

Podcast Script

Introduction — Background, Motive, Objective

Living in the American or Canadian society, I'm sure everyone has heard of stereotypes about Asian women... For example, A 2013 journal Article from Seethaler that looks at Internet Humor and Stereotypes about Asian American Women, says that "common stereotypes make it appear as if only certain versions of Asian American women exist: the submissive and docile Geisha, the hyper sexual, seductive, and dangerous Dragon Lady, and, the newest addition, the assimilated, studious female nerd". Looking at this quotation now, more than 10 years has past since this article was published, it's quite fascinating that I cannot say that things have changed much ever since. There still occurs to be many stereotypical perceptions about Asian women, just like mentioned. And this, became my motivation for the final project. In light of how there are many, various stereotypes about Asian women, I was inspired to explore the relationship between stereotypes about Asian women and their Acculturation strategies and experiences in Vancouver.

What I mean by acculturation strategies makes reference to the bidirectional model of Acculturation proposed by Berry, 2007. The model accounts for an individual's identification with their heritage culture, versus the mainstream culture – which for an Chinese person in Canada, could be something like their identification with Chinese culture versus Canadian culture. There are 4 big strategies in this model depending on if you have low or high identification with heritage and mainstream culture, which are Assimilation, Integration, separation, and marginalization. I go through some of these acculturation strategies in detail later in this podcast.

Anyhow, I have conducted interviews to explore this topic of gendered stereotypes and acculturation of Asian women, and I'd like to forecast that in this process, I saw the emergence of topics and themes of identity formation, immigrant health and well-being, as well as gender disparities in relation to the main topic of acculturation.

Methods

For the methods of my interview, I had two young Chinese-canadian women participants – Eunice and Hailey. To give some background, the first participant, Eunice is a 20-year-old student and a 2nd generation Chinese Canadian who grew up in Vancouver. Then the second participant, Hailey, is a 22-year-old student, who grew up in Canada from ages 4-12, as a part of an astronaut family composed of her, her siblings and her mother at the time. She is attending school in Canada right now, but she has attended and graduated from elementary school and international secondary school in Hong Kong. Just to note, both Eunice and Hailey preferred to identify as Chinese-Canadian rather than a Hong Konger or Cantonese. They discuss little more about their identity in the later section.

For the interview, I separately asked both participants the same 6 questions that would allow them to talk more about Asian women stereotypes and their acculturation experiences. In the set, the first two questions regarded what kinds of stereotypes have they heard about Asian Women in private and public contexts. Then, I asked about what kind of acculturative strategy have they adopted according to the bidirectional model of acculturation. While there are multiple ways to measure acculturation, both participants had a foundational knowledge of the bidirectional model, therefore I directly asked their position on the model. Next, I asked them about if the stereotypes of Asian woman have ever influenced their choice of acculturation strategy, and I was trying to seek if specific stereotypes had an impact on their acculturation. I also asked a question about the relationship between stereotypes and their mental health. Lastly, I touched on whether their acculturation experiences differed from those of Asian men.

In the following parts of the podcast, I will go through each of these six questions, Play parts of Hailey and Eunice's responses, and I will go through themes that emerged from each of those responses. I will also reference the literature to support their observation and thoughts, as well as connecting it to the various topics related to Asian Diaspora.

Question 1 – What are some stereotypes about Asian women that are related to private contexts like Family or relationships have you heard of?

In response to this question, Eunice mentioned topics related to family gender roles ‘stay-at-home-mom’ and ‘obedience to male authority’:

Eunice: it's like, very common for Asian families or Asian woman to work to support the family and to be a stay-at-home mom. And like I saw this kind of experience with my own mom because she stayed at home for much of my childhood, and she like took care of the family and cooked and cleaned up until when I was in high school, or middle school when she started working again. It's also really important for Asian woman to respect the male in the family, that's a very prominent stereotype. I think, also respecting the male and not questioning the male authority. So, if a man such as a dad makes a decision in the family, it's like sort of the responsibility of the wife or the daughter to not question that decision and just to go along with it.

