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# **THE AMERICAN DREAM AND THE FILIPINO COLLEGE STUDENT**

**BY**

**ANGELO GABRIEL G. BALDADO**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Honors in the Major Program in Social Work  
in the College of Health Professions and Sciences  
and in The Burnett Honors College  
at the University of Central Florida  
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## **Abstract**

The American Dream Ideology is defined by Sociologist, Jennifer Hochschild as, “All persons in the United States can achieve the American Dream, which is defined as the achievement of success however that is defined to oneself, through hard work and one’s own efforts.” Filipino Americans have a unique history with the United States and much of Filipino culture has roots within its history of colonization by Spain and the United States. Previous research has shown a high consistent rate of immigration into the United States, and high rates of social mobility among second-generation Asian immigrants compared to first-generation Asian immigrants. A study also has shown that college students predominately mentioned wealth and material goods when discussing the American Dream Ideology. Inquiry on Filipinos and their perceptions of the American Dream have yet to be completed. Using the framework of culture as a “tool kit,” this qualitative study investigates if Filipino college students that attend the University of Central Florida buy into the “American Dream Ideology,” as defined by Sociologist, Jennifer Hochschild. This was done by analyzing 3 interviews with Filipino college students that attend the University of Central Florida. Based on the data, there are many factors that can attribute to a student’s understanding of the American Dream Ideology. This study lays the groundwork for further research on the processes that create one’s definition of the American Dream Ideology within Filipino communities.

*Keywords:* American Dream Ideology, social mobility, second-generation immigrant, culture as a “toolkit”, model minority myth

## **Dedication**

For my mentors, Dr. Andrews, Dr. Graham, and Michael Freeman, who  
empowered me to utilize my privilege to inspire others

For my Dad and my brother, for having my back and supporting all  
my endeavors

For my Mom, for continuing to shine your love up from Heaven

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## **Introduction**

As a child, I was told, “our family moved here so that you could have a better life.” What did that even mean? Was the Philippines all that bad? Being a Filipino immigrant in the United States has proved to be a rather complicated experience. Filipinos are within the Asian subgroups, which is labeled the “model minority”. The model minority myth is seen in society when Asians are generally looked upon as the prime example of how minority groups should act, and the notion that Asians are successful (Wu, 2013). The idea that Asians are the “model minority” is a stereotype that generally hurts Asian culture rather than empowers it (Wu, 2013). There are many different sub-ethnic groups under the Asian umbrella that have their own strengths and struggles in society. The Philippines has a unique history that greatly impacts Filipino culture and the way of life for many Filipino immigrants. In my brief interactions with other Filipinos at the University of Central Florida (UCF), I have noticed that many of us have heard the “moving to America for a better life,” idea at home and among our families, and might be a large driving force for Filipino work ethic. Does the American Dream Ideology motivate migration to the United States, and do Filipinos buy into the promise that hard work and success is achievable for anyone in the United States?

This study examines the lived experiences of college students that are second generation immigrants from the Philippines. By analyzing the interviews of students’ ideas of comparative success in relation to the home country of the Philippines, this research gathers narratives that reveal how and why the American Dream Ideology impacts their lives. Additionally, this research focuses on how the American Dream Ideology may be influencing Filipino college students’ cultural tool kits in how they live their lives and experience through college. The



emphasis will not be on their ideas of success, but how the American Dream Ideology might be a part of the cultural tool kit that students use to create plans of action to achieve in society. The hope was to use qualitative data that might help explain these themes and trends with Asian and Pacific Islander students that attend UCF and how the American Dream might influence these behaviors.

## **Literature Review**

### The Philippines and the United States History

The Philippines has a rich history that affects Filipino culture. The old Filipino saying that briefly captures this history is, “The Filipinos spent three hundred years in the convent, and fifty years in Hollywood” (Ocampo, 2016, p. 15). For more than three hundred years, the Spanish Empire controlled the country and later shifted control to the United States by the early 1900s, which in turn greatly influenced the people of the Philippines (Ocampo, 2016). After all the years of colonial influence, there are many aspects of the Philippines that are not as typical to other parts of Asia. Filipinos have a religion, language, and familiarity with American culture that many other Asian countries do not have (Ocampo, 2016). The country is currently predominantly Roman Catholic and has the fifth-largest English-speaking population in the world (Ocampo, 2016). These traits showcase the great effect of colonization and how it impacts the culture of a society. For example, more than 80% of Filipinos have high school degrees (Portes & Rambaut, 2006). The lack of a language barrier and consistent migration can be factors to the high percentage of high school degrees as Filipinos have the highest levels of English proficiency and migration trends compared to other Asian immigrants (Ocampo, 2016). Due to early immigration policies that benefited Filipino immigrants, family petitions increased by 80% in the 1980s as employment visas decreased by 20 % (Ocampo, 2016). Professional Filipino immigrants in the United States continued to petition other professional relatives in the Philippines shifting Filipino communities from poor to middle-class communities (Espiritu 2003). These large differences may provide insight into social mobility among Filipinos.

According to a report by the Center for American Progress, they found, “Asian Americans have the greatest proportion of immigrants of any U.S. racial group,” and that the Asian population consisted of 19,397,080 people (Ramakrishnan & Ahmad, 2014, p. 26). It also showed the growth rate of the Asian population has drastically increased, having the highest rate of growth compared to other racial and ethnic minority groups at 46% from 2000 to 2010, with two-thirds of these residents are foreign-born, and the Philippines has been ranked as one of the top countries of migration to the United States (Ramakrishnan & Ahmad, 2014). In 2012, the population of Filipinos in the United States was at 3,593,534, which accounts for 19% of all Asians living in the United States. Also, in 2012, there were approximately 57,000 green cards issued from the Philippines (Ramakrishnan & Ahmad, 2014). The Philippines has also been shown to have the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest population of people on a wait list for a visa at 401,880 people, behind Mexico, which has 1,308,761 people (Ramakrishnan & Ahmad, 2014). This information greatly demonstrates that the Filipinos are consistently trying to enter the United States in this modern era, possibly looking for a better life.

#### Defining the American Dream Ideology

The American Dream Ideology is a key component of this research. Hochschild (1995) discusses that the American Dream consists of three tenants on achieving success. The first tenant defines that being all people in the United States can achieve the American Dream, while the second tenant defines this dream consists of the achievement of success however that is defined to oneself, with the final tenant defining how this dream can be achieved, through hard work and one’s own efforts (Hochschild, 1995).

The definition of success is also important to mention. According to Hochschild (1995), people define success in multiple ways, from having a high income, a prestigious job, or a stable job. This idea of success can be measured in three different ways. One can see it as an absolute, with the implications that the American Dream is reaching a higher level of wellbeing compared to where one started (Hochschild, 1995). Another viewpoint is seeing success as relative, comparing success to a comparison point, whether that is life from childhood, or life from in another country (Hochschild, 1995). The last viewpoint that Hochschild presents (1995) is that success is competitive, which is seen as achieving over someone else.

The American Dream Ideology is one piece of American culture that influences people in the United States. This research will utilize the framework of understanding culture created by Ann Swidler (1986) which sees culture not as values and preferences, but as shaped skills, habits and styles, and understands this alternative way of culture in three steps. Swidler (1986) first gives the image that culture is a “tool kit” comprised of diverse symbols that are used to process through life. Second, this perspective looks at the plans of action people take to order themselves. Lastly, Swidler (1986) looks specifically at how pieces of culture can be utilized to create these plans of action.

In a study of about life goals among multiethnic high school seniors (which includes a population of Filipino Americans), research showed differences in priorities in life goals, the perceived controllability in attainment, and perceived time frame of attainment (Chang, Chen, Greenberger, Dooley, & Heckhausen, 2006). Overall, these adolescents were generally optimistic about their future with a high belief that individuals have a chance of controlling their future (Chang et al., 2006). Many students shared the belief that these goals are attainable before the

age of 33, and their average long-term educational attainment goal was attending a 4-year college (Chang et al., 2006). Specifically looking at Filipinos in the study, they showed above average aspirations comparatively to the white and other ethnic minority groups, but average expectations to their life goals (Chang et al., 2006). This is important because this shows the possible effect the American Dream may have on Filipino immigrants and how they perceive their future.

### Filipino College Students

As defined by Tran (2018), the first generation is made up of immigrants who were born outside the United States. Tran's (2018) work found that 51.9% of first-generation immigrants ages 50 and older have graduated from college, and that number increased for the second-generation ages 25 to 50, becoming 55.8 % (Tran, 2018). Out of 18 different ethnic minority groups, the percentage of college graduates for Filipinos is the second highest next to Indians (people from the country India). This research shows higher amounts of social mobility among the second-generation immigrants compared to first-generation immigrants. In this study, social mobility will be defined as a positive, negative, or neutral, change in social status based on education, wealth, and occupation.

Ramakrishnan and Ahmad (2014) found in their research that 29% of Asian Americans have a bachelor's degree or higher, which is much larger than the other minority groups in the United States. Data from the American Community Survey showed that 40% of Filipinos have bachelor's degrees, and 8% have postgraduate degrees, which show higher rates of bachelor's degree educational attainment compared to other Asian sub-groups (Ramakrishnan & Ahmad,

2014). In comparison to the overall general Asian American population, 29% of people have a bachelor's degree, while 20% have a postgraduate degree (Ramakrishnan & Ahmad 2014).

There is not much research on the American Dream Ideology and Filipino college students, but there still is literature that discusses how the American Dream Ideology impacts college students of current society. A study done at the University of Michigan found that there are contradictions in the American Dream for the current generation of young adults in college (Wernet, 2016). The 85 young college students that participated in the study were propelled to earn college degrees, as they thought it was necessary to succeed, were fearful of their capacity to find future work, and were concerned of the lack of job opportunities (Warnet, 2016). Another study analyzed what college students at the University of South Carolina Aiken thought was the American Dream. The researchers found that 32 of the 35 participants discussed wealth and material goods when asked about the American Dream (Aronson, 2017). This study demonstrates that the pursuit of wealth is deeply ingrained in American life as an end goal for many individuals, regardless of race (Aronron, 2017). This study examined the gaps in the literature, examining specifically how race, immigration, and culture can impact the American Dream Ideology, and whether Filipinos specifically buy into the Ideology.

