CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to Filipino American Psychology

Figure 1.1 First- and second-generation Filipino American cousins at a holiday party
Photo courtesy of Ian Tamayo

Portions of this chapter are taken from K. L. Nadal (2008c), *Ethnic group membership, phenotype, and perceptions of racial discrimination for Filipino and Chinese Americans: Implications for mental health* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation), Teachers College, Columbia University.
INTRODUCTION

In the United States, race is often viewed as a Black and White issue, with members of general American society tending to concentrate on the historical and contemporary racial conflicts between African Americans and White Americans (Nadal, 2008c). This phenomena can be exemplified by the recent election of President Barack Obama in 2008, in which the mainstream media concentrated primarily on the voting patterns of Blacks and Whites without much regard to the opinions or voting practices of Latinos, Asian Americans, or other racial/ethnic groups. This is also demonstrated in many interpersonal dialogues on race (e.g., in academia, legal systems, and workplaces) that tend to focus on racial relations between Blacks and Whites without examining experiences of race for Latino Americans, Asian Americans, or other racial/ethnic groups. Because of this emphasis on Black versus White in American society, the existence of these other racial/ethnic groups is often minimized, forgotten, or made invisible (Yoo & Lee, 2005).

Perhaps this tendency to disregard or forget about other racial groups is due to the historical views of race in the United States, in which individuals were originally divided into three categories: “Black,” “White,” and “Other” (Gibson & Jung, 2002). The “Other” groups, which included Asians and Native Americans, were not measured until 1860 because their numbers were too insignificant in comparison to Whites and Blacks. For example, in 1860, there were approximately 35,000 Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (0.10% of the U.S. population), compared to the 4.4 million African Americans (14.1% of the U.S. population). And in 1890, there were approximately 100,000 Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States (0.20% of the U.S. population), in comparison to the 7.5 million African Americans (or 11.1% of the U.S. population; Gibson & Jung, 2002; U.S. Census Bureau, 1989). So while the number of Asian Americans had doubled during that time, so did the number of African Americans. As a result, as a group, Black/African Americans continued to grow and remain the largest racial minority group in the United States.

However, the “Other” groups have slowly grown and diversified over the years. According to the U.S. Census, Hispanics and Latinos have surpassed African Americans and have become the largest minority group
in the United States at almost 13% of the total population (Bernstein, 2008). Although Hispanic is considered an “ethnic” group and not a “racial” group (it is divided into “White Hispanic” and “Black Hispanic”), it is important to acknowledge the growth of this minority population. In addition to escalation of the Latino community, Asian Americans have become one of the fastest-growing minority groups in the United States with a 72% growth between 1990 and 2000 (Barnes & Bennett, 2002). Asian Americans contribute greatly to immigration, accounting for one-third of all arrivals since the 1970s, and are projected to reach 11% of the U.S. population by the year 2050 (Ghosh, 2003). Because of immigration increases in both the Latino and Asian American populations, the total U.S. population is projected to become about 50% “non-Hispanic White” and 50% persons of various racial/ethnic minority groups (Bergman, 2004). As a result, it is likely that the United States will move beyond a “Black and White” paradigm and there will be a greater presence of Latinos and Asian Americans.

As a result of this increase in racial diversity, it is important for counselors, clinicians, educators, and other practitioners to become aware of the unique experiences of all the major racial minority groups, including African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and Native Americans. It is also necessary for practitioners to gain an understanding of other invisible ethnic minority groups, such as Arab Americans, Pacific Islanders, Jewish Americans, and multiracial and multiethnic people. Previous authors have purported that most research and training in mental health (including psychology, counseling, and social work) focuses on White, middle-class American values, and people of color are often misunderstood and ineffectively treated in psychological treatment (see Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992; D. W. Sue & Sue, 2008 for a review). Moreover, the American Psychological Association (APA) has published “Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice, and Organizational Change for Psychologists,” which primarily focuses on ways of being culturally competent toward oppressed racial and ethnic minority groups (APA, 2003). Therefore, in order to become ethical psychologists and work effectively with various people of color and other minority groups, one must attain appropriate cultural knowledge, awareness, and skills.

The purpose of this book is to examine the experiences of Filipino Americans—an ethnic group that is often invisible in academia.
Filipino Americans are the second largest Asian American group in the United States and become the largest Asian American ethnic group in the upcoming analyses of 2010 Census. Therefore, it is imperative for practitioners in all fields to become multiculturally competent when working with this group. In the next chapters, readers will have an opportunity to gain knowledge about Filipino Americans, awareness of different dynamics that may impact interpersonal relationships with Filipino Americans, and skills on how to work with Filipino Americans in psychotherapy and counseling settings.

This first chapter reviews the history of Asian Americans as a racial group while exploring how the historical experiences of Filipino Americans may be different from other Asian American ethnic groups. Moreover, this chapter introduces socioeconomic demographics and contemporary experiences of Filipino Americans—a group that has been present in the United States since 1587. Finally, this chapter reviews psychological experiences of Filipinos in the Philippines and current mental health issues of Filipino Americans in the United States.

**EXPERIENCES OF ASIAN AMERICANS**

According to the most recent U.S. Census, Asian Americans are the fastest-growing racial/ethnic minority group in the United States (Barnes & Bennett, 2002; Reeves & Bennett, 2004). Although Asian Americans make up only 3.6% of the entire U.S. population, the group has multiplied eightfold from 1.4 million in 1970 to 11.9 million in 2000. Between 1990 and 2000, Asian Americans had the largest percentage growth (72%), outpacing every other racial/ethnic group in the country (Barnes & Bennett, 2002). The U.S. Census projects that by 2050, Asian Americans will expand from 10.7 million to 33.4 million (a projected 213% growth), and their proportion of the nation’s population to double from 3.8% to 8% (Bergman, 2004). Given this development, Asian Americans are projected to have a more noticeable presence in American society, in that 1 in every 12.5 Americans will be of Asian descent in the year 2050.

The term “Asian American” refers to persons who have common ancestral roots in Asia and the Pacific Islands, with a similar physical appearance and comparable cultural values (Nadal & Sue, 2009). The Asian
American racial category comprises over 40 distinct ethnicities, which includes Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, Japanese, Cambodian, and Hmong (Nadal & Sue, 2009; D. W. Sue & Sue, 2008). Sometimes Pacific Islanders are lumped into this category when discussing multicultural issues, forming broader racial categorizations such as “Asian/Pacific Islander” (API), “Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders” (AAPI), or “Asian Pacific Americans” (APA). However, in the U.S. Census, Pacific Islanders constitute a separate category (Nadal & Sue, 2009).

When using the term “Asian American,” it is important to understand the heterogeneity of the Asian American community. Three points are significant.

1. There are hundreds of languages within the Asian American racial group, including Cantonese, Mandarin, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Japanese, and Farsi (Nadal & Sue, 2009).

2. There are over 20 major religions within the Asian American racial group, ranging from Buddhism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Taoism, and Confucianism (Nadal & Sue, 2009).