For the same question, Eunice in particular also touched on the topic of sexual norms and how it is a taboo:

Eunice: In my family, especially, we don't really discuss things around sexuality or intercourse or sex in general, because it's kind of considered to be taboo.

The next participant, Hailey mentioned almost the same topic of women being expected to take on housework, obey male authority and then she also quered for the topic of distinct expectations for wife-husband dynamic:

Hailey: first of all, for family gender roles, they tend to have this perception saying that, women should always stay home after marriage because they should take care of their children and work with household chores, rather than, like men going out for earning money. I think that's one of a big perception for Asian and I also think that that's why people will think that men has more authority than woman in like Asian families. And regarding to like sexual norms and attitude, a lot of families will say that asian woman, (when) they (men) are finding their spouse (the wife), they should find someone that who is not, who

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doesn't earn that much as them and their family backgrounds should have a higher status than the women. [...]

Looking at Eunice and Hailey's responses we see the themes of 'stay-at-home-mom', 'male authority in households and obedience to them, as well as sexual taboos and expectations for women to be socially inferior to men. These all seem to be pressures that are more from their heritage culture, and I infer this from the fact that these themes strongly resemble that of Confucianistic, or traditional-chinese beliefs about gender norms and power distance.

For example, an article by Gao, 2003, which delves into the history of Confucianism and women in China, mentions that in traditional Confucianism, there are codes like 'three obediences and four virtues', which outlines that women should obey their father, husband and their son, and to have virtues of sexual morality, efficiency in needlework and so on. Gao also discusses that there had been an insistence on the inferiority of women, in terms of intelligence and power. These traditional concepts absolutely parallel with the stereotypes that Eunice and Hailey mentioned about family gender roles and sexual taboos.

The next question is similar to Question 1, but for a different context. **Question 2 - What are some stereotypes about Asian women that are related to public contexts like school or work have you heard of?**

First, Eunice's response to this question mentions about the general pressure to 'be hardworking' at work and school. This passed down from her Asian family, she mentions.

Eunice: from a young age, my grandparents or my parents, they've always told me that studying hard or being hard working to get a good job and education is really important. And this is really expressed through my grandpa, especially, because my school had a tuition and he was like, oh, 'in order for you guys to get a good education... because I couldn't...'. He paid for my brother and I's tuition up until high school.

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Next, Hailey's response then hints at the idea of how education is stereotypically not considered to be compulsory for women, and that there are fields of education that are stigmatized for women:

Hailey: for Asian women, they will think that we don't need that much kind of a status within the society. So, education is like a bonus for us. But nowadays, I think because of the norms, they may want to have their own ability to earn money as well. [...] And as well as that, the jobs that we do, for example, you won't see it as much Asian women taking like computer science or like engineering, they would feel like it's a bit weird for that.

Similar to the first question about stereotypes related to private contexts, it occurs that many of these stereotypes they mentioned are rooted in their heritage culture's pressures. Like the theme of education being not a requirement for women and some expert professions being stigmatized for women as well, which Hailey mentioned, it again aligns with Chinese traditional belief that women are to be at home, rather than to get an education and take part in work outside home.

However, what Eunice had mentioned about the pressure to 'hard-working' is quite different. This stereotype is not specifically for Asian women but for Asians of all gender, first of all, just like how she mentioned this pressure applied to her and her brother as well. Also, this theme of being 'hard-working' is different in the sense that it's a stereotype that relates to the mainstream culture as well, because, perhaps it was enhanced due to the model minority stereotyping. So, perhaps, there had been a social pressure in Canada for minority groups like Chinese people in this context, to be expected of high levels of societal achievement in Canada, which became a family pressure to be hard working as Eunice mentioned. Eunice's response did not hint any negative mental health affects of this, but as a fun fact, a study about model minority stereotyping and anxiety symptoms from Haft et al. (2024) found that model minority stereotyping is associated with higher anxiety symptoms.