As of 2018, the University of Central Florida (UCF) reports having a total of 66,183 students attending the university, with 6.2 % of those students identifying as Asian and Pacific Islander ("UCF Facts 2017-2018"). That is a total of 4,013 Asian and Pacific Island students at the university. This number is comparatively smaller to other racial minority groups at UCF, with Black/African Americans comprising of 11.1% of the student population, and Hispanic/Latino comprising about 25% of the student population ("UCF Facts 2017-2018"). The

university also has public reports that share enrollment by classification and ethnicity (“Enrollment by Classification and Ethnicity,” 2018). Out of all Asian and Pacific Islander students, a total of 22.9% of students pursue a degree in Engineering and Computer Sciences and 16.6% pursue degrees in Health and Public Affairs (“Enrollment by Classification and Ethnicity,” 2018). Data also shows that the College of Business, College of Medicine, and College of Sciences each have about 13% of the Asian and Pacific Islander population (“Enrollment by Classification and Ethnicity,” 2018). In comparison, the Hispanic/Latinx population, have numbers like Asians and Pacific Islanders but still different in certain areas. The largest Hispanic/Latinx student population at UCF is in the College of Sciences with 19% of its students (“Enrollment by Classification and Ethnicity,” 2018). Engineering and Health and Public Affairs fall at 16.6% and 17.2% respectfully (“Enrollment by Classification and Ethnicity,” 2018). The numbers shared give context to the students that attend the university, and the racial composition of the campus. It is important to note that a higher number of Asian students are participating in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) comparatively to other racial and ethnic minorities.

## **Methodology**

### Method of Research

The Asian and Pacific Islander (API) student population at the University of Central Florida will be used for this research study, with a total API student population of 4,013 (“UCF Facts 2017-2018”). The university has over 700 registered student organizations that the researcher identified as a sample from which to recruit. One prominent organization is the Filipino Student Association, comprising of over 100 members who meet and come together to celebrate Filipino culture. Not every student in the organization is of Filipino descent, but it was suspected there are a good number of students who are. For this study, the researcher located Filipino college students in partnership with the Filipino Student Association. With snowball sampling, the researcher worked with the President of the Filipino Student Association to individually identify and recruit students to interview. The goal was to interview a minimum of three Filipino college students, and that goal was met. The rationale to utilize three participants was due to the time constraints of two months. Research participants had to meet the following criteria: (1) be second-generation immigrants from the Philippines, (2) attend UCF, and (3) be 18 years of age or older. Second-generation is defined here as being born in the United States with parents that were born in the Philippines (Rambaut, 2004). Selecting second-generation Filipino immigrants was to control the variable of life experiences people might experience from their origin country. When the Filipino Student Association President introduced the researcher to a potential participant, the researcher messaged the participant via text message and shared the opportunity to help him with the research project. When the participant agreed, the researcher



emailed them the IRB explanation of research to review and scheduled a face-to-face interview at an agreed upon time and location.

### *Research Design*

This research used qualitative methods, specifically interviews. Using snowball sampling, a total of 3 interviews with Filipino college students were conducted. The interviews were semi-structured with a total of 15 questions. Eight of these questions were gathering demographic data from the participants, looking at attendance at UCF, age, major, parental information, the origin of birth, gender identity, and places lived. Seven of the questions focused on what Filipino college students believe regarding the three tenants of the American Dream defined by Hochschild (1995). Questions 1 and 2 started the conversation with participants, looking at their core base beliefs on success and the American Dream. If needed, the researcher provided Hochschild's definition of the American Dream. Questions 3 to 5 provided insight into participants' thoughts on who pursues the American Dream and what it is. Questions 6 and 7 informed the researcher on how the participants think this dream can be achieved. The interview script can be found in Appendix B.

The researcher used a naturalist approach in the interviews. This approach allowed the researcher to gather authentic and multifaceted life experiences from participants who participated in this study. Individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted, lasting from 30 to 36 minutes. Since the interviews were based on the answers provided in the survey by the research participants, a semi-structured format was utilized as a guide for the discussion, but the participants had the freedom to naturally share their thoughts. These interviews were audio recorded with the researcher's micro-recorder, downloaded in the

researcher's computer and backed up into a password protected external hard drive. Audio recording the interviews allowed the researcher the opportunity to analyze what participants shared. The researcher transcribed the interviews which would be used through the results section to share participants' understanding of the American Dream and whether they buy into the ideology. Then the researcher used initial coding when reviewing the transcripts and completed one cycle of coding to conduct a thematic analysis that examines themes and patterns that arose in the experiences of the participants. The codes were listed on the margins on all the transcripts and were compiled in an Excel document. This excel document helped the researcher organize his thoughts and create a thematic analysis.

## Results

After interviewing the participants, transcribing the interviews, and coding the transcriptions, the data showed a diverse amount of information. Each participant also had different ages and educational backgrounds. Participant 1 was a 21-year-old female from Melbourne, Florida, with a major in sociology and minor in legal studies. Participant 2 was a 19-year-old female from Orlando, Florida, with a major in nursing. Participant 3 was a 19-year-old male from Jacksonville, Florida, with a major in mechanical engineering. Interviews are found in Appendix C, Appendix D, and Appendix E labeled respectively as Transcript 1, Transcript 2, and Transcript 3. Overall, there were three main themes that were present throughout the entire study. The first theme was, “Filipino Identity & Culture.” This was highlighted through the consistent discussions on family history, immigration stories, the prioritization of family, the act of passing culture down to children, and the detachment family. The second theme was, “education and career priorities.” This was highlighted by consistent conversations on, as Participant 1 coined, the career “Triad,” the careers of family members within this “Triad”, parental pressures for their children to pick specific careers, discussions in high school about where children should go in their careers, and economic wellbeing as it relates to supporting themselves and their families. The last theme highlighted was, “Perceptions of the American Dream.” This theme was rather diverse in responses, as each participant had a different understanding of the American Dream.

### *“Filipino Identity & Culture”*

Every research participant highlighted their Filipino identity and culture as important to them. All three research participants had a moment where they discussed their family history and what they were taught about their family’s immigration from the Philippines to the United States.

Participant 1 mentioned the concept of moving due to “better opportunities” in the United States, and Participant 2 phrased it as moving because there were, “more opportunities,” and only knew that his father got a job offer that prompted the family to move to the United States. Another noticeable similarity is how Participants 1 and 3 both feel like one of their parents has not disclosed the full immigration story. When asked about her family, Participant 1 stated in her answer, “a lot of my Filipino friends they know that much about their parents and like... I don't. It wasn't until recently I started learning more.” Participant 3 shared the same sentiment about his Mom by stating, “my mom doesn't really talk about her life in the Philippines that often with us so like I don't really know much about my Mom's life in the Philippines.’

Even though research participants may not have heard in detail how and why their families immigrated, and what life in the Philippines was like in the past, families consistently passed on Filipino culture to the children. This looked different for each participant, for example, Participant 1 shared that cultural wear, dances, and food were important for her mom to pass down, whereas Participant 3 discussed that he saw food and church as parts of his culture impressed upon him. Participant 2, on the other hand, mentions the culture that was passed down to her was more along with the idea of a hard work ethic, and a basic understanding of professionalism (i.e. not being late to appointments).

One concept that was passed down from parents to children in all three interviews was the prioritization of family as part of the Filipino culture. This concept can be connected to the perceptions of the American Dream, but all three participants mentioned the institution of family being taught as important in their lives. This idea also leads to the consistent concept of economic well-being regarding family. When sharing her father’s definition of success,

Participant 2 stated, “Dad's success would be that I'm making enough money to support him. I'm making enough money to support a family.” Participant 1 and 3 also shared statements that emphasized economic well-being regarding their families’ lives. These statements, however, were focused on how their parents or grandparents lived, not on how the participants lived. When Participant 3 explained why he ate a Filipino food at home a lot he stated, “...my dad always cooks Filipino cause he wanted to be a caterer, but then he was like, ‘That doesn't put money on the table, so I'll just do it at home.’” Participant 1 shared a similar experience when she shared a story about her grandfather in the Philippines. When explaining her grandfather’s life in the Philippines and why he immigrated, she said, “it was like a pretty big family and he just had so much time, you know, making money to provide and then he joined the military and that's how they ended up moving over.” One final similarity that all three research participants mentioned in some way was a detachment from family. Participant 1 stated that her family is emotionally distant but trying to become more open and honest with each other in terms of emotions. Participant 2 shared the experience of pushing away that value of prioritization from family, but later accepting that is important to her. Participant 3 provided a mixed answer when asked if his family was a good support system, sharing that he has good parents but not everything goes well with them all the time, relatively looking to his brother for insight and support.

### *“Education and Career Priorities”*

In all the interviews, concepts about participants’ education and careers consistently were discussed. Participant 1 mentioned that she was a STEM major at one point in her college career, but she switched to focus on the possibility of being a lawyer as that is a career, she is interested in pursuing but also something her family wanted her to do. When asked why her family wanted

her to become a lawyer she responded, “Oh, I hate anything that's medical, and then I am really bad at Math. From the "Triad" there's really only one that fits me.” After asking her to describe what this, “Triad” was in depth, she laughed and responded with, “You know, cause you're either a doctor, lawyer or engineer. I can't do Math [laughter] and I hate anything medical, so I'm just a lawy- I don't know.” At least one of these three careers/fields as the active educational and career aspirations was a consistent part of all the interviews. Other than doctor, lawyer, or engineer, a career in pharmacy, nursing, or the overall medical field were mentioned in interviews and it can possibly be inferred what Participant 1 sees as the doctor could be the overall field of medicine for some Filipinos.