3. There are many differences in phenotype (physical characteristics/attributes) between the major Asian subgroups. Most East Asians (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, and Korean) may have a lighter peach skin tone, Filipino Americans and Southeast Asians (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian) may possess a light to dark brown skin tone, and South Asians (e.g., Asian Indians, Pakistanis) may have a very dark brown skin tone (Nadal, 2008c; Nadal & Sue, 2009). Eye shapes are also different between different Asian groups, with East Asian Americans typically having smaller eyes, while South Asians having larger eyes. Because of this heterogeneity, it is common for Asian Americans to identify themselves in terms of their ethnicity (e.g., “Chinese,” “Indian,” “Filipino”), instead of the broader racial category of Asian or Asian American (Nadal & Sue, 2009).

The largest Asian American ethnic groups in the United States include Chinese Americans, Filipino Americans, Asian Indian Americans, Korean Americans, Vietnamese Americans, and Japanese Americans (Reeves & Bennett, 2004). In terms of specific numbers, there are approximately
2.86 million Chinese Americans, 2.39 Filipino Americans, 1.86 Asian Indian Americans, 1.23 Korean Americans, 1.21 Vietnamese Americans, and 1.15 million Japanese Americans. Other smaller Asian American groups include Cambodian Americans, Hmong Americans, Pakistani Americans, and Thai Americans.

Asian American History and Demographics

Among Asian Americans, Filipinos were the first documented group to land in the United States. In 1587, several Filipino men escaped Spanish galleon ships en route to Spain and landed in what is now Morro Bay, California (Posadas, 1999). However, the first Asian Americans to arrive to the United States in large numbers were the Chinese Americans who settled on the West Coast (primarily in California) in the mid-1840s (Takaki, 1998). These Chinese immigrants are credited with building the transcontinental railroads in the United States while enduring very poor living conditions and facing blatant racial discrimination from Whites. Japanese Americans arrived shortly after and also worked as laborers in transcontinental railroads as well as in fish canneries and mines. Like the Chinese, these Japanese immigrants also experienced blatant discrimination from Whites for much of the end of the 19th century.

Because of this anti-Chinese and anti-Japanese sentiment, the U.S. government aimed to limit the number of Asian immigrants into the country by enacting the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the 1924 Immigration Act (Takaki, 1998). Both of these acts limited the number of Chinese immigrants and later forbade Chinese immigrants altogether. It was not until the 1965 Immigration Act, in which quotas were no longer based on race, that Asian immigration into the United States began to increase again. These post-1965 immigrants came from various Asian countries, such as China, Japan, the Philippines, India, and Korea. Most of the post-1965 Asian American immigrants were professionals, including doctors, nurses, and engineers, who were recruited by U.S. agencies such as hospitals and manufacturing companies. These immigrants came to the United States for better employment opportunities and a superior future for their children while searching for the
“American Dream,” which was advertised throughout various Asian American countries.

Another major category of Asian American immigration includes the 2 million Southeast Asian refugees (primarily from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos) who began arriving in the United States in 1975 (Takaki, 1998). Although other Asian immigrants have time to prepare for their move, refugees often escape from persecution and other tragic conditions in their home countries and come to the United States without education, money, or resources. Refugees have been relocated all over the continental United States, in areas where other Southeast Asians and refugees reside (e.g., parts of the West Coast) and also in areas where there were few Southeast Asians and refugees (e.g., parts of the Midwest). Although refugees came primarily in the 1980s and 1990s to seek political and economic refuge, a sizable number of refugees move to the United States every day (D. W. Sue & Sue, 2008).

Asian Americans are often described by their generational status (Nadal & Sue, 2009; Uba, 1994). The first generation of Asian Americans consists of Asians who immigrated to the United States in late adolescence or adulthood (e.g., a Korean American who immigrates when she is 18 years old). This generation often maintains many of the values from their country of origin and often has difficulty becoming accustomed to the new values in the United States. Second-generation Asian Americans are individuals who are U.S. born and have foreign-born parents (e.g., a Pakistani American who was born in the United States and whose parents were born in Pakistan). These individuals often are taught the cultural values, language, and customs of their parents’ home countries while learning the values and norms of being American in the United States. The 1.5 generation consists of those foreign-born who arrive in the United States prior to age 13 (e.g., a Thai American who was born in Thailand and immigrated to the United States at 11 years old). Members of this group often are characterized as being somewhere in the middle since they maintain characteristics of both the first and second generations (Nadal & Sue, 2009; Uba, 1994). Because they spent their childhood in their home country, they were able to develop many of their values, beliefs, and personality before immigrating to the United States; however, because they immigrated
during adolescence, they still have the ability to further develop their values, beliefs, and personality in the United States. The third generation includes Asian Americans whose grandparents immigrated to the United States, and the fourth generation includes Asian Americans whose great-grandparents immigrated to the United States.

**Asian American Mental Health**

Out of all the major racial groups, Asian Americans are the least researched, studied, or discussed in the fields of psychology, education, and health (David & Okazaki, 2006a; Uba, 1994; Wolf, 1997). Many hypotheses have been offered to explain this fact. One reason is that it has been found that Asian Americans utilize mental health services the least out of all racial groups (Uba, 1994). Some authors have argued that this may indicate lower rates of psychopathology for the Asian American population (Lin & Cheung, 1999). Other literature, however, suggests that these lower rates of mental health utilization for Asian Americans should be attributed to cultural stigmas, reluctance to seek out services, patient suspiciousness, and a different understanding of the manifestation of psychological problems (Uba, 1994). Although Asian Americans are not seeking mental health services, they are as susceptible to mental health problems and psychopathology as other racial groups. Moreover, because of the stigma of mental health treatment, it is likely that those Asian Americans who do have mental health problems are not seeking help and therefore are not being treated.

Another reason why Asian Americans are invisible in psychology (and other fields) is the model minority myth. This myth contends that all Asian Americans are well-educated, successful, and law-abiding citizens in the United States, in comparison to other racial/ethnic minority groups of color (e.g., African Americans, Latino Americans, and Native Americans) who are stereotyped to be the opposite of the model: uneducated, unintelligent, or prone to crime (Nadal & Sue, 1999; Uba, 1994). The model minority myth is based on census data, which reveals that Asian Americans attain higher educational statuses and have higher family or household incomes than the general U.S. population (Reeves & Bennett, 2004). However, these statistics are misleading in a number
of ways. For example, although many Asian Americans have attained higher levels of education, a large group have not attained a high school diploma. Due to the model minority myth, members of society at large hold false perceptions that all Asian Americans are succeeding educationally (D. W. Sue & Sue, 2008). Moreover, Asian Americans tend to have higher levels of family or household income because more people are contributing to the household income than there are with other racial groups (Reeves & Bennett, 2004).