In conclusion, For questions one and two together, we saw that for both participants, when they think about stereotypes about Asian women, they think of stereotypes that are mostly

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coming from pressures from their heritage culture, rather than from the mainstream culture.

Let's move on to **Question 3: where do you feel you stand on the bidirectional model of acculturation strategies?**

First, Eunice explained that she had a phase of Assimilation during high school, meaning she had high identification with Canadian culture but low identification with her heritage culture. Then, transitioned closer to the integration strategy where now she has a higher identification with her heritage culture as well.

Eunice: I think, for the bidirectional model, in the past, especially in early high school, I would consider myself to be in the assimilated stage where I didn't really accept my Asian heritage. And even though I went to a high school that was predominantly Asian, So my teachers and my classmates were Asian, I felt very distant from my Chinese Heritage at School. And this is probably because of the people that I hung out with, who valued this mainstream culture more. [...] But for now, I think I'm somewhat in the integration stage, but I'm still trying to figure out where I stand. I'm like more confident now and more comfortable now talking about my Asian heritage.

Referring to the week 8's lecture about acculturation, it is known that Integration & assimilation strategies are both associated with the best psychological outcomes. But for Eunice, it occurs that shifting to the Integration strategy brought her more psychological comfort than times when she was taking on the assimilative strategy. Perhaps, the matter was that her discomfort in the assimilative acculturation strategy stage came from the pressures in her environment to disregard her heritage identity, without giving her a choice.

On the other hand, Hailey's response is quite different from Eunices', as she identifies to have a low identification with both heritage and mainstream culture.

Hailey: For my identification of the mainstream culture, I'll say it's a bit low, because my whole sound like background is like Asian and they're really like Chinese and they have like

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really traditional thoughts about that. So, I was saying, I'm pretty low on that. Whereas, for my identification of heritage culture of like Hong Kong, and like being speaking Cantonese-wise culture, I'll think that I'll be in the middle — because I've only stayed in Canada for like, my childhood years, up to grade six. And then afterwards, I have went back to Hong Kong for my high school education. Although like I have received more of my own culture, but I don't seem like I fit into the norms within Hong Kong. So I'll say like, I'm in the middle with that.

In Hailey's responses, it is implied that she stands between marginalization and separation acculturation strategies, This response reminded me of the Marcia's Model of identity formation, which has two dimensions – the first being the exploration of different cultures, and the second being the commitment to a particular culture. When Hailey mentioned how she doesn't feel like she fits into the norms of Hong Kong, it shows her attempt to explore different cultural options, yet failing to stay committed to that culture. Referring to Marcia's model, High exploration and low commitment is a characteristic of those who are going through an identity crisis. So, Hailey's situation can be analyzed from the perspective of identity formation as well as acculturation strategies.

So in summary, as a background for the next few questions about the interviewee's experiences with acculturation, please just noted that, for Eunice, she used to have low identification with Chinese culture, whereas now she has a high identification with both cultures. And then for Hailey, she has low identification with Canadian culture, and middle identification with Chinese culture.

Now on to **Question 4. Do you believe your strategy of acculturation in Canada was influenced by the fact that you are an Asian woman and the stereotypes associated with you? If you can think of particular stereotypes, do you feel like you followed the stereotype or worked to defeat them?**

First, Eunice's response entails her experience of refusing to fit into the stereotypes and expectations, such as being hardworking.

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Eunice: my answer to this question is a bit complicated. In the past when I was in that assimilated stage where I kind of embraced that mainstream culture a bit more, like I wasn't as hard-working as I was in elementary school. So, I embraced my Asian heritage a lot more in elementary school, because the people were more accepting, but in high school — I don't think I embraced as much. But in early high school, with the stereotype of Asians being hardworking and studious, and achieving high grades, I wasn't really one of them. I feel that this stereotype didn't really apply to me because I was too busy trying to fit in with my peers, instead of working hard and studying. So, in the sense for this question **I kind of rejected that stereotype of being hardworking, in order to fit in with my peers.**

Again, the theme of being 'hardworking' is not necessarily specific to Asian Women, but for minorities of all genders.