All the participants had family members that either had or currently have careers in either medicine, law, or engineering. Participant 1 has a pharmacist father, and a software engineer mother. Participant 2 has an engineer father, and a mother that was previously a nurse but now is a cosmetologist. Participant 3 stated that both his mom and dad have careers in medicine and his brother is a pharmacist. Each participant shared that they felt some type of pressure to pursue one of the three fields, whether that is medicine, law, or engineering. Participant 1 felt pressured to pursue law. Participant 2 felt pressured to pursue engineering. Participant 3 felt pressured to pursue the medical field. Also, all the participants had thoughts and conversations about their future careers in high school as a conversation they had with their parents. Overall, these concepts of careers being specific to medicine, law, or engineering were connected to the concepts of economic wellbeing. Participant 1 shared her experience being told that careers in medicine or engineering always are hiring, insinuating a priority that she should pick a career where she will get a job. As mentioned earlier, Participant 2 shared her father's idea

of success for her being that she makes enough money to support him and her own family.

Participant 3 his idea of success is tied to, “having resources to keep moving forward.”

### “Perceptions of the American Dream Ideology”

Even though there are many similarities in culture, and in educational & career priorities, the perceptions of the American Dream Ideology were vastly different. Participant 1 shared an overall general distaste for the American Dream Ideology, thinking of it as a, “very white-washed dream.” She also described the imagery having a house with a “white picket fence,” and front lawn with, “a dog somewhere.” She literally says, “I hate the idea of the American Dream,” later commenting on its integration of capitalistic ideas, and its overall lack of understanding of bigger issues like colorism as she also states, “...it’s very much that mentality of like, ‘I don’t see color.’” Regarding her family’s perception of the American Dream, she gives two answers. First, she says “Yeah, I think they [her parents] know its bullshit.” Then later in that same explanation of her thought process, she says,

So, I think she [her mother] just really wants to believe in the American Dream, and I think her knowing how much progress she has made, to make- to... be able to get these resources for myself and my brother, she, she knows that it's like possible for us. She knows that she worked hard to make these achievements possible for us and that, we can, um if we want to. But I think it's also hard for her to ignore that. You know, it’s still very possible that somebody could come in and, like, fire me for "mysterious reasons"

[Laughter] You know? Like that kind of thing.

Overall, she believes that her mother and father want to keep the idea that if their children work hard like they did, their children too can be like their parents. When asked the difference between

the American Dream of success in comparison to a “Filipino Dream of success,” she shared that the Filipino Dream has more of a focus on family. After being told the American Dream Ideology as defined by Hochschild, Participant 1 expressed her hate towards the idea and shared her belief that it, “is an outdated and very privileged way of thinking of things.”

Participant 2 has a different thought process and family ideology. Her answer when defining the American Dream Ideology consisted of the concept of starting wherever you are, having the chance to experience more and have more. This is because the United States has more opportunities in comparison to other countries. She also shared that her family immigrated because of the American Dream and partially attributes the achievement of the American Dream related to the parents one has or lack of parents one has when growing up. When asked about how much she thought the American Dream was rooted in family, she shared that they overlap for her and family is deeply rooted in her definition of success and the American Dream. After being told the American Dream Ideology as defined by Hochschild, Participant 2 agreed with the statement.

Participant 3 fell in between having a criticism for the American Dream and agreeing with certain aspects of it. Throughout the interview, he was actively processing his own thoughts on the matter. When the American Dream Ideology was first mentioned in the interview, the participant shared that they never have thought deeply into it. His own perception of it was being separate from one’s family and making a name for yourself in a place one might not be familiar with. He continued explaining that he believes that everyone can achieve the American Dream, but it’s all in different ways. His family also believed in it and hope to pass it to their children. When asked the difference between the American Dream of success in comparison with the



“Filipino Dream of success,” he shared his perception of the American Dream as something an individual wants whereas the “Filipino Dream” is more family based and is what one’s family wants, not necessarily individual wants. Once told about the definition created by Hochschild, he shared that he can agree with it to some degree but believes there is more to it than hard work and efforts, attributing having solid support systems to be a large factor as well. From there he shared his own personal experience and understanding of what it’s like to have a positive social support system.

## **Discussion**

The inquiry of this study was to determine whether Filipino college students buy into the American Dream Ideology and to explore how this ideology might affect the “cultural tool kit” one has. The perspective taken when starting this research focused on how the American Dream Ideology affected Filipino college students, and whether they bought into the idea. Based on the data and the findings, the study flipped the script and highlighted how someone’s “cultural tool kit,” can influence the perception of the American Dream Ideology. The interviews suggested that Filipino identity and culture were part of the foundation regarding the emphasis on family that was in the definition of the participants’ American Dream Ideology. All three participants contrasted the American Dream Ideology as a form of success/attainment for the individual-self when they mentioned that their understanding of the Filipino Dream of success as rooted in the prioritization of family. This study highlighted that the Filipino identity and culture, as part of the “cultural tool kit,” made a noticeable effect on the American Dream Ideology. It was not the American Dream Ideology making a noticeable effect on Filipino identity and culture.

Even having similar backgrounds being second-generation immigrants, at the same university, with two Filipino parents, there was large diversity amongst the responses towards the beliefs of the American Dream Ideology. Consistent topics regarding people’s Filipino identity and culture were prominent throughout all three interviews, as well as their understanding of their career and educational priorities, but there were still large differences in people’s perception of the American Dream Ideology. The findings presented the concept of the American Dream Ideology as something created through socialization within the confines of one’s own culture. Based on the findings, the American Dream Ideology was not something that appeared in the

minds of the participants but was an idea that was taught and socialized throughout their lives. Not once did a participant say, “I was explicitly told this is what the American Dream is,” or anything along those lines. The American Dream Ideology has been an abstract concept that people just know exists and believe that their parents think exist.

Even though the sample size is three and this study did not produce data saturation, some of these findings are consistent enough to hypothesize some theories. Looking at all themes together holistically, the researcher can hypothesize that there are many aspects to someone’s life that create a person’s individual perception of the American Dream Ideology. What is certain based on the findings when asked about the American Dream Ideology, if one equates the prioritization of family as a large part of the Filipino identity and culture, it will then influence education and career priorities of a Filipino, which will then be a part of the formation of the perceptions concerning the American Dream Ideology. This unique perception for Filipinos is one where the American Dream Ideology also includes the institution of family as an additional tenant to the American Dream Ideology as defined by Hochschild. There are many other variables that can greatly affect the formation of perceptions regarding the American Dream Ideology, but due to the scope of this study, that inquiry was not possible. This is a large generalization, and continued research can analyze this more. Inquiry on sex and gender within the Filipino communities can add insight, as well as details on socialization at home and school can largely affect the formation of the perceptions concerning the American Dream Ideology. The gaps in the research have only widened creating more opportunities for inquiry.

## **Limitations**

As this research is part of an Honors in the Major Thesis completed by an undergraduate student, there were three main limitations that impacted this study. The first limitation was the time constraints. This research was conducted during the final year of the researcher's senior year at his undergraduate institution, with one semester focused on directed readings, and the second semester focused on becoming IRB approved, finding participants, interviewing participants, transcribing the interviews, coding the interviews, and drafting the thesis. Completing all those tasks within 3 months was challenging and created minimal time to code and analyze the research. These time constraints allowed the researcher to achieve only one cycle of coding, where it would have been optimal to achieve 2 cycles. Also, finding participants that were specifically second-generation immigrants from the Philippines took more than 3 weeks and created a time crunch in transcribing, coding, and analyzing interviews.

A second limitation was the lack of training the researcher had in qualitative research. This also can be attributed to the lack of time the researcher had to complete this study as he could have worked committee members to learn the basics if time allowed it, but none of the researcher's education in the UCF Bachelor of Social Work curriculum included in-depth qualitative training. In the short time period, the researcher worked on the thesis, he also needed to learn qualitative research methods on his own.

A third limitation was the natural bias the researcher invested in the research. The researcher comes from a Filipino immigrant family. Even though efforts were made for unbiased research, there will be a bias of perception and understanding coming from someone in the group compared to someone that might be out of the group.

## **Implications for Practice and Future Research**

This study may be of interest to both Social Work and Sociology practitioners and researchers, especially with social workers who work with Filipino Americans in clinical mental health settings. Cultural competency and humility are both important concepts when working with clients, and this research can help provide insight on the systemic structures that might influence and Filipino college students' concepts of success which also might create spaces of anxiety and discomfort from the stress and expectations put upon them. This understanding can help provide insight on techniques that social workers can utilize when assisting clients of this background and the parents of the children. For sociology research, immigration trends are always changing, and Asian immigration is continuing a trend of increasing. Also, with the push to disaggregate Asian American data to be less homogenous and more specific to individual Asian nationalities and ethnicities, this research can provide insight on specific socialization trends of Filipino Americans which might in turn influence other research on other Asian populations.

Future research should increase the sample size and analyze other variables that affect perceptions of the American Dream. Intersectionality is a large concept that was not highlighted in this study, but there are many windows of opportunity from sex and gender and other generational differences. Adjusting the methodology might produce different and informative results on the matter, from quantitative or mixed methods. In general, this American Dream Ideology research can be replicated to work with other populations, and it might help create new theories on how the American Dream Ideology permeates in society.

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## **APPENDIX A: IRB APPROVAL LETTER**



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

Institutional Review Board  
FWA00000351  
IRB00001138  
Office of Research  
12201 Research Parkway  
Orlando, FL 32826-3246

### EXEMPTION DETERMINATION

February 8, 2019

Dear Tiffany Lumpkin:

On 2/8/2019, the IRB determined the following submission to be human subjects research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review:	Initial Study, Category
Title:	The American Dream and the Filipino College Student
Investigator:	Tiffany Lumpkin
IRB ID:	STUDY000000028
Funding:	None
Grant ID:	None

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made, and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request so that IRB records will be accurate.

