
A Research Of Asian Americans Culture: Proposal And Reflection

The culture I am interested in is Asian Americans. I would like to explore this cultural group in greater detail because out of the 7 that we will be studying this is the one I know least about. From my personal experience, I feel as though there are many minority groups that are represented in the media, news, or politics and Asian Americans are not one of them even though they make up a large portion. This is one of the things that interests me. It makes me question why there aren't more lead Asian American roles in movies or why there aren't many Asian American politicians. Is it because we discriminate against them or is it because they are a less vocal minority group? You generally don't see Asians protesting or hear about problems within their minority group. It is almost like there is none at all. This leads me to my next question that interests me; why don't we hear about any problems? Is it part of their culture to keep to themselves and not openly discuss their problems? These are all questions I hope to be able to answer by the end of this project.

I chose to read chapter five from the book *Asian Americans: Vulnerable Populations, Model Interventions, and Clarifying Agendas* by Lin Zhan. In this chapter, the author discusses the challenges gay, lesbian, and bisexual Asian Americans and their families face. She starts off by giving a little background history of the East Asian culture and how East Asian families have been heavily influenced by Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. These different religions shape the family value system and the dynamics of the family. Generally, in East Asian families the child's identity revolves around the family and these values that the family holds. Throughout their life, the child's behavior is scrutinized by the parents and sexual exploration or behavior is greatly discouraged until young adulthood. The child is expected to fill the prescribed role in the family and any deviation from this role reflects not only upon the child, but the whole family. The author continues on to discuss how this type of family dynamic can be particularly hard for homosexuals.

The expected restriction from sexual exploration can often make the child's sexuality difficult to understand and integrate into their self-image as they grow up. Many homosexuals also worry about losing closeness to their family if they come out since their primary loyalty is to their parents. Coming out may also break their expected traditional role within the family which would increase the threat of rejection from the family. Communication usually occurs in East Asian families from parents to children, so many Asian parents refuse to accept the idea of their child's homosexuality.

Family therapy, counseling or mental health treatment could help, but are usually frowned upon in the East Asian culture because it would bring dishonor and embarrassment to discuss their problems with a stranger. Because of these deep-rooted family values, it is especially hard to be a homosexual Asian American. Many of these individuals struggle to find a way to integrate their homosexuality identity with their ethnic identity which can cause internal stress and self esteem issues. After reading this chapter and reflecting on it, the message I took away from this chapter is how challenging it is to be gay in an East Asian family. You have all of these high expectations held by your parents and family that you are pressured to meet and being gay is definitely not one of them. It makes me feel sad that there are people who go through this on a

daily basis and have to choose between telling their family and being rejected or holding back who they really are in order to uphold the family standards. It also must be extremely difficult to have these thoughts and also not be able to talk to a counselor or therapist because it is traditionally frowned upon in the East Asian culture to talk to strangers about your problems. I imagine that holding onto these types of thoughts and feelings in silence must create extreme internal struggles for these individuals. No one should have to go through this sort of thing alone and should always have someone they feel safe talking to about their sexuality, but unfortunately this is not the case in this culture. This relates back to one of my original questions I had about whether or not it was part of the East Asian culture to not openly discuss their problems which I learned it was not. This could potentially be why we never hear about any problems within this minority since they are not ones to talk about their problems. This could also explain why you don't usually see any Asian Americans protesting or creating public conflict. From a young age they are taught to keep their problems to themselves in order to preserve the family name. This potentially makes it difficult to know what kind of problems are happening within this minority group if no one is talking about them.

For my final paper I will focus on Asian Americans. I want to learn more about their culture, traditions and history. Specifically, my main topic of interest is homosexual Asian Americans and their families. I hope to learn more about their family structure and dynamic and the challenges they face with being gay in a traditional East Asian family. The research question I hope to answer is what challenges do homosexual Asian Americans face within their families and what can be done to overcome them? To better understand my topic of interest I will seek out information in books from the MSU library, through electronic media and in scholarly journals on the internet.

One of the resources I will use to further my research is the book I mentioned from part 2. I have only read chapter 5, so far and plan to read more of the book to further my research. Another resource I plan to use is a report from New York's queer Asian Pacific legacy conference titled "Pacific American Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People: A Community Portrait." After using these resources and conducting further research, I hope to be able to gain more insight into the homosexual Asian American community and the different difficulties they face. I think policy plays a part in my topic of interest because gay marriage is still illegal in many Asian countries, so it is not widely accepted to be gay there which can play a part in traditional family dynamics. I think it also plays a part because here, in the U. S. , gay marriage just became legal a few years ago which greatly changed how gay people started to view themselves. It became more mainstream to be gay and more widely acceptable. This ties back into my research question regarding what challenges they might face within their family. Now that it is legal to be gay U. S. , but still illegal to be gay in most East Asian countries, individuals might find themselves torn between the 2 cultures.