However, Hailey's responses are much more specific to women. She talks about her attempt to refuse stereotypes such as that women do not need to focus on seeking higher socio-economic status.

Hailey: [...] like I do not really agree to the fact how, in like Asian culture, they will say how, your goal is to get married, and to find a guy who is rich and they will help you a lot within like, your whole life like regarding to what you want and your desires. But right now that's like my traditional (culture) which I might get effected from my parents and to find like, the other half to be having the same like, wage as me — like education wise and socio-economic status. But for me right now, I feel like I don't really like agree too much on that like, since I had like education for 25 years working towards my goal on my career, so that's why I'll fit in the middle because **I feel like nowadays women should have their own ability to earn money and to live happily by ourselves. We don't need to rely on somebody.**

It was interesting hear how Eunice and Hailey both worked to defeat the stereotypes from their heritage culture that they were pressured to follow, whether it was about being hardworking or not being hardworking for higher socioeconomic status. So, after hearing

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this, I was then curious about what the health outcomes of these experiences could be – which leads to question 5.

Question 5 — Do you feel like the stereotypes about Asian women affected your mental or physical health?

Eunice mentions how she experienced negative mental health effects from intergenerational conflicts with her parents which arose from her not following the stereotypes about Asian women.

Eunice: I think that it did affect my mental health in particular, especially in high school where I mentioned that I was trying to fit into a peer group and learn about my identity with that peer group instead of being studious, like there was often conflicting sides with my parents, and I didn't want to associate myself with any sort of Chinese culture. And so that kind of resulted in sometimes bickering or conflicts with my parents, because of these different mindsets and perspectives of each culture. [...]

I believe Eunice's response to the question explains that her negative mental health outcomes were due to her having low identification with her Chinese culture, not just about how she did not conform to stereotypes.

Hailey's response was different, as she mentioned that stereotypes had no impact on her mental or physical health yet, though it may, in the future.

Hailey: I don't think like it has, the stereotypes of Asian women, have affected my mental health, physical health right now. I'm still in the process of education and getting receiving more of knowledge. I think that afterwards, after my degree, and after actually getting into the career and getting jobs, I feel like it's my parents and the older generation that's pushing you towards like, who are you finding as your other half? What are your main goals in life? And that will actually really affect my mental health, I feel like, because they're like pushing towards, like, what they're like controlling me what I should think about about Asian women. Like, we should not be that powerful because we should rely on somebody else

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and we should find somebody who has more socioeconomic status (that) can allow us live, we should not rely on ourselves... [...]

Hailey mentions of two specific stereotypes, the first one being that Asian women should have a male figure in their life to lead them and second being that women should have a lower in socioeconomic status than the man. She says that these stereotypes could have a negative impact on her mental health in the future but that it is not a prominent pressure right now because she is yet in school. This, again, is a stereotype from her heritage culture.

In this question, I attempted to look at the topic of immigrant mental health in relation to stereotypes about Asian women. Overall, Eunice's and Hailey's responses both again entailed stereotypes rooted in their heritage culture, rather than from the mainstream culture. This is interesting because the two participants claimed to have almost opposite strategies of acculturation in the previous questions, yet both of them feel most mentally impacted by the pressures from Chinese culture as Asian women in Vancouver.

Now on to the last question. **Question 6: do you feel like your acculturation experiences differ from those of Asian men? And if so, in what ways were they different?**

Here, I directly asked the interviewees about differences they saw in acculturative experiences between Asian women versus Asian men. In response, Eunice described the differences between her and her brother, pinpointing how her brother was less pressured by Asian stereotypes and how he chose to obey traditional expectations of their heritage culture.

Eunice: I think it does differ. Especially when I look at my brother versus me. My brother is like a year and a half younger, and he seems to start work later than I do. I started work in maybe in middle to end of high school. Whereas he only recently started work. [...] This could related to what he's studying, maybe. Or it could be maybe the stereotype shaping his experience. And then also with my brother, he doesn't really talk back to our parents or

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to relatives. So he's often really respected by his relatives and our family, because he respects this paternal authority. But growing up, I was the one who always talked back and always made these comments when I thought things were unfair. Instead of just accepting it. And so sometimes, this got me into a lot more conflicts with my parents or like with male family members, compared to my brother.