If you have any questions, please contact the UCF IRB at 407-823-2901 or [irb@ucf.edu](mailto:irb@ucf.edu). Please include your project title and IRB number in all correspondence with this office.

Sincerely,

Racine Jacques  
Designated Reviewer

## **APPENDIX B: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

### **Demographic Questions**

- Do you attend the University of Central Florida?
- What is your age?
- What is your major?
- Were both your parents born in the Philippines?
- Where were you born?
- What is your gender identity?
- Does your gender identity differ from the sex you were assigned at birth?
- Where have you lived and for how long in each location?

### **Semi-Structured Interview Questions**

- What does success mean to you?
- What does the American Dream mean to you?
- Do you believe you can achieve the American Dream and why?
- Who do you think achieves the American Dream and why?
- Do you believe your parents work towards the American Dream?
- Describe your beliefs on the way people can succeed in the United States.
- Describe your life goals and how they came to be.

## **APPENDIX C: TRANSCRIPT 1**

**Interviewer Angelo (A):** Hi Thanks again for coming today! Can I grab uh your email spelled out for me?

**Participant 1 (P1):** [Redacted]

**A:** Thank you so much! So, we will get right to it. First are a couple demographic questions um and first is: Do you attend the University of Central Florida?

**P1:** Yes

**A:** Okay. What is your age?

**P1:** I am 21.

**A1:** What is your major?

**P1:** Sociology with a Minor in Legal studies

**A:** Alright! Were both your parents born in the Philippines?

**P1:** Yes

**A:** Where were you born?

**P1:** Melbourne, Florida

**A:** What is your gender identity?

**P1:** I am a she her female

**A:** Does your gender identity differ for the sex you were assigned at birth?

**P1:** No.

**A:** Where have you lived, and for how long in each location?

**P1:** Um I have only lived here and Melbourne. For Melbourne it was up until I was 18 and then I have lived in Orlando since.

**A:** Um, perfect! Thank you! Alright!

**P1:** [Laughter]

**A:** So then, yeah, I'll get into the actual questions pertaining to um the research! So, first is, "what does success mean to you?"

**P1:** Okay I guess, what does success mean to me um, I don't think I am the kind of person that looks for anything like major I guess, like I don't look to be famous or anything I just to be able to, uh sorry. Live comfortably um without many constraints, so like if I need to pay my rent, I have a career that allows me to do that efficiently and easily. That kind of thing. Does that make sense?

**A:** It does make sense! Uh, so what do you think the American Dream means to you?

**P1:** Okay I guess, the American Dream I think... when I think of that, I think of a very white washed dream, I think? Like when I think of that I don't- I guess I would think of like the typical- okay from like my standpoint it would be like my parents moved to America, um, my mom is now a computer engineer - software engineer to be exact- at a big government company and my Dad is a pharmacist- pretty successful at it; and they live in like their own house that they can afford comfortably and they have like two kids, you know, and that kind of thing, they live like close to their grandparents so they still kinda have some sort of connection to their culture. And then expanding upon that, it's like the stereotypical white picket fence...

**A:** Yeah?

**P1:** [Laughter] A front lawn! Yeah that kinda thing.

**A:** Okay.

**P1:** There is a dog somewhere. [Laughter]

**A:** There's dog? [Laughter] okay

**P1:** I guess, yeah, I don't know think- oh sorry- being where I come from, I know what it is like to live beyond that. I don't really have an idea, I think, a solid idea what the American Dream is? I guess. Beyond what I have seen on like TV. Yeah. Does that make sense?

**A:** Yeah, did you watch a lot of TV like growing up, or not really?

**P1:** Um, sort of; I'd say when I like got to, like, maybe, like closer to, like middle school, Um, a lot of times my parents didn't get to spend too much time with me cause they were so busy working, so I would like live with my grandparents and they didn't have cable or anything so...

**A:** Ah, okay, were you with your grandparents as well not just like your parents you would say? Or was it like a mix of or was it predominately one or the other?

**P:** Yeah, I would say it was a mix.

**A:** Okay. It was a mix. Okay. Um okay, so I know that you're stating that you don't really know. Do you believe that you can achieve the- at least the definition you started saying like, that idealistic white picket fence with the dog type of thing American Dream and why, or why not, or again is that even not something you want to achieve?

**P1:** Um okay. I guess. Okay. As far as if I can I- given my resources, yes. Like I think I grew up fairly privileged, especially compared to a lot of people that come from like, like my background and my culture and stuff. I recognize I definitely have more opportunities than like say my girlfriend, or something. Um as far as if I want to- u- I guess it's a little more complicated. I think being Filipino American and Queer and a Woman- um- like I look at a lot of um like traditional Filipino women and it's like - you are the like stereotypical house wife. You like cook for like a fairly big family, and you're like are always cleaning and like all that other stuff. You know? That kinda thing. And I don't know if that's really me. Like for me it's like- when I think about my future, and like a family, I'm like, "I think I would rather adopt," which is definitely not like the traditional thing, umm. What was the other part of your question? [Laughter]

**A:** [Laughter] I'm just asking like, again rephrasing it, like, do you believe you can achieve the American Dream and why, or again like, or is it something that you even want to achieve because you were stating like the ideological like you have the dog and the white picket fence and all things of that nature... along those lines.

**P1:** Oh, okay so, yeah. I don't know. I don't think I could live in such a gentrified society to be honest and be comfortable in that, learning what I learned in college, you know, under my major.

**A:** Do you feel like you like became a different person like going through college um in like your understanding of the world and the American Dream has like shifted from like where you were in high school and where you are now?

**P1:** Yes? Okay. I think it's kinda complicated because you know, given my standpoint, queer, woman of color, it's hard for me to not see how I am treated differently in a lot of circumstances, like it's hard to not see that, but coming into college, it's like, I'm just learning more about why that is the way it is, and it's just like, both affirming, and it also kinda makes you more uncomfortable I guess? It's like, can I- It's like- you want to change things, but it's like, can you really? Like even now when I think about it, it's like, it's like, yeah I don't wanna do what I think of, like, the American Dream, or like, at least I don't think so, but is that like a risk you are willing to take because you've grown up under this idea that's what you need to do as like a person of color to like kinda not be treated as a person of color? Yeah. If that makes sense?

**A:** No, it does. It does. There is like the um you know, the always big issue, again with assimilation um into the like majority culture and sometimes like I can imagine what you are talking about here is that the American Dream um and believing in the American Dream, can be considered assimilation. Is that something you would say?



**P1:** Yeah. And I definitely think another thing is that like, like I'm not, I'm not a dark skinned Filipino, like I'm pretty light skinned, sometimes I am confused as like East Asian, which, although difficult, does have its advantages, so I think sometimes it's, I forget about like, colorism and the advantage I have in that. And it's sorta hard for me to... it's still like the mindset kinda like changes I guess when you think about that. Does that make sense?

**A:** Yeah, no it does! It does. Again, with color, it can really shift your life perspective in like how people are treating you and things in that nature. So, let's think here... Do you think though, because you kinda mentioned this a little bit, or maybe at least think about this, do you think there is like an American Dream and there is like a Filipino like dream of like success? And do you think they are different, or do you think they are similar or how do you think they kinda like interconnect or intersect.

**P1:** Yeah. Okay. I guess... I definitely do think there is a difference. I don't... I think for a lot of white people, right, cause when, especially think, when I'm speaking of like that cla- that... I'm thinking of like, you know, middle class, maybe upper middle class, you know, that kind of, like- or, not that kind, you know what I mean!

**A:** Yes! Yes! [Laughter]

**P1:** [Laughter]Um That demographic of... caucasians, um, I would say those kind of things are fairly similar I dont... i think a lot of times, it's hard for that demographic to realize how difficult it is, so Im not really, like Im obviously not white, but Im like, "do they still think of that as an American Dream this day and age?" or do they see it now, as like, like, you gotta be like a billionaire or something. Like does, is that the Dream, or is that just how a lot of them live? I guess? And then I guess, for, I would say for Filipinos, um, espically what I have seen a lot, is um, that that same idea that I was describing earlier um that I grew up with and then just like, I think more of a focus on family, I think? You know, um, filipinos are very like family oriented, and I feel like a lot of times when I heard that description of the American Dream, from like, like, just like other people of color I think there is not as much emphasis on that I think. Or at least that's what I have felt and experienced.

**A:** Um. Who do you think then achieves the American Dream in society and why?

**P1:** Hm. Okay. I think there is very little people that really achieve the American Dream. In my mind I feel like a lot of times people that are living the American Dream are born into it. Um I think my parents had a very rare success story especially given that we're from the... that we like, well, when they first moved to America they moved um, they were in Boston, so, there were some like advantages there, but being in the south I think in particular is... and being as successful as they are.. Is a little rare, um, I don't, I don't know who really achieves the American Dream. Can I come back to that?

**A:** Of course! Yeah. So like, okay, let's jump to this real quick, cause I think this is like this is a really big question, um but kinda like, going at the root of it, like, tell me again, how do you like

feel about just the phrase American Dream, like what does that just like mean to you, because I'm sensing there is piece of like frustration with it, there is piece where like... fascinating enough... and I can share with, the sociological perspective um, and give you a base definition. And maybe we can hear your thoughts on this. The American Dream is an ideology that is, "Anyone through hard work and efforts can be successful at whatever they want to be successful in." That's like the definition defined by Jennifer Hochschild

**P1:** Mhm

**A:** So, there's like that context; Do you like vibe with that, do you think you agree with that's what the American Dream means to you or like to other people or... what are your thoughts on that?

**P1:** Honestly... I just hate the idea of the American Dream [Laughter]

**A:** Okay so you just hate it. Okay. On the record you just hate the American Dream. Okay [Laughter]

**P1:** I think it's just... for one, the idea is outdated and very privileged way of thinking of things, um... I don't know if you, that's uh, I don't know if you have ever taken a Sociology class but uh...