Because of the prevalence of this myth, psychologists, educators, and researchers tend to assume that Asian Americans are doing well and fail to notice that many have a contrary experience. For example, there are a number of health and educational disparities that are prevalent in many Asian American subgroups (particularly Southeast Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Filipino Americans). These issues range from poverty, lower educational achievement, HIV/AIDS, teen pregnancy, and gang involvement (Nadal, 2008c). However, because of the myth, the experiences of these Asian American subgroups continue to go unnoticed. Chapter 6 discusses the negative outcomes of the model minority myth in more detail.

When considering Asian Americans, it is also important to note that research tends to focus on East Asian Americans, namely Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Americans (Agbayani-Siewert, 2004; David & Okazaki, 2006a; Nadal, 2004; Root, 1997a). This practice in academia parallels the tendency of American society to generalize the experience of East Asian Americans (especially the experience of Chinese Americans) to all Asian Americans (Nadal, 2008c). For example, when the general American population thinks of “Asian,” they tend to think of “Chinese” or “Japanese” first (Cordova, 1983), despite the fact that Filipino Americans and Asian Indian Americans are the second and third largest Asian American groups in the United States. Because East Asian Americans are viewed as the dominant Asian American group, non–East Asian American groups often feel marginalized or invisible in the Asian American community. Moreover, because psychologists, educators, and other practitioners are not being trained or taught about the experiences of these marginalized Asian American groups, members of these groups continue to receive culturally inappropriate mental health services and continue to be underserved.
There are some benefits to categorizing Asian Americans into one racial group. One advantage may include attaining power in numbers for community organizing; another reason may involve collectivist social support. However, it is important to understand the problems involved in lumping Asian Americans into a homogenous group.

Hierarchies are formed within the greater racial community, in that some individuals are assumed to be the “norm” while all others may be viewed as marginal, different, or even pathological. For example, within the Asian American community, East Asian Americans are often viewed as the top of the hierarchy in that they have higher educational attainments, technologically advanced home countries, and are likely to have a lighter skin tone. Contrarily, Filipino Americans and Southeast Asian Americans are viewed as the bottom of the hierarchy in that they have lower educational attainments, home countries that are extremely poor, and tend to have darker skin tones (Nadal, 2008c). This hierarchy within the Asian American racial group may also lead to a personal sense of normality for East Asians while resulting in a sense of internalized hatred or self-deprecation for Filipino Americans and other marginalized Asian American subgroups. It also has an impact on racial/ethnic identity development (see Chapter 3), colonial mentality (see Chapter 4), group and community dynamics (see Chapter 5), and disparaging sociocultural experiences (see Chapter 6).

By failing to disaggregate racial categories, many marginalized groups are forgotten or made invisible. For example, Cordova (1983) has referred to Filipino Americans as the “forgotten Asian Americans” because people tend to consider Chinese and Japanese Americans when discussing Asian American history. Because Filipino Americans have a unique colonial history and cultural values that are markedly different from other Asian American groups, they may not fit into the Asian American community and may align closely with other racial/ethnic groups like Latinos, Pacific Islanders, or African Americans (Nadal, 2004). This next section will examine experiences of Filipino Americans, including history, culture, and demographics, that distinguish them from other Asian American groups. In learning about Filipino Americans, one can begin to understand how their unique background influences their mental health experiences on societal and individual levels.
Filipino Americans are the second largest Asian American/Pacific Islander population in the United States (Barnes & Bennett, 2002; Reeves & Bennett, 2004) and are projected to become the largest Asian American population by 2010. With 1.37 million Filipino-born immigrants living in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000), Filipino Americans are the second largest immigrant population in the country (behind Mexican Americans), with over 2 million documented Filipino Americans in the United States and a possible 1 million undocumented individuals in the United States (Nadal, 2008c). The term “Filipino” will be used throughout this volume, as it is the most common spelling of the word. It is important to recognize that some Filipinos and Filipino Americans use the term “Pilipino” as a political identifier, signifying the lack of the letter “F” in indigenous and non-Spanish-influenced Pilipino languages (Nadal, 2004, 2008c; Revilla, 1997).

Filipino Americans are descendants of people from the Philippine Islands, a country made up of over 700 islands and 170 languages that is located southeast of mainland China and west of the Pacific Islands.
Unlike other Asian nations, the Philippines has been influenced by several different countries and cultures due to Spanish and American colonization, Japanese occupation during World War II, and trade from China, the Pacific Islands, Portugal, and Australia (Posadas, 1999). Other Asian and Pacific Islander countries were colonized by Great Britain or the Netherlands; the Philippines was the only Asian or Pacific Islander country that was colonized by Spain. In fact, as with countries in Central and South America, the Philippines was colonized by Spain for almost 400 years. As a result, many Filipinos and Filipino Americans have Spanish last names, most are Roman Catholic, and many Filipino words are the same as or variations of Spanish words (Nadal, 2004). For example, leche means “milk” in both Tagalog (the first Filipino national language) and in Spanish; “meat” can be translated to carne in Spanish and karne in Tagalog.

Shortly after the Filipino people fought for their freedom from Spain in 1898, the United States invaded the Philippines, leading to almost 50 years of American colonization. As a result, the Philippines is one of the only Asian countries to have English as its second national language and teach most classes in institutions of higher education in English (Posadas, 1999). Given this fact, most Philippine educational systems have adopted American curricula, although it may not necessarily be culturally appropriate. For example, it is commonplace for Philippine elementary schools to teach that “A is for apple,” even though apples do not grow in the Philippines. Moreover, in contemporary times, American television is widespread in the Philippines, leading many Filipinos to be aware of American trends, politics, events, fashions, and celebrities. So even though the Philippines is no longer a U.S. colony, American presence is still pervasive and dominant.

This colonial history has impacted the Filipino and Filipino American people in many ways. Chapter 2 explores how the intersections of indigenous Filipino cultural values with Spanish and American values may lead to identity conflict and societal tensions. Chapter 4 examines how Filipinos and Filipino Americans have developed a colonial mentality, in which many may internalize the values and beliefs of the colonizer (e.g., Spain and the United States) and view the mores of the colonizer as superior to those of the colonized (David, 2008, 2010; David & Okazaki, 2006a,b). Acknowledging that the Philippines has a distinctive
history allows one to understand how its culture can be differentiated from other Asian countries and cultures.

**FILIPINO AMERICAN HISTORY AND IMMIGRATION**

Over the past 400 years, there have been four major immigration patterns or “waves” of Philippine immigration (Kitano & Daniels, 1995; Posadas, 1999). The first wave of Filipino immigrants was in the 16th century; these Filipinos are credited as being the first Asian Americans in the United States. During this time, Spanish galleon ships traveled among the Philippines, Mexico, and Spain, trading goods among the three. In 1587, some Filipino slaves and indentured servants jumped ship and landed in what is now Morro Bay, California (Kitano & Daniels, 1995; Posadas, 1999). Other Filipino slaves and servants abandoned their ships in Mexico and formed larger settlements in the bayous of Louisiana as early as 1763. These individuals consisted mainly of “Manilamen” who escaped the brutality of Spanish galleon ships (Kitano & Daniels, 1995; Posadas, 1999).