Eunice's response for this question aligned perfectly with the results of Tang's 1999 study in Toronto about Chinese university students. This study revealed that Chinese men were significantly more traditional than Chinese women regarding their beliefs and expectations about family hierarchy and gender roles, just like Eunice's brother is more obedient to paternal authority than Eunice. The study further explained that, therefore, there was no 'generational discrepancy between self and perceived parental values' for Chinese men, but there was discrepancy for Chinese women. And therefore, the study suggested that Chinese women likely suffer conflict with traditional gender roles and cultural values. I believe this intergenerational conflict was especially high with Eunice's case because she does have a high identification with Canadian culture, which may have contradictions with Chinese culture's norms and stereotypes, such as with patriarchal family structure.

Hailey also claimed of observed differences in Asian men and Asian women's acculturation experiences, but kind of opposite to what Eunice mentioned.

Hailey: Asian men in Canada like their mainstream culture, I think they don't have much perception... (which I mean) by like, they don't have to see what other people think about them. They don't have to fit in the norms, in order to feel like to be respected or anything. They have authority like by themselves already. They don't really have to fit in, and they don't really have to care about what other people think — that's what I feel like. For example, if they are jobless... they don't really care about it here. They don't have the norms here where the man has to have a job or anything, but what I can see here is men tend to not have to have a job and they could be taking care of children, whereas the woman will go out to earn money and like earn for the living. [...]

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In my interpretation, Hailey thinks that Asian men tend to be very free from the heritage culture's norms during their acculturation process in Canada. This somewhat contradicts the theme from Eunice's response that men tend to be more traditional with their heritage culture. But Anyhow, in summary, both Eunice's and Hailey's responses suggest that Asian men and women do have it different with acculturation experiences.

CONCLUSION

Now we have gone through all the questions and the responses, I will make some final summaries and conclusions. In this podcast, from the interviews of two Asian women participants who are a part of the Asian Diaspora in Canada, I aimed to explore the relationship between stereotypes about Asian women and their Acculturation strategies and experiences in Vancouver.

I would say that the main discovery of this podcast was that the traditional beliefs from their Chinese culture, in the form of stereotypes against Asian women, are very impactful to diasporic individuals... despite where they stand on the bidirectional model of acculturation.

I honestly expected to see differences in the stereotypes they mention, so maybe that someone who identifies highly with mainstream culture would talk more about Asian women stereotypes that originates from the mainstream culture as well. But, what we saw was that despite two participants having almost opposite strategies of acculturation, both of them almost exclusively talked about stereotypes from their heritage culture only.

As someone who is also a part of the Asian immigrant diaspora with Korean heritage, I had many overlaps with the interviewees' experiences, of being influenced by this Confucianistic stereotyping about Asian women. Therefore, it was very cool how these ideas from our heritage culture, which originates back from a few thousand years ago, continues to impact us so strongly in Canada, although these ideas are mere remnants of our distal chronosystem...

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My main discovery about how stereotypes from heritage culture can be so impactful transcending acculturation strategies is not a solid conclusion about the relationship between Asian woman stereotypes and acculturation since I only had two participants, but perhaps, further research with more participants can be done with similar set of questions to see if indeed, these gendered stereotypes from heritage culture impact those of Asian diaspora more than the stereotyping from mainstream culture.

Lastly, I also wanted to note that the responses were so valuable because they ended up touching on many important topics related to the immigrant diaspora, such as identity formation and immigrant health and well-being.

Therefore, to end the podcast, I wanted to express my gratitude to my two interviewees, Eunice and Haliey, who gladly participated and shared their experiences, allowing me to gain a more interdisciplinary understanding of these various topics around Asian Diaspora in Canada.

I hope you enjoyed this podcast, and Thank you for listening!

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