**A:** Tell me more.

**P1:** Like for example, we're just learning about um, gosh what were we learning about, like Capitalism, so we're learning about the founding people of sociology, so like Marx, and Weber... I don't know how to pronounce his name... anyways, so we're talking about [Laughter] like the iron cage... and

**A:** The theory of rationalization, yeah?

**P1:** Yeah, so obviously the American Dream is very- has a lot of integrated Capitalistic ideas- and this, you know, again it's that idea of working hard, like, you can work super hard and get where you want but, a lot of times it's hard to ignore that, you know, you can work as hard as you want and then it can be taken away from you so easily. You know, like, thinking about - you can - I don't even know. [Laughter] I don't even know. I'm just like, "I hate that idea."

**A:** [Laughter] "I hate that idea"

**P1:** It's just so privileged, I think.

**A:** Okay. What would you wish society's mentality was then about success?

**P1:** I guess I wish it wasn't so white washed and we would... a little more honest about where everybody is in life, I guess? I think a lot of times when I think about that idea, it's um, how can I, it's very much that mentality of like, "I don't see color," I think. I think we should... be a little more honest than that? I don't... not that I think it's impossible for somebody that like comes from like a difficult, sorry I don't know why my finger hurts,

**A:** It's all good.

**P1:** [Laughter] um not that I don't think it's possible for somebody to like, let's say like, they are an immigrant, and they move here, I don't they like can't achieve the American Dream, but I think especially given the political climate we are in now, it's particularly hard. And I guess I wish we're- society was a little more honest about that, and we were a little more... responsible, and had more accountability for these definitions and like ideologies that are forced on us... yeah [laughter]

**A:** Okay... so you come from a sociological background...

**P1:** Yeah [laughter]

**A:** And you have expertise that can think critically about this stuff... So I would be curious to maybe frame this um from... and hear your perspective about your parents maybe then. Because they don't, I'm assuming, they have an education, right? You mentioned the things they are doing now, but they might not have such a sociological background, right?

**P1.** Mhm. [Nods head]

**A:** So, do you think they buy into the American Dream as well, or do you think that, again, they understand the bigger systemic pieces of it, or they just again are like you know they want the best for you?

**P1:** Um, I think, it's kinda difficult for them. I think they know it's kinda not uh achievable for all. [Laughter] I guess. I don't know if I'm allowed to cuss so [Laughter] I'm just going to be clean.

**A:** You can! You totally can!

**P1:** Yeah, I think they know its bullshit. [Laughter] Yeah, um, but I think especially with my Mom in particular, like, um, my Grandparents, my Grandpa in particular, he grew up as like a farmer in the Philippines and a fisherman um, and then he was jus- Oh! And she has three other sisters, so it was like a pretty big family and he just had so much time, you know, making money to provide and then he joined the military and that's how they ended up moving over. So she kinda grew up from like that very difficult background, and especially where she is today compared to that is like, it's like crazy. So I think she just really wants to believe in the American Dream, and I think her knowing how much progress she has made, to make- to... be able to get

these resources for myself and my brother, she, she knows that it's like possible for us. She knows that she worked hard to make these achievements possible for us and that, we can, um if we want to. But I think it's also hard for her to ignore that. You know, its, it's still very possible that somebody could come in and, like, fire me for "mysterious reasons" [Laughter] you know? Like that kind of thing. And as far as my Dad, um he's a little more... honest, I think with um how he views life, or whatever. Like when he hears like news about like people being deported, or whatever, um, he's like very um, honest about being scared, very honest with his opinions on it. How he just hates, [laughter] our President, that kinda thing, um but I think he also is just like he wants... he and my mom just want to keep this idea that we just need to work hard and we can also be like our parents.

**A:** What made them, your... what made your family move from the Philippines to the United States? Have they ever shared that with you?

**P1:** Yeah. I know, like, like I said, my Mom, um, they... they moved because of my Grandpa on that side of the family was in the military and they stayed because they were like better opportunities. Um that kind of thing. Although my Mom when she moved here, she would, like uh, when they officially moved here she was the oldest and she was already in college at this point, um, she went to like Boston College or something. Yeah, so she was like- or not , "or something," that's literally where she went. [Laughter] Um, so they couldn't move, and then all of her sisters are like fairly close in age so they were about to go off to that. Um, with my Dad um, I don't really know too much about his background? I know my Grandpa from that side of the family was also in the military... this is also the Grandparents I spent like actual time growing up with. Um, yeah. He was also in the military and I think they just stayed here. Um, they in particular stayed in Boston, um... never... I don't... They don't really share much um my family is pretty private so it's a little trickier for me to answer. I know they moved to Florida in particular because of my Dad's job, because he's a pharmacist and... Yeah serves a lot of old people [laughter] old people.

**A:** Did they meet each other in the United States, or did they meet each other in the Philippines?

**P1:** Mhm! Um, they met in Boston! I can't remember the whole story... somehow their parents already knew each other... Oh! My family is very involved in the uh Filipino community, no matter what state they are in. [laughter] So they met through that and then when my mom came here, she also started the Filipino organization at Boston College with her and her friends. So... They just continued through that.

**A:** Are you involved in any of the Filipino organizations here on campus?

**P1:** Yes. I am!

**A:** Is your Asian Identity, you would say important to you?

**P:1** Yeah! Definitely! Um, I learned a lot about Filipino history because of my brother. He's a lot more East Asian looking- or passing- than I am. Um, we're also that kinda of Filipino that has like Chinese blood.

**A:** Okay. Somewhere down the line type of thing? Yeah.

**P1:** Yeah. um, so for him, that was his way of like really connecting because he just does not look Filipino. But in terms of like, like, cultural wear and like dances and food and stuff, like, my mom in particular was like, very- that was very important for her kids to know about, so that's kinda where I got my connection to my culture from.

**A:** What do you think makes you family a little different than other Filipino families when it comes to culture and understanding like concepts like the American Dream?

**P1:** Um. Okay. I definitely didn't... um it's a little complicated, but it... my mom and I have always had a... difficult relationship. So, I didn't grow up like a lot of um Filipino daughters. Like, especially because I'm the younger sibling, so I didn't have to like cook to provide for the family and I didn't have to change nobody's diapers or anything [Laughter] so there's that. Um, my family, I think because my parents spent so much time working when I was younger, we're just not very close. We're all a little emotionally distant; it wasn't until, um, my brother and I started going to college- my brother is seven years older than me- that my family, particularly my parents, have been a little more like, um, pushy about, um, trying to be more open and honest with each other in terms of emotions. Um, so I guess there is that. Like when I talk to other people, they know like both their parents like full story about moving here and how they grew up. They're like parent's ex partners [laughter].

**A:** Wow, that's lot of information. yeah [laughter]

**P1:** It's funny cause there is a lot of like um, a lot of my Filipino friends they know that much about their parents and like... I don't. It wasn't until recently I started learning more. So, mhm!

**A:** Do you ever feel like your family, um, being here in the United States that are influenced by the American Culture and they changed, um, kinda how they go about things versus how they did in the Philippines, or, um, do you think they always like maintained Filipino Culture and like their values of being a Filipino?

**P1:** Um, I think moving here it did change...? Obviously, I won't know for sure. Um. They both had, like- like I vaguely remember somethings my Dad would tell me about growing up- they both had pretty difficult lives in the Philippines, um, and then especially when they both first moved here, I think they're both kinda um, a little jaded [laughter] and very on guard about their culture. Um, so I think to some extent, like they, it did definitely change and like adapted um especially, especially with my Mom, um, yeah, cause I'm a little, little Filipino woman she had to be certain of like orientalism against me and like that kinda of thing. Um, but I think they try so hard to stay connected to their culture, and hence why Mom wanted me to learn so much

about it, um, but I think it's kinda difficult for them. Yeah. Yeah. Um, my Mom's first couple years of college, like, cause my family was, or, her side of the family was still moving over so, she spent a lot of time in Boston in College kinda by herself in America, so, I think she in particular is just like kinda lost in her identity a little bit. So. Yeah...

**A:** So... let's... I'm curious to hear your beliefs. Can you describe your beliefs in a way you believe people can succeed in the United States, and how do you think those beliefs came to be?

**P1:** Ah okay. I guess. Hmmm. Aside from being born into it... I guess depending on... your social location. A lot through... education, I guess? Like, I have the means to go to university as opposed to community college, so not only am I gaining this education, but I am meeting all the people that have had similar education and can have helped me worked up from there. Um, like for example, okay, I think White people can work hard to get where they want, but I think with people of color we need to build a community to give each other accountability to have people see us as like worthy of success. Does that make sense?

**A:** No, it does!

**P1:** Yeah. like we need to like almost fight in like numbers I guess.

**A:** Cause visibility isn't there as much, whereas with the majority, right, like, they don't have to think about that, but again in the minority group, like, having bigger numbers makes it more noticeable. Does that sound correct?

**P1:** Mhm. Like, I don't- like I didn't get my first internship or job or anything until I started like focusing on organizations that like focus on Asian American / Pacific Islander issues or like LGBT issues or anything like that. So, if I didn't with like minority-oriented groups, especially because of my job is kind of, or my career is kinda difficult to get a job in. If I didn't- if continue down my path of like not like looking at those, I think I wouldn't have gotten like my first internship or job or anything. Um, I used to be STEM Major, umm..

**A:** Mhm, and why is that?

**P1:** [Laughter] Why is that? Oh God. Oh, why did I change or why did I start?

**A:** Why did you start with a STEM major then?

**P1:** Oh, I used to love Chemistry, but I just stopped loving it... um and then I switched because, I just, um, Crime, Law, and Deviance was my minor and then I just loved Sociology more. Um...

**A:** Did you ever feel pressured to go into a STEM Major or it actually was just a natural thing- you just liked Chemistry?