The second wave of Filipino immigrants included sponsored students, or pensionados. These young people were sponsored by the U.S. government to study in American colleges and universities in the early 1900s (Kitano & Daniels, 1995; Posadas, 1999). These students were recruited after the Philippine-American War in 1899. At the time, the U.S. government viewed the Philippines as its “little brown brother” and wanted to offer them an American education and “civilized” way of life. Pensionados were mainly Filipino men who studied at prestigious universities on the East Coast and in the Midwest. Many of these sponsored students succeeded in attaining their college degrees and moved back to the Philippines; however, others never completed their education; did not return to the Philippines for financial reasons, shame, or both; and worked in menial jobs in the United States for the remainder of their lives (Kitano & Daniels, 1995; Posadas, 1999).

The third wave of Filipino immigrants included Filipino laborers and nonsponsored students from the 1910s to 1940s (Kitano & Daniels, 1995; Posadas, 1999). Laborers immigrated to the United States in search of opportunities, in the same ways Chinese and Japanese immigrants did at the time. Nonsponsored students attempted to attain an
American education, as the government-sponsored students did; however, unlike the sponsored students, they came to the United States with their own resources. Many of these nonsponsored students were unable to succeed and instead joined the labor market. They lived primarily on the West Coast: in California (working as grape farmworkers), in Hawaii (working in the sugarcane plantations), or in Alaska (working as fish cannery workers). Most of these laborers and nonsponsored students were men who lived together in small ethnic enclaves. According to some authors, for every 10 to 15 Filipino American men, there was only 1 Filipina American woman (Cordova, 1983; Posadas, 1999).

In 1924, the Asian Exclusion Act was enacted, banning Asian laborers from immigrating to the United States. Many argue that anti-Asian sentiment during the time is what drove this act to be passed. During the Great Depression, Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino Americans were viewed as “stealing” jobs from Whites (Takaki, 1998). Consequently, Filipino (and other Asian) immigration was limited until 1952, when the Walter-McCarran Immigration and Naturalization Act repealed the Asian Exclusion Act of 1924 and allowed a token number of Asians to immigrate to the United States with right of citizenship (Kitano & Daniels, 1995; Posadas, 1999). Additionally, during this time many Filipino Americans were recruited by the U.S. government to serve in the U.S. Navy. Although laborers were not permitted, Filipino American naval officers were allowed to immigrate (Posadas, 1999).

In addition to this anti-Asian sentiment during the 1920s to the 1940s (which was further complicated because of the U.S. relationship with Japan and World War II), there existed a specific anti-Filipino sentiment as well. Because there were very few Filipina American women in the United States at this time, Filipino American men searched outside of their race for romantic relationships and companionship, dating White and Mexican women in particular. However, antimiscegenation laws prevented people of different races from marrying (Posadas, 1999; Takaki, 1998). Chapter 8 describes the history of antimiscegenation laws, particularly for Filipino Americans, in more detail.

Additionally, many White men viewed Filipino men as sexual competition and “sexual deviants” who were “stealing” White women away from them (Guevarra, 2008; Posadas, 1999; Takaki, 1998). This led to specific anti-Filipino racial discrimination in California, which ranged
from the usage of the derogatory term “little brown monkeys” to describe Filipinos (Cordova, 1983) to the initiation of a “Positively No Filipinos Allowed” campaign. Signs with this phrase were displayed prominently on doors of hotels and businesses in California, and many Whites denied Filipino Americans civil rights, public accommodations, and property ownership (Cordova, 1983; Tiongson, Gutierrez, & Gutierrez, 2006).

The Immigration Act of 1965 completely repealed both the Asian Exclusion Act of 1924 and Walter-McCarran Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1952. This led to the final wave of Filipino immigrants, which consisted mainly of professionals. Most of these immigrants were educated in the Philippines and arrived in the United States with their college diplomas. Many were recruited to work as doctors and nurses in hospitals or as engineers in various manufacturing companies. As a result, many immigrants were able to succeed, unlike the previous generations of Filipino American laborers and nonsponsored students. Most of these post-1965 professionals settled on the West Coast (e.g., California and Washington) and Hawaii. However, because of an increased job market, many moved to other regions in the United States, including the East Coast (e.g., New York, New Jersey), the Midwest (e.g., Illinois, Michigan), and the South (e.g., Florida, Texas), settling mainly in suburban areas outside of major metropolitan cities. Chapter 5 describes the history of Filipino American communities in further detail.

Although the post-1965 professionals are viewed as the last official wave of Filipino immigration, other “nonprofessional” Filipino Americans continue to arrive in the United States on a regular basis. One group, which is often invisible in the Filipino American community, is the undocumented immigrants from the Philippines. Undocumented immigrants are often known as TNTs (*tago ng tago*), which can be translated as “to keep on hiding” (Montoya, 1997). Because of the poverty in the Philippines, many Filipino citizens search for better opportunities in the United States. Members of the TNTs may be educated or uneducated and have various immigration statuses, including those who enter the country with a legal visa and overstayed their welcome or those who violate the terms of their visa (Montoya, 1997). Many of these undocumented individuals work menial jobs (in which they are paid under
the table), even though they may have higher levels of education in the Philippines or advanced skill sets.

Contemporary Filipino American Experiences

Many recent contemporary events involving Filipino Americans have implications for mental health. Although the experience of racism may not be as relevant or pervasive as it may have been in the 1920s to 1940s, racism and racial discrimination still are present in some overt and mostly covert ways. For example, in 1999, Filipino American postal worker Joseph Ileto was killed as a result of a hate crime for “not being White” (Clinton, 2000). The number of hate crimes toward racial minority groups has decreased since the civil rights movement of the 1960s, but this event indicated that racism is still alive and still an issue for Filipino Americans in the United States. Racism also is present in more subtle ways. For instance, in 2007, Filipino Americans lobbied against ABC
Studios for airing an episode of the television series *Desperate Housewives* that made derogatory comments about Filipino medical schools (Vergara, 2008). Subtle forms of racism (on individual and societal levels) have been found to have a significant impact on the mental health of people of color, leading to an array of emotional reactions and potential psychological disparities (see Sue & Sue, 2008, for a review). Specifically, Filipino Americans experience an array of everyday discrimination (Alvarez & Juang, 2010; Nadal, 2008c, Nadal, Pituc, Johnston, & Esparrago, 2010) but tend to ignore such discrimination, which may negatively impact their mental health (Alvarez & Juang, 2010).

