candidate
Virginia Commonwealth University	Virginia Commonwealth University
1001 West Franklin Street	1001 West Franklin Street

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P.O. Box 842027
Richmond, Virginia 23284-2027
Phone: (804) 828-0688
E-mail: mkoconno@vcu.edu

P.O. Box 842027
Richmond, Virginia 23284-2027
Phone: (804) 878-6313
E-mail: suzie.weng@gmail.com

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact:

> *Office for Research*
> *Virginia Commonwealth University*
> *800 East Leigh Street, Suite 113*
> *P.O. Box 980568*
> *Richmond, VA 23298*
> *Telephone: 804-827-2157*

You may also contact this number for general questions, concerns or complaints about the research. Please call this number if you cannot reach the research team or wish to talk to someone else. Additional information about participation in research studies can be found at http://www.research.vcu.edu/irb/volunteers.htm.

CONSENT

I have been given the chance to read this consent form. I understand the information about this study. Questions that I wanted to ask about the study have been answered. My signature says that I am willing to participate in this study. I will receive a copy of the consent form once I have agreed to participate and request a copy.

_____

Participant name printed   Participant signature   Date

_____

Name of Person Conducting Informed Consent
Discussion / Witness [3]
(Printed)

_____ _____

Signature of Person Conducting Informed Consent   Date
Discussion / Witness

_____ _____

Principal Investigator Signature (if different from above)   Date [4]

[3] *[A witness to the signature of a research participant is required by VA Code. If the witness is to be someone other than the person conducting the informed consent discussion, include a line for the witness to print his/her name and lines for signature and date.]*

[4] *[The purpose of this signature is to ensure that the principal investigator is aware of who has been enrolled in studies. The principal investigator's signature date need not correspond to that of subject or witness, but should be provided after both the subject and witness have signed.]*

VITA

1978   Born, China (American Citizen)

1997-2000   Peer Educator & Counselor, Sexual Assault Support Services of Mid-Coast Maine, Brunswick, ME

1997-2000   Director of Operations Support, Operations Coordinator, & Admissions Processor, Teach for America, Houston, TX & New York, NY

2000-2001   College Bound Specialist, Communities in Schools, Houston, TX

2000-2013   Regional Chair, Bowdoin Alumni Schools and Interviewing Committee, Richmond, VA

2001   B.A. in history, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, ME

2002-2004   Translator & Volunteer, SAHELI: An Organization for Asian Families, Austin, TX

2002-2004   Executive Projects Coordinator, SAFEPLACE: Domestic Violence Center, Austin, TX

2004-2007   Government Relations Coordinator & Research Manager, Law Offices of J. Christopher LaGow, Richmond, VA

2007-2008   M.S.W. Intern, Greater Richmond Earned Income Tax Credit Coalition, Richmond, VA

2008-2009   M.S.W. Intern, Cameron Foundation, Petersburg, VA

2009   M.S.W., Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA

2009   Certificate in Nonprofit Management, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA

2009-2011   Graduate Research Assistant, School of Social Work, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA

2011-2012   Project Director, School of Social Work, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA

2011-2013	Adjunct Faculty, School of Social Work, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA
2011-2013	Community Relations Director, Secretary & Board Member, Organization of Chinese Americans – Central Virginia Chapter, Richmond, VA
2012-2013	Community Board Member, Asian American Society of Central Virginia, Richmond, VA
2013	Ph.D. in Social Work, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA
2013-	Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of North Florida, Jacksonville, FL

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