**P1:** Um, I just liked Chemistry, but actually, I always been wanting to go into law. So, yeah. That was kinda my thing. I don't know why I was STEM and Law but... I had issues, I don't know. [laughter] I guess I must have cause that's kinda crazy to do. Um, no, but uh, yeah, I have always wanted to do law and that's my forced upon me thing. Like I wasn't forced to be a doctor, but my thing was forced to be a lawyer.

**A:** Your family wanted you to become a lawyer?

**P1:** Mhm. Which, it worked out for me because I wanted to be a lawyer.

**A:** Why do you think your family wanted you to become a lawyer?

**P1:** Oh, I hate anything that's medical, and then I am really bad at Math. From the "triad" there's really only one that fits me.

**A:** Wait, talk about the triad though, what do you mean the "triad"?

**P1:** [laughter] You know, cause you're either a doctor, lawyer, or engineer. I can't do Math [laughter] and I hate anything medical, so I'm just a lawy- I don't know.

**A:** Wait, so like is this just a Filipino thing? Like the "Triad" thing?

**P1:** Oh no, that's like any like, Asian American Identity. [laughter]

**A:** Do you think this whole triad thing has anything to do with the American Dream?

**P1:** Oh yeah, for sure! Yeah, like you know, they're like, "Oh go into medical! They are always hiring!" Okay, like sure? I guess. "Engineers! They always need Engineers." My mom still wants me- or, I guess she kinda gave up- but she still wanted me to pick up a computer engineering minor or something like that, or um, programing, because she believes that like if sociology-like, first of all programming is everywhere, which she is not wrong about, and that if Sociology doesn't work out for me then I could always do programming. Um, but I just really don't want to [laughter] like my GPA just could not just handle that. Oh, so yeah, like I definitely do think that plays into a lot, I would say, that it's like, yeah! I guess that should have been included in my idea of like the American Dream.

**A:** It's okay! It's, again, a natural interview. It's fine! So, I kinda already discussed this but I want to hear this again, describe your life goals and how they came to be? So, let's elaborate a little more because you're talking about the triad- like you knew about the Triad thing growing up. For me I'm like, "what are you talking about?" How early do you remember hearing about how, like, you should become like a lawyer or you should become one of those three in your lifetime? How early did you start hearing that, how prevalent was it, what was that like growing up?

**P1:** Oh. Well, my brother is seven years older than me, so he started going to college when I was in like third grade, so, I've learned everything about University since about third grade. Um, I guess I was also a big part of the American Dream- got to go to college. Specifically, or, hopefully, not community college- not that I have anything against it- that's just the idea [laughter] Um, yeah. So, I guess I always kinda heard about that. As far as being a lawyer in particular, I think around the same time I would think so? I think it was, I don't think it was as pushed on me until maybe high school. Yeah...

**A:** Okay. So, like when you were in elementary or middle school, your family didn't really pressure you or push that to you at all?

**P1:** I think most of the pressure was like, "You need to think about college." [laughter] But as far as a particular career path, that was... maybe in high school. I would think most people would have that experience in high school, but I don't know.

**A:** It would be different for many people. So... okay! I guess, let me think here, I'm trying to think if there are any other questions. Oh! Touching upon this real quick- What do you think about community college? Do you feel like that's a part of the American Dream, or is that something that you think isn't included in the traditional belief of success and going through life?

**P1:** Sadly, I don't think it's a part of the traditional belief. I personally don't think there is any issue with community college. So, I wish I went to community college. Um, I wish I did- what is that called- dual enrollment? Yeah, instead of IB, um, because I think it's uh- I gue- like this doesn't necessarily have to be as much of an issue for me as other people- I am very wary about my privilege in this sense, but you know, it saves a lot of money, you still get a good education, you still get um all the networking and resources, uh, hopefully before you can go to like University to get a higher degree, or whatever so... But no, I don't think that's part of the traditional idea of the American Dream [laughter]

**A:** Ah okay. Do you have any thoughts or other comments about this whole topic at all before we end this?

**P1:** Nah, I think I'm good, I don't know? [laughter]

**A:** You don't know? [laughter] okay, alright then. Well thank you so much again for your time I really appreciate it. And then, just to let you know again, what's going to happen is, I am going to transcribe this, right, I am going to type this all up, I'm going to try and analyze it. I'm going to analyze it with the three other interviews, and then I will let you see the analysis and then grab your feedback if you have any thoughts about it. Okay? That's why I have your email. Once I send that to you, we are all good to go, and I will delete your email.

**P1:** Okay!



**A:** Thank you so much! I really appreciate it! I will let you know!

**P1:** Okay!

[End Interview]

## **APPENDIX D: TRANSCRIPT 2**

**Interviewer Angelo (A):** Could I get your email spelled out for me please?

**Participant 2 (P2):** [Redacted]

**A:** Perfect! Thank you so much! Alright, I have a couple demographic questions, and then we will go into the semi-structured interview. First, do you attend the University of Central Florida?

**P2:** Yes, I do

**A:** What is your age?

**P2:** I am 19

**A:** What is your major

**P2:** It would be considered pre-nursing, but in general it is just nursing.

**A:** Were both your parents born in the Philippines?

**P2:** Yes.

**A:** Were where you born?

**P2:** I was born here in Orlando.

**A:** Does your gender identity differ from the sex you were assigned at birth?

**P2:** No

**A:** What is your gender identity

**P2:** Female

**A:** Where have you lived, and how long in each location?

**P2:** So primarily the way I would describe it, is that my base, or where I primarily grown up is here in Orlando. My base has been permanent my whole life for all 19 years, but I travel for long periods of time. Growing up I went back to Philippines quite often, maybe every year, even two years? As I grow up- as I grew older, um, those times became a lot less in length and it was more like 3 years and 4 years. And I spent a lot of time in Texas. Usually my whole summer would be in Texas because my older brother lives there it was the only time where we could bond and things of that sort.

**A:** Do you have a lot of family there other than just your brother?

**P2:** No, it's just, um my, the clos- like, my immediate family, uh we try and stay as close as possible.

**A:** Alright then, thank you for answering those. Okay, now into the questions pertaining to the topic at hand. My first one to you is: I would love to hear what success means to you.

**P2:** Hmmm.

**A:** You can take your time by the way.

**P2:** [laughter] Um I think success means that you are stable and happy. So of course, money doesn't mean everything, but money sure does help. Cause you need money to put food on the table and have a roof over your head. So, for me success is that, I am able to eat. And I am able to have a house over my head, maybe do few vacations, every so often in a year and um, just not have to worry about money.

**A:** That sounds like, um, would you say that's like life goals for you, to be able to worry about money, or what would you say would be your life goals?

**P2:** My life goals would be more pertaining to like freedom. So, like growing up in a typical Filipino household, my parents were rather on the strict side, um so, they didn't necessarily manage what I do, but they micro manage. So, they would, [sigh] I mean, even now I live still live with my parents and so I have curfew as a nineteen year old which I find is uh, [laughter] not so cool, but um, like freedom for sure.

**A:** When I use the phrase American Dream, the American Dream Ideology, first and foremost, have you ever heard of it?

**P2:** Yes.

**A:** Okay. What does that mean to you? American Dream, that phrase.

**P2:** I think the American Dream is that you started from wherever you did, and you gained more as in you have more, you experienced more, you tangibly have more, um and with the American Dream it's like, you were able to do that because you came to America because there's more opportunities here.

**A:** You mentioned the quote, you want to be able to put food on the table. Where have you heard that from, and where has that notion you think has come into your envision of success?

**P2:** So, growing up- a lot of things I will say is because when I was growing- my Mom and Dad, they came from relatively impoverished, um, beginnings. And so, they never really knew when they're, at least growing up, before they were adults. They didn't really know when their next

meal was. Mom, not so much, but my Father definitely was like, questioning like, "am I going to have dinner tonight," and, "am I going to have breakfast in the morning?" So, I think that's where it ties in, like I said, where success is, you're not worried, you're very stable as to where you are.

**A:** How much do you think that definition of success that you've been able to create for yourself and the American Dream Ideology, how much do you think that overlaps?

**P2:** A lot personally for me because I personally never had to worry about if I was having food on the table, but for sure I have seen like a lot of growth within my family, as I have lived at home. And so, my mom and dad came to America because of, like, the American Dream, and then they instilled in me to do things and prepare myself for a future that I will be successful. So I feel like, the American Dream was like a stepping stone into like how I would soon later now define success.

**A:** Do you think your family fully believed in the ideology that coming into the United States would be a better life than it was in the Philippines?

**P2:** Yes.

**A:** Do you believe in yourself in that you can achieve the American Dream?

**P2:** Yes.

**A:** And why is that?

**P2:** Um, I [pause] I feel like the way that I was raised and the things I experienced as well as the things that I have learned from being told and the little things that I do now will cause me to have success. Uh little things from like, you know, don't wait till the last minute, or, you know, don't be late to things, like I feel like that set me up for success.

**A:** How much do you think hard work is a part of success and the American Dream?

**P2:** I think I would say it's like a good 75%

**A:** What do you think the other 25% is?

**P2:** Definitely working, like, efficiently, because there is no point in, like, working really really hard, it's like, for an exam, like you're studying really really hard on the like, you know, exam three, but the exam was on, you know, exam 4, or on chapter 4. So, you have to efficiently know what you're doing and spending your time wisely.

**A:** So, who do you think in the United States achieves the American Dream, and why? And who do you think doesn't achieve the American Dream and why?

**P2:** [Pause] specifically I don't know if I could answer who or who cannot. I do- I can say that, people who are able to achieve the American Dream are people who are having those two qualities of working hard and also working efficiently in that they are not just waiting for somebody to hand it to them. So, the reason I cannot say who or- yeah specifically who would be like successful with the American Dream is because, I mean it's easily seen that you know, or it's like very widely seen that, you know somebody who was living in poverty grew to be a billionaire. But at the same time, like, it's still an American Dream when you are some, like, more fortunate than others. You have that money and you actually have that credibility behind your name before you even get started in the field, but it's still you who worked to get to a certain spot. So, that's why I didn't, I couldn't really answer exactly who could achieve it.