This history of blatant and subtle racism is important to understanding Filipino American mental health because studies suggest that race-related stress may impact other psychological problems (Harrell, 2000). In fact, it is essential to be familiar with the concept of “transgenerational transmission,” which is defined as the historical contexts of racism or discrimination toward a group that are passed from generation to generation (Harrell, 2000). For example, African Americans may continue to feel distressed when thinking about slavery and Japanese Americans may continue to feel distressed when remembering Japanese internment camps during World War II. These feelings may exist despite the fact that both events occurred generations ago. Transgenerational transmission has been described as a type of trauma that is passed across generations and is related to psychological stressors, such as guilt and shame (de Mendelssohn, 2008). Transgenerational transmission may have varying impacts on one’s racial/ethnic identity development (see Chapter 3), one’s colonial mentality (see Chapter 4), and one’s coping mechanisms and views of psychotherapy (see Chapter 9). Accordingly, acknowledging Filipino and Filipino American history with racism and discrimination is an important guide to examining the mental health and contemporary experiences of Filipino Americans. The next section reviews the current demographics of the Filipino American community, which will be helpful in further understanding their experiences in the United States.

**FILIPINO AMERICAN DEMOGRAPHICS**

There are currently 2.4 million Filipino Americans in the United States, with the majority identifying as “Filipino alone” (1.8 million)
and the remainder identifying as “Filipino in combination with another race” (Barnes & Bennett, 2002; Reeves & Bennett, 2004). The Filipino American population has increased threefold between 1980 and 2000, and in the upcoming analyses of the 2010 Census, an even more significant increase will be reported.

Unlike any other Asian American group, Filipinos and Filipino Americans have been placed into several racial and ethnic categories (Nadal, 2004). According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Filipino Americans currently are classified as “Asian American” (Barnes & Bennett, 2002; Reeves & Bennett, 2004). However, according to the U.S. Department of Education, Filipino Americans have been categorized as “Pacific Islanders” (Horn, 1995), while some academics have classified Filipino Americans as “Hispanic” due to the Spanish colonization of the Philippines for 350 years (Trevino, 1987). Moreover, California Senate Bill 1813, which was passed in 1988, has required that all California state personnel surveys or statistical tabulations classify persons of Filipino ancestry as “Filipino” rather than as Asian, Pacific Islander, or Hispanic (Espiritu, 1992). Finally, because Filipino Americans may have a different phenotype, they often are mistaken as belonging to different racial/ethnic groups, including Latino, Pacific Islander, and Arab Americans (Nadal, 2004; Uba, 1994). These experiences (which may be positive, negative, or neutral) may also impact the ways Filipino Americans self-identify.

Being placed in various racial/ethnic categories has many implications for Filipino Americans. First, Filipino Americans may often feel torn regarding which group they belong to because various people identify these groups differently. For example, some may check boxes where they are identified as “Asian,” “Pacific Islander,” or specifically as “Filipino.” Moreover, because of the hierarchies that occur within the Asian American community, many Filipino Americans may not identify with the Asian American racial group and choose to align themselves with Pacific Islanders, choose an “other” box, or identify specifically as “Filipinos” (Nadal, 2004). Finally, because of similar colonial histories and cultural values, some Filipino Americans may even identify as Latino before they identify as Asian or Asian American (Nadal, 2004). In California, some Filipino Americans have never had to identify themselves as anything other than “Filipino” because that state has a specific “Filipino” box. This distinctive conception of race is one that
distinguishes Filipino Americans from most other Asian American racial
groups, whose members may almost always consider themselves (and
be considered by others) to be Asian and not of another racial group.

Although Filipino Americans are spread throughout the United
States, more than half are located on the West Coast and Hawaii (U.S.
Census Bureau, 2000). Over 25% of Filipino Americans live in Southern
California, namely in Los Angeles and San Diego counties (U.S. Census
Bureau, 2000), while about 13% of Filipino Americans live in the San
Francisco Bay Area. Cities in Southern California with the most popu-
lous Filipino American populations include Carson, Cerritos, and West
Covina in Los Angeles County; National City and Chula Vista in San
Diego County; and San Francisco and Daly City in Northern California
(U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Filipino Americans also have a visible pres-
ence in Hawaii, making up 23% of the state population (U.S. Census
Bureau, 2000). Other notable Filipino American settlements include
Washington (Seattle and Tacoma), New York (Queens), New Jersey
(Jersey City), and Illinois (Chicago and surrounding areas).

One may also acknowledge that the immigration and settlement  patterns
may vary significantly, based on geographic location. For example, individ-
uals on the West Coast and Hawaii have immigrated in a number
of ways—as laborers, post-1965 professionals, and students—while
most Filipino Americans who immigrated to the East Coast, Midwest,
and South arrived mostly as professionals. Although there were also
large numbers of post-1965 professionals who immigrated to the West
Coast and Hawaii, there have been settlements of Filipino Americans
in California and Hawaii since the early 1900s. The differences in his-
tory between regions may have an influence on various experiences. For
example, it was revealed that 84% of Filipino Americans in New York
attained a college education (Asian American Federation of New York,
2004), in comparison to the 43% of Filipino Americans across the United
States who attain a college degree (Reeves & Bennett, 2004). One must
wonder why individuals in New York (and other regions) are attaining
significantly higher levels of education than the general Filipino American
population. Perhaps historical racism, immigration patterns, and identity
may all have influences in regional differences (Nadal, 2008c).

Most Filipinos are Catholic or Christian, with about 85% being
Catholic and an additional 5% to 10% being Protestant Christian (Gall,
Because of this overwhelming Catholic/Christian presence, many Filipino and Catholic/Christian values, beliefs, and traditions are synonymous. A small percentage of Filipinos are Muslim; this group is predominantly from the southern regions of the Philippines (e.g., Mindanao) that are geographically close to other Southeast Asian countries with strong Muslim influences. Because of this majority Catholic culture, a religious hierarchy is created in the Philippines; Catholics are viewed as the norm; Protestant Christians (e.g., Methodists, Mormons, and members of Iglesia ni Cristo) are viewed as secondary; and all others are viewed as deviant or unacceptable. It is important to realize these statistics are based on Filipinos in the Philippines; statistics concerning religion with Filipino Americans are not known because of a lack of disaggregated data. Therefore, these numbers may be different for Filipino Americans in the United States, who may maintain Catholicism or Christianity, who may convert to different religions in the United States (e.g., Buddhism, Judaism, Wiccanism), or who may identify as nonreligious, agnostic, or atheist.

Demographic trends of Filipino Americans tend to be similar to those of other Asian American groups. Like most other Asian Americans, the majority of Filipinos are adults between the ages of 18 to 64 (69.1%), with a median age of 35.5 years (Reeves & Bennett, 2004). Filipino American immigration statuses are similar to those of the general Asian American population: 32.5% are native-born Americans, 41.6% are foreign-born citizens, and 26.1% are foreign-born noncitizens (Reeves & Bennett, 2004). Of the Filipino Americans who immigrated to the United States, there was a fairly equal distribution of the time frame of immigration: 31.3% immigrated prior to 1980, 33.0% immigrated between 1980 and 1990, and 35.6% immigrated after 1990 (Reeves & Bennett, 2004).

Filipino American marriage patterns are similar and dissimilar to those of both the general Asian American and the general American populations (Reeves & Bennett, 2004). Twenty-nine percent of Filipino Americans have never been married (which is similar to the 30% of Asian Americans and 27% of the general U.S. population); however, the Filipino American divorce rate (5.2%) is slightly higher than the general Asian American population (4.2%) but much lower than the general American population (9.7%). Similarly, Filipino American families (and most other Asian American families) are likely to have two parents...
as the heads of households. For Filipino Americans, 61.7% of families are two-parent households while 61.8% of the general Asian American population and 52.5% of the general American population have two-parent households. Although this smaller divorce rate might be viewed as a positive quality, one must also recognize that Filipino American couples may feel unable to divorce due to religious and cultural stigmas. Therefore, a lower divorce rate may not necessarily imply successful marriages or higher degrees of mental health.

Many other demographics must be identified in order to understand how the experiences of Filipino Americans may be similar or different from those of other Asian Americans. Filipino Americans are more likely than other Asian Americans to speak English very well; Filipino Americans have a rate of 75.9% of English proficiency, compared to the general Asian American population, which has a rate of 60.4% (Reeves & Bennett, 2004). This trend is likely due to the aforementioned prevalence of English in the Philippines, where English is a national language and taught in the school systems. This trait may be viewed as a positive one in that Filipino Americans are likely to be able to communicate effectively in workplaces and schools. However, it is important to notice how American colonialism has impacted Filipino Americans in negative ways, particularly for second-generation Filipino Americans who were never taught to speak Tagalog or other native Filipino languages by their parents.

Another statistic to consider is that Filipina American women are more likely to enter the labor force than Asian American women and the general American female population (Reeves & Bennett, 2004). According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 65% of Filipina American women were in the labor force, as compared to 56.4% of Asian American women and 57.5% of the general American female population. It is likely that these higher labor force rates for Filipina American women are influenced by gender roles and other cultural values. Unlike some other Asian American groups, in which women are not as encouraged as men in pursuing higher levels of education or traditional male fields, Filipina American women are equally encouraged as men to achieve. Chapters 2 and 7 explore gender roles and cultural values more in depth.

Additionally, Filipino Americans have the lowest poverty rate out of all Asian American groups and significantly lower than the general American population. Filipino Americans had a poverty rate of 6.3% as
compared to the general Asian American poverty rate of 12.6% and the general American average poverty rate of 12.4% (Reeves & Bennett, 2004). One must recognize how cultural values may also prevent Filipino Americans from entering poverty or becoming homeless. Chapter 2 examines Filipino American cultural values and family structures that may partially explain why Filipino Americans have a significantly lower poverty level than other Asian American groups.

A few statistics from the U.S. Census are misleading and may need further analysis. It was discovered that 43.8% of Filipino Americans have attained a college degree, in comparison to 44.1% of the general Asian American population and 24.4% of the general American population. Although one may view this as a positive quality, one must recognize both that a majority of Filipino Americans are immigrants who arrived in the United States with a college degree from the Philippines and that second-generation Filipino Americans achieve a college degree at about half the rate as Filipino immigrants (U.S. Census Bureau, 1994). Additionally, while 22% of second-generation Filipino Americans attain college degrees, 51% of native-born Chinese Americans, 36.5% of native-born Korean Americans, and 34% of native-born Japanese Americans complete their degrees. Although all of these ethnic groups likely have parents who were post-1965 “professional” immigrants, second-generation Filipino Americans are not achieving at the same rates as East American groups.

Another statistic that is notable is that Filipino Americans have a higher median family income than other Asian American families and general American society. Filipino American families have a median income of $65,189, Asian American families have a median income of $59,324, and the general American family has a median income of $50,046 (Reeves & Bennett, 2004). Again, this statistic may appear to be a very positive quality, but it is misleading and needs to be scrutinized further. Although Filipino Americans have a higher median family income than other Asian American families and the general American public, it is necessary to recognize that in Filipino American families, an average of 3.41 family members are contributing to the household income, as opposed to the average of 2.59 family members in general American households and the average of 3.08 members in Asian American families. Given this, Filipino Americans average about $19,117 per person
contributing to the family income, as compared to $19,322 per general American person and $19,266 per Asian American person. Moreover, further analysis reveals full-time Filipino American male workers make significantly less money than both Asian American male and general American male populations. Filipino American men who work full time earn an average of $35,560; the average American man earns an average of $37,057, and other Asian American men earn an average of $40,650. Chapter 6 discusses how racism and other factors may influence issues such as educational attainment, income, and socioeconomic status.

In examining these statistics, one can recognize that there are some positive and negative trends in the Filipino American community. In some regards, Filipino Americans may appear to fit the traits of the “model minority.” They appear to have a higher family income, to have higher educational attainment, and to have more of a presence in the workplace. Women may enter the workplace more than other groups, Filipino Americans may have a lower poverty rate, and Filipino Americans may speak English more competently than members of other Asian American groups. However, looked at more deeply, Filipino Americans face several negative outcomes: For example, they may make less money than other Asian Americans and the general population, and second-generation Filipino Americans may have lower levels of education than East Asian Americans. Given these facts, one must wonder why Filipino Americans may not be achieving as well (financially or educationally) as their East Asian American counterparts. Additionally, one might wonder how experiences with race, differences in cultural values and histories, and issues concerning identity may impact mental health experiences.

Mental Health Experiences of Filipino Americans

Very few studies focus on the mental health of Filipino Americans (David & Okazaki, 2006a; Nadal, 2004; Tompar-Tiu & Sustento-Seneriches, 1995). In fact, most studies on Filipino mental health involve Filipinos in the Philippines (Nadal, 2004). Moreover, many of the psychology studies regarding Filipino Americans involve ethnic identity and may not include information about psychopathologies or psychological disorders. This section provides a brief overview of
the small number of mental health studies involving Filipino Americans. Chapter 9 presents a complete review of Filipino American mental health and psychological disorders.

A few empirical studies examine depression in the Filipino American community. According to one study that investigated the prevalence of depression with Filipino Americans (both immigrants and second-generation individuals), 27% of the community sample had a major depressive episode or clinical depression of varying severity; this rate is significantly higher than that of the general U.S. population, which is usually reported at 10% to 20% (Tompar-Tiu & Sustento-Seneriches, 1995). Other studies found colonial mentality to be positively correlated with depression (David, 2008) and negatively correlated with self-esteem (David & Okazaki, 2006b). In other words, a Filipino American who internalizes Spanish and American values and beliefs as being the norm or superior is more likely to be depressed or feel low self-esteem (see Chapter 4 for a full review of colonial mentality and mental health). Finally, a study of Filipino American participants reveals racial/ethnic discrimination over a lifetime to be associated with increased levels of depressive symptoms (Mossakowski, 2003). This same study found that ethnic identity buffers the stress of racial/ethnic discrimination, suggesting that individuals with higher levels of ethnic identity will have the ability to manage their stress and overcome depressive symptoms.