**A:** Maybe to rephrase the question to fit a little better is like, what types of people do you think achieve the American Dream and what types of people don't achieve the American Dream? You started partially answering that, but do you have any extra thoughts rephrasing the question?

**P2:** Hm, just for the fact that it's like, in addition, it's like you don't have also like- there's not a beginning or an end to when you can start the American Dream as well. I feel like unfortunately sometimes growing up the experiences and the parents you have or the lack of parents that you have determines how you go about achieving the American Dream. Um, so, although one might have grown up to be an adult already, whatever age that would usually be, um, it doesn't mean that they can't still learn those, um, those traits to be successful in the American Dream.

**A:** Do you think your background with your Filipino culture, the way you were raised at home, gives you a little bit more of an edge versus maybe your colleagues that might be American or raised here in the United States, um, of a predominately let's say white household? Do you think there is a different in culture that affects people's success in the American Dream?

**P2:** For sure, yeah. Um, I- even though a lot of it can be stereotypical, stereotypes had to come from some kind of truth, um, and I do believe that Asians and, primarily because I know of the culture, the Filipino culture, um, they're a lot harder on their kids as far as being successful. Um, obviously there is not only one type of Filipino parent, there's not one type of American parent and sometimes your typical Filipino parent can be more similar to an American than, you know, their next-door neighbor Filipino family. Um, but, yeah for sure, being Filipino I- or, even just like generally like Asian like, it, there were stereotypes from the outside world that were put onto me that I wanted to challenge and be like, "Yeah I'm this way," or, "o I'm this way," and there's also like stereotypes within the Filipino community that they tried to put on me that I was like, "no, I'm going to do it my way," and, I- to sum it up yes, I do think that being from a Filipino background having that Filipino culture did give me an edge.

**A:** So overall, how do you think race and ethnicity might affect people's journey in achieving the American Dream, or at least your definition of the American Dream?

**P2:** I think race plays a huge part, because race can be very negative as well can also be on the other side be very positive. Um, when you m- I feel like when your mixed race, it can either

hinder you or it can also um, kinda elevate you giving that edge as well depending how the person takes it, um, basing it off their personality and again, things they have experienced prior hand. Um, as well as regardless if they are Asian, or American, or European um different cultures have- give you different experiences and there is also always negatives and positives, there is pros and cons to every culture. Um, so yeah.

**A:** How like - You've talked about you traveled a lot, do you feel like you've had a sense of, um, learning of other people's cultures, and what other cultures do you think you have you learned about other than like, maybe um, the Filipino culture?

**P2:** Yeah, I have learned a lot about Asian culture within it, cause, um, being Asian, uh, growing up I liked to flock with other Asian to begin with, and so, um, I learned how we are all similar, but we're all very different as well. And then, travelling around America, even within America they have their own cultures, and then I traveled in Europe for like a few months at a time in different times of my life, and um, learned about cultures there by doing homestays and even just experiencing like being in public with um all these different cultures, um, and friends, I mean, UCF is huge and UCF has a diverse population for sure and even just like within this, like, large campus there's like small little worlds that you get to like experience with every person you've met. So, going back, it's like, it's really interesting, I'd don't know how to say it other than like comparing, um, my culture to others that I've experienced / learned about things that I feel like can aid me later on.

**A:** Can you give me some examples of, um, specific things that you think you have learned that can aid you in the future?

**P2:** Um, so, growing up I was always pushed to be a family person. I never really got to make that choice, um, and so as I was like going, through puberty and experiencing other people, um, I kinda pushed away from family. I was like, "nah, they are just too much, I want to be with friends." And so, my Freshman year in high school, and um, I did a homestay in Germany- no, Austria, I'm sorry- after, um, after their morning classes they can go home for lunch, and it showed me like not even just that, like even when they are home like, they have to eat lunch, and dinner, and breakfast together as many times as possible. And it's like, they weren't necessarily pushed into it, they were given the choice, but be- I feel like also because everyone was doing it kinda became a norm. And it kinda brought me back to like, "oh wow, okay, maybe my parents had a different way of showing it, but it's like yeah, I learned that you know family is important and you should try keep your family close. And so, when I came back, I came back with like, this like, refreshed idea of what family meant and what it meant to be close to family, not just because you have to be but because you want to be close with your family.

**A:** How much do you think your definition of the American Dream is rooted in family?

**P2:** A lot. Um, so going back to earlier, how I do put like success and, um, the American Dream they like overlap a lot, um, the way I learned those, um, the meaning what I became, what I became to like define success and the American Dream was very highly rooted, or very deeply

rooted with family; I learned a lot of what it meant to be successful from them, um I mean obviously, uh, exterior like, outside of the household I did learn what- like success could mean and what American Dream could mean and I like integrated that as well but majority of it was like deeply rooted in my family.

**A:** Kinda jumping um, to a different topic, but I am sure it will still connect with family, um, but why did you pick nursing to be your degree?

**P2:** [Laughter] Okay. So, when I was younger, uh, most girls wanted to play with Barbies and with dolls, and with dollhouses and wear pretty dresses and um, I always gravitated towards the stethoscope, and the doctors kit and doing things of that sort? And so, I don't know why, but that was always my thing. Like Dani, oh Dani is going to be a doctor- Dani is going to be this. And I feel like even though I chose on my own, I would presume that I was gravitating towards a stethoscope, um, I feel like my parents like egged me on. It was like, "oh yeah you're going to be a doctor, you're going to be a doctor!" And um, as I grow older, I was like, "Okay I'm going to be a doctor! I'm going to be a pediatrician because I love kids." That was another thing that I liked. I loved my baby cousins. I loved all the kids. They're all old now! But it's okay, um, but yeah, they all grow up and I was like, "I'm going to be a pediatrician. "And then like middle school I like really got serious and was like, "Okay, how am I going to go through high school. What am I going to do to become a doctor?" Uh, that was really instilled in me also from my parents, but a lot of it was like me wanting to do that and figure it out. Um, I was very like independent as a kid. [Laughter] and so I was like, "12 years? 14 years? Oh no, no no no no no, what's the nearest thing to a doctor." And I was like- my Mom was like, "well you could do nursing?" And I was like, "okay, I could be a nurse." Nursing it like what, four years? I could do it. So, eventually, I uh, once I got into high school I was like, "okay nursing." Um, but I will say like, my senior year I think I got like my first year C ever, um, in one of my classes. As so I like sat myself down and I was like really devastated I was like, "what? what went on? I was trying my hardest," and then it really made me question if I wanted to be a nurse. And so, I looked up volunteering jobs seeing if I really wanted to do this, and uh, through the experiences that I gained from volunteering in like hospital setting or a clinic, uh, setting. I was like, re-like re-solidified that I was like, "Yes, okay I know I need to be a doctor. I want to be a doctor." And then from there I was like, "Yeah I was always pretty solid about being a doctor. There's been, again, like patches like that where I would question if I'm even- even though I wanted to be a, a nurse- I, like, I always got like re-like solidified that, yes, I'm going to be a nurse.

**A:** Are there any other careers that your family tried pushing you when you were younger?

**P2:** Oh yeah. So, growing up I was really good at math and so they were like, "oh you're going to be an engineering! You're going to be an engineer!" and so I tried that out in high school, I did IT work and I was like no, no no [laughter]. I have to go through how many more classes in math? Like no [laughter].

**A:** [Laughter] Your family, what do they do? What does your mother and father do then for a living?



**P2:** So, as of currently my Mom is a hairstylist and my father is an engineer. Um, and I say currently now because, my Dad has always been an engineer, but my mother has been, uh, multiple things beforehand. So, when she originally got here, she actually went for nursing and she became a nurse. She was a nurse for a year and then she was like, "yeah, no, this is not the job for me." yeah, she actually wanted to be a lawyer, but her parents, like, forced her to be a nurse because that's all they knew. And so, she went on being a nurse; she ended up quitting and, uh, she was looking around and then she looked at cosmetology. She liked the idea of individuality and being able to express what you want to express through, like, the art of, like, doing other things of like the hair and makeup and making people feel pretty. Um, she also liked the idea of, like, being able to control her schedule so she went into cosmetology and then from there she became a hair stylist.

**A:** How much do you think, like- there is a common theme right, that uh, you were sharing that Filipino culture can be really controlling over their kids. Do you agree with that?

**P2:** Oh yeah for sure.

**A:** Okay. How much do you think that benefits Filipinos, or how much do you think it actually hurts Filipinos and where do you think kinda between the both of them it goes?

**P2:** Um, the same thing as I said earlier, I can't specifically say for all Filipinos that it's going to be, um, a good thing or a bad thing. I think it definitely depends on the kid, on the child, on the adult. Um, and especially like their personalities, how they play with, being told what to do, or even little things like trying to, like, tell them like, "Hey, you should probably chose that instead of that," and like, um, I have seen the extremes of both where people have grown up with the structure and their very timid or they're very like, "Okay I'll go whatever with the flow," and I have also seen, um, people go to the other side and be like, "Nah, I'm a rebel, I'm going to do what I want. I don't care what you say, and I can do-" I can't even take people who are trying to be ahead of me or above me. Um, and then there's you know, obviously in between. Personally, I needed the structure, but at the same time I wish they weren't so structured with me. Um, I noticed that because I was the girl there was an additional, like, structure and I was the only girl. Whereas like, my older brother he was able to do not necessarily what he wanted, but his structuring was a lot less than mine then it was me, and then my youngest brother, oh, he's able to do whatever the heck he wants to do. So [laughter] I mean honestly, he could get away with murder if you let him.

**A:** [Laughter] Really? Wow. Do you think that your brothers might have a different perspective on the American Dream, or do you think it's shared amongst the three of you?