Some authors have explored the prevalence of alcohol, tobacco, and substance use in the Filipino American community, purporting that Filipino Americans (particularly youth) may have higher incidences of use than other East Asian American groups (see Chapter 6 for a review). For example, one study found that Filipino American men smoke tobacco more than the general population (California Asian Pacific Islander Joint Legislative Caucus [CAPIJLC], 2009). Another study reported that Filipino Americans were the largest “abstainers” from alcohol among all Asian American groups; however, Filipino Americans drank for pathological reasons significantly more than any other group (Johnson, Schwitters, Wilson, Nagoshi, & McClearn, 1985). Given this, perhaps there may be a correlation between mental health and substance use among Filipino Americans. Although Filipino Americans may not be seeking help for their problems, they may be turning to substance
use (e.g., drinking, tobacco, or other drugs) as a way of coping with their life stressors.

Additionally, while there are few studies that concentrate specifically on Filipino American mental health, there are some statistics on Filipino American physical health that may have implications for psychological well-being. For example, some studies have indicated Filipino American men and women have a higher prevalence of hypertension in comparison to White Americans (Ryan et al., 2000) and other Asian American subgroups (Klatsky, Tekawa, & Armstrong, 1996). In fact, next to African Americans, Filipino Americans have been found to have the second highest prevalence of hypertension out of all ethnic groups (Stavig, Igra, & Leonard, 1988). Given that chronic stress and faulty coping reactions to stress are likely causes of high blood pressure (Sparrenberger et al., 2009), one must wonder if psychological distress (and inability to cope with such stress) may lead to health problems for Filipino Americans. Moreover, while there has been some research that indicates that racism may be a cause for cardiovascular problems in African Americans (see Wyatt, Williams, Henderson, Walker, & Winters, 2003), further research may be beneficial to understand the impacts of racism on the health disparities in the Filipino American community. For example, one study found that Filipino Americans’ perceptions of unfair treatment may be associated with increased illness (Gee et al., 2006).

There are other health disparities that have been found to be most prevalent in the Filipino American community. For example, according to the recent State of Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Health in California Report, among Asian Americans, Filipinos have the highest proportion (46%) of overweight or obese adults and 30% of Filipino American youth were listed as overweight (CAPIJLC, 2009). The same report also found that Filipino Americans have higher rates of diabetes than the general population, despite having a generally younger population. Other studies have also found that Filipino Americans have significantly higher rates of diabetes than Whites (Araneta, Wingard, & Barrett-Connor, 2002) and that Filipinas from lower socioeconomic statuses tend to be at risk for diabetes as well (Langenberg, Araneta, Bergstro, Marmot, & Barrett-Connor, 2007). Future research can examine whether discrimination and other stressors may influence other Filipino American health disparities (e.g., diabetes,
cardiovascular disease, and obesity), but also other unhealthy behaviors, particularly alcohol and substance use.

Some studies compare Filipino American children with other White or Asian American children and suggest health disparities. A meta-analysis of scholarly articles through the medical database, *Medline* found that Filipino American children may experience a range of health problems including gestational diabetes, higher rates of neonatal mortality and low birth weight, and malnutrition in young children. Moreover, it was found that Filipino American children in general tend to be more overweight, physically inactive, and less physically fit, and tend to have higher rates of substance abuse (Javier, Huffman, & Mendoza, 2007). Again, future research may examine potential cultural and societal variables that may influence these disparities in order to prevent these health problems in children.

The lack of research on or knowledge about Filipino American mental health may be due to the underutilization of mental health services by Filipino Americans and other Asian American groups (Uba, 1994). As mentioned, Asian Americans may not seek mental health services due to cultural stigmas; therefore, underutilization of treatment may not indicate positive mental health. In fact, some authors have indicated that Filipino Americans may seek mental health services even less than other Asian American groups (see David, 2010, for a review). Thus, although there is a dearth of knowledge of Asian Americans’ mental health help-seeking behaviors, even less is known about Filipino Americans’ experiences with mental health treatment.

The lack of research may be due to the limited number of Filipino and Filipino American psychologists or academics or others who are interested in Filipino American issues. In fact, preliminary data from a national study of Filipino American academics found that there are fewer than 100 Filipino American tenured or tenure-track professors in the social sciences, education, or humanities (D. C. Maramba, personal communication, August 30, 2010). As noted, most research on Asian Americans tends to homogenize the group or focus specifically on East Asian Americans. Therefore, because few Filipino Americans (or other marginalized Asian Americans) are in academia, there may be few individuals who advocate for their mental health. Nonetheless, whatever the reason for the dearth of research, it is crucial for psychologists,
educators, and other practitioners to provide ethical and multicultural services for their clients. Hence, this book aims to serve as a guide to working with Filipino American individuals.

FILIPINO PSYCHOLOGY

It is imperative to review the psychological literature on Filipinos in the Philippines in order to understand Filipino Americans in the United States. Extensive studies in the field of Filipino psychology, or *sikolohiyang Pilipino*, examine how cultural values may influence Filipino psyche and personality development (e.g., Church, 1986; Church & Katigbak, 2002; Enriquez, 1982, 2004). Filipino psychology examines “traditional” Western psychology from a Filipino perspective. For example, Filipino psychology experts describe various personality patterns and development that exist in addition to those traditionally taught by Western psychologists, such as Freud, Erickson, and Wundt (Church, 1986). Therefore, when providing psychological services for Filipino individuals, psychologists and other practitioners may be able to incorporate cultural values into their case conceptualizations as a way of understanding clients’ presenting problems and personality development from a cultural perspective.

Filipino psychology also incorporates Western psychological practices with indigenous healing and religious connotations (Enriquez, 2004). For example, although traditional Western psychology might view psychotherapy as the most effective form of treatment, Filipino psychology may regularly include spiritual and religious practices (e.g., praying, meditating) as well as indigenous methods (e.g., consulting with a shaman or “faith healer”). Religious, spiritual, and indigenous considerations, which might be viewed as pathological in Western practice, may be incorporated into treatment. For example, if Filipino individuals complain someone has “put a curse” on them, a Western counselor or clinician might view these individuals as delusional or schizophrenic; however, according to Filipino psychology, these individuals might be viewed as “normal” persons with spiritual beliefs.

Some of the major concepts of Filipino psychology will be provided when discussing Filipino American cultural values and family dynamics (Chapter 2), Filipino American group and community dynamics.
INTRODUCTION TO FILIPINO AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGY

(Chapter 5), and culturally competent counseling techniques for Filipino Americans (Chapter 9). Although these concepts can provide a context and can be applicable, the experiences of Filipino Americans are markedly different from Filipinos in the Philippines, in that they live in a country where they are the minority, they interact with individuals of other racial/ethnic groups in their everyday lives, they are exposed to and develop American cultural values more directly, and they experience racism and discrimination that Filipinos in the Philippines might not.

Similarly, concepts from Asian American psychology (see Tewari & Alvarez, 2008; Uba, 1994) might provide helpful insights into understanding Filipino Americans. However, the experiences of Filipino Americans are different in a number of ways. Because of differences in cultural values and colonial history, Filipino Americans may cope with problems differently and may have different presenting problems within their families and in groups. Moreover, because Filipino Americans have a distinctive experience with race (in that they are placed into several categories and mistaken as several racial groups), they may experience racial discrimination differently from other Asian American groups (Nadal, 2008c). Also, the varying experiences of Filipino Americans with educational achievement and socioeconomic status may also lead to various mental health experiences that may be dissimilar from those of other Asian American groups.

Because of the gaps in Filipino psychology and Asian American psychology, this book advocates for the creation and implementation of Filipino American psychology. Chapter 2 examines how Filipino Americans may possess cultural values that are different from those of Asian Americans in the United States. Chapter 3 reveals how Filipino Americans may experience a unique racial and ethnic identity development. Chapter 4 discusses how colonial mentality impacts Filipino Americans in unique ways. Chapter 5 discusses the distinctive dynamics that occur within Filipino American groups and communities, while Chapter 6 explains how Filipino Americans may experience difficulties with educational attainment, HIV/AIDS, and teen and out-of-wedlock pregnancy—all of which are not as pervasive in the Asian American community. Chapters 7 and 8 discuss subgroups of Filipino Americans
and how the intersections of identities (e.g., gender, sexual orientation, multiracial/multiethnic identity) may have an impact on one’s Filipino American experience. Finally, Chapter 9 shares culturally competent counseling techniques to be utilized when working with Filipino American individuals and groups.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Why do you think that race is seen as a “Black or White” issue? How can race be more inclusive of other groups?
2. What are your cognitive and emotional reactions in learning about the history of racism with Asian Americans and Filipino Americans?
3. When you think about Filipino Americans, what are the first images or stereotypes that come to mind? Where did you learn about these images or stereotypes?
4. What racial group do you think that Filipino Americans belong to? Explain your answer.
5. In what ways are Filipino Americans similar to or different from Filipinos in the Philippines?
6. In what ways are Filipino Americans similar to or different from Asian Americans?

**SUMMARY**

This chapter introduced the history of race relations in the United States and how race is often viewed as a Black and White issue, which leads other racial/ethnic groups to become invisible or ignored. The chapter introduced the history and experiences of Asian Americans, discussing various immigration patterns, experiences with racism, and previous literature on mental health experiences. It also presents the history and experiences of Filipino Americans, explaining how Filipino Americans have a distinct history, cultural values, demographics, and contemporary experiences in the United States. Finally, the chapter explains the dearth of literature on mental health experiences of Filipino Americans in order to provide a context for the purpose of the book.
Activity 1: Self-Reflection

The purpose of this activity is to learn more about Filipino American history and how it may impact individual mental health. Read the next poem regarding Filipino American historical and contemporary events. The poem’s title, “Ikaw,” is the Tagalog word for “you.” The poem was originally performed in 2001. Appendix A includes historical events that correspond to each line of the poem.

Ikaw
You called me a negrito when you invaded my country.
You called me a savage when you enslaved my people.
You called me a monkey when I came to your country.
You called me a rapist and won an award.

You spat on my brothers for courting your women.
You beat on my sisters for not giving it up.
You lynched and you killed and you never said sorry.
You just put us on a ship and sent us back home.

You taught me Columbus discovered America.
You taught me Magellan discovered my land.
You taught me Cesar Chavez was the only farmworker.
You taught me MacArthur said he’d return.

You promised my Lolo you’d give him his benefits for the war he fought for your damn country.
You forgot the hundreds of thousands of pinoy and pinay that died in that war.
You forget the 5.5 pinoy vets that die each day.
Bataan won’t be remembered, but the Alamo will.
Philip Vera Cruz won’t be remembered, but Rosa Parks will.
Joseph Ileto won’t be remembered, but Matthew Shepard will.

A hundred years ago
You kidnapped my people and took them to your country
You locked them in cages at the St. Louis Fair.
You put them on display with the rest of the animals.
“Come look at the Filipino monkeys”
That’s what you said.

Eighty years ago
You killed my brother Fermin Tobera
to teach us a lesson that this was your country.
You burnt down our houses and tied us against trees.
You beat my brown ass and you left me for dead.
“Positively No Filipinos Allowed”
“Go home, monkey!”
That’s what you said.
But you didn’t mind paying me
one dollar
for fifteen hours
of work in the sun.

Sixty years ago
You put us to war, the second of the world.
You made my people fight in our native land,
while your people were safe at home.
Thousands of my people died in bloodshed
But you’re the ones who get recognized.
You’re the ones who won that war.
But what about my Lolo who lives no more?
Well, he got an American flag at his funeral
so what am I complaining for?

Forty years ago
You told my parents to come here
that they would have a better life.
But you didn’t tell them they’d get spit on.
You didn’t tell them they weren’t allowed in your neighbor-hoods or schools.
You didn’t tell them that things weren’t as they seemed.
America was just a dream.
“Life can be bright in America,
if you can fight in America.
Life is all right in American,
if you’re a White in America.”

Twenty years ago
you told me that life was better.
Better than they used to be.
But then you called me a dogeater.
Monkey.
Oriental.
Asian Nigger.
Chink.
Flip.
Fob.
You told me my skin was dirty and I’d never be like you.
You told that I was ugly because I didn’t look like you.

Ten years ago
You killed my brother
Joseph Ileto
near the City of Angels
because he was brown.
You didn’t make a movie, not even a television special.
Tomorrow, you won’t even remember his name.

Today.
You tell me not to be angry.
You tell me that things are better than before.
You ask “Why can’t we all just get along?”
But when I answer, you don’t understand.
In fact, you weren’t even listening.

You can’t call me American because you know you’ll never mean it.
You can’t tell me I’m foreign because I know I was born here.
You can’t tell me I’m yellow because I know that I’m brown.
You can’t tell me I’m ugly because I know that I’m beautiful.
Questions for Discussion

You can’t tell me I’m different because I know I’m the norm.
You can’t tell me I’m invisible because I know that I am not alone.

2.4 million
2.4 million
2.4 million pinoy and pinay in my barkada now.

Today
Tomorrow
You will remember my name.
Tomorrow
And tomorrow
You will say sorry.

Kevin Nadal

pinoy: a term used to describe Filipino Americans, usually as a term of endearment or a political identifier
pinay: the female counterpart to pinoy

Questions for Discussion

1. Describe your cognitive and emotional reactions to the poem.
2. How do you feel about the historical events that are referred to in the poem?
3. Have you been educated about these historical events before? How do you feel about this?
4. For Filipino Americans: How does Filipino American history affect your life today?
5. For Filipinos and non-Filipinos: How do you think Filipino American history affects society today?