**P2:** Oh yeah. So, my older brother, he is my half-brother. He is my Mom's kid, uh, with her previous husband. Um, and then me and Eli, are from both the same Dad and Mom. And so, his father was very wealthy. Uh, he was American, like White and very successful and, um, I feel like John's interpretation of success is much different than mine. He has told me that, um,

success to him is like, being able to be a CEO, be able to make X amount of money, and do whatever I want to do. Eli, on the other hand, although he is young, he is about to turn 14. Like, "you little baby." Um, he's forming what American Dream is like, and I feel like he's in that generation where he's like, "Oh I'm just going to, you know, be a gamer."

**A:** Oh?

**P2:** And then yeah, he wants to be a gamer right now. And he wants to, like, work minim- like, work the least amount that's possible, and get the most amount of money. Um, then like, there's me where I've said what success means and, um, I, I just find it interesting that even though their ideals are different they both centered it around money. And I'm focusing more on, like, happiness and freedom. I just thought that was interesting like when I was talking to them about specifically what success meant to them.

**A:** So, when we talk about the American Dream Ideology, um, I'm glad some of these questions before, um, to hear your, your just straight out answers. Cause I'll give you what the sociological, um, definition is based on one person, um, who like researched it, and it is the idea that like, um, "Any person in the United States can achieve the goals they want to achieve by their own hard works and efforts." Um, how do you feel about that statement? Do you fully resonate with that or do you have qualms with that? What are your thoughts on that?

**P2:** I completely agree with that. Yeah, um, like I said before, it depends on the person. It depends on the personality. Also, it's like, I can't judge what your success means by my definition of success. And so, if success means that, "Hey, you know what, I don't need that much money, I just want to, like, live and do what I want to do." Yeah, go for it! Like, if that's what your success is and that's how hard you want to work, then, I mean- I'm guessing you can't have any profanity in this?

**A:** No, it can! It doesn't matter! This is the second time people are like, "I don't know if I can put it on the record." Like, no, like, again it's not- your name is not tied to this, so you can say whatever you want.

**P2:** Yeah. The biggest thing that everyone knows that I say is like, "Whatever you eat, don't make me shit." So, it's like, whatever you do doesn't bother me. If you want to go out and do what you want to do, go, I am fully supportive of it.

**A:** Wow. Thanks for sharing all that. I really appreciate it.

**P2:** [Laughter]

**A:** Um, can you tell a little more about your family system? You mentioned that you have two brothers and then you have your Mother and your Father. There was, um, it sounds like, your older brother comes from another husband. Um, did you have aunts and uncles you were close with? What does that look like?

**P2:** So, my father's side of the family, practically everyone's here, meaning- um, before his parents died, both his parents were here. All his siblings are here, um, including him- there's 9. Whereas my mother's side of the family, only she was the one who came over. Um, and the rest of them are still back home in the original family house they grew up in. And so, I'm very close with my Aunties. Like, sometimes I'm like, oh, I'm a little too close to them [laughter] but yeah, all my Aunties, all my cousins, second cousins, and third cousins, um, and I, so like I mentioned growing up I pushed away family. But, what I mean by that, I pushed around, I pushed away my initial family. As in my Mom, my Dad, my brothers, um. But I grew closer to my Aunties growing up. Uh, during time I was pushing my initial family out. And so, I got really close and I learned a lot from them. And then when I came back down, it was like, refreshing, to like learn things from my parents again and learn like, and experience like what it is to have a younger brother and older brother again. So that was kinda cool.

**A:** Do you feel like any of the things your Aunties taught you was related to success or how you can achieve success?

**P2:** Oh yeah.

**A:** What were some of those things?

**P2:** Um, so to contrast, my Mom was very, "Work hard. Work- do this do that and you will be successful." Um, my Aunties actually also instilled in me that, you know, yeah, it's great that you're going to make 100,000, but what's the point of working all the time and then not doing what you actually want to do. Like, yeah, you enjoy your work, you enjoy being a nurse, but, um, at least for me there's more than just working. Like, yeah, enjoy your job, you get your money, but, um, I want freedom. I want to travel the world and experience more things than just work. So, yeah, my Aunties, that's the biggest thing my Aunties taught me, like, "Happiness. Be happy. Be happy with what you want to do." That success.

**A:** Would you say you look up to your Mom and your Dad by any chance?

**P2:** Oh yeah. Um, I do look up to both of them. I - the biggest thing that I, like, learned throughout the years is that, you know, Mom and Dad might not always be right but, like, their intentions were always good. Their intentions were always to help you be successful- help me... like, be able to do what you want later on in life. Um, whether that is- personally for me I'll go - whether that's, like, travelling or for my older brother meaning growing, uh, climbing the corporate ladder or Eli being... a Youtuber [laughter] like, I looked up to them and the biggest thing that I found is that, you know, they are who they are. You know, like, I can't change my Mom, my Mom is my Mom. I can't change who my Dad is. My Dad is my Dad. And I can't change who they are, how they parent, cause they can only do what they know, and so it took my a very long time to understand that. And now that I finally do, I would say I do have a better relationship with them. And then I do now look up to them. Beforehand it's like, "Nah my parents are, like, weird." Like, "My parents are controlling me." Now it's like, "You know what,

some of the things my Mom said were right. Some of the things my Dad said were right. Some of the things my parents said were wrong." But, a lot of it was actually right.

**A:** Do you think that if you wanted to do a career that wasn't in nursing- so something that, um, maybe was in art or was in social sciences, um, do you think they would support you just as much as it is in nursing or do you think the conversation would be different at home?

**P2:** Um. So. In short terms, Mom would be more supportive than Dad. Um, that's just because Dad's a lot more traditional than Mom. So, as I said, my Dad's family all move here. Cause they were all in the head of "American Dream- make ourselves better," um, "Be better than our parents. Grow more than our parents. Help our parents." Whereas my Mom was very individualistic, she was very, "I want to go and better myself. I want to do this. I want to do that." And her parents were much traditional, and they wanted her to stay and be with the family and never go away. And so, Mom has more modern ideas, so like, if I wanted to do art, if she saw that I was passionate enough and there is a chance that I am successful, then yes, she would have supported me all the way. Uh, whereas my father would be very confused and not understanding. Um, that's because that's who he is. He thinks that you have to either be like a doctor, nurse, engineer, or lawyer to be successful when, you know. I could be, I don't know, the same thing as my Mom, a cosmetologist. Um, to, like- his definition of success is different than mine and his definition of success is different than my Mom's.

**A:** Yeah. Can you tell me a little bit more about especially what you think your father's definition of success is and what your mother's definition of success is?

**P2:** Um, Dad's success would be that I'm making enough money to support him. I'm making enough money to support a family. Like I am supposed to get a husband and have my own family. Um, that I make a lot of money but not as much as my husband. Whereas my mother is very like, "You make your own money. Your husband makes more? Cool. If you make more? Cool. But you do what you need to do. Um, if I need help, and you want to help me, then sure. But I don't expect you to take care of me." Whereas my father expects me to take care of him.

**A:** How much do you think those traditional gender roles, as you're talking about getting a husband and having a family, how much do you think that has affected your definition of success with the American Dream?

**P2:** It has influenced me a lot. Like, um, within success I feel like happiness for me I would like to have a husband. I'd like to have kids and a family and be able to grow, like, have my own happiness but add on to my happiness with them. Um, and I think that came with my father, but at the same time success for me is also, you know, do what you want to do. Travel if you want to travel. I feel like I got that part from my Mom.

**A:** Do you have any other final thoughts or comments to share?

**P2:** I am really curious to what the results are going to be because there's the extreme of like, they're like, "Oh no, they, like my parents didn't teach me anything." And there's other, like the other complete side where it's like, "My parents taught me everything. Like, I learned everything from my parents." And then like the in-between and I want to see how others, that, even though again we're at the same- relatively same level, as in we're all in college. Also, that, we're all coming from relatively a Filipino background and we are all second generation. Like, I am curious as to see what kind of range we are at. If we all have the same mentality or if we are all very different. Like completely that I didn't even know.

**A:** Yeah. What I can share to you that question is- fun fact, already based on what I know, there is diversity in answers and so that's a great question and I look forward to sending you my analysis which you would be able to read other transcripts. And you will be able to see the diversity on my take on it and my thoughts on it. And of course, you can add to that for sure. And other comments, questions, or concerns?

**P2:** Mhm. [shakes head]

**A:** Thank you again for your time. Again, this means a lot to me and I will be in contact with you again in the future.

[End Interview]

## **APPENDIX E: TRANSCRIPT 3**

**Interviewer Angelo (A):** Hi, thanks again for coming, I really really really really really appreciate it - I have to transcribe all those really's- can you give me your email? Spell your email. That's the only identifying thing.

**Participant 3 (P3):** Alright, it's Dionedajonathan@gmail.com

**A:** Perfect, thank you! Alright, so first I have a couple demographic questions, um, and then I'll go into questions on the topic. So first, do you attend the University of Central Florida?

**P3:** Yes.

**A:** What is your age?

**P3:** I am 19

**A:** What is your major?

**P3:** Mechanical Engineering

**A:** Were both your parents born in the Philippines?

**P3:** Yes

**A:** Okay, where were you born?

**P3:** I was born in Jacksonville, Florida.

**A:** Jacksonville. Okay. Uh, what is your gender identity.

**P3:** Male

**A:** Male. Does your gender identity differ from the sex you were assigned from birth?

**P3:** No

**A:** Where have you lived and for how long in each location.

**P3:** Um, Jacksonville, until I was 18. And then now Orlando.

**A:** Okay, so most of your life is in Jacksonville and then -

**P3:** coming here for college.

**A:** Was that a weird transition?

**P3:** Not really, mostly because, I don't know, my personality better suits Orlando than Jacksonville. Not really much of a change for me.

**A:** Okay, cool! Okay, into the questions about the topic at hand. The first one is - well, first and foremost, tell me about yourself actually. Tell me, um, what's your major, what are you doing here at the university, um, and actually the first question is, what does success mean to you?

**P3:** Okay, so um, well I came here to study biomedical engineering, at least that's what I wanted to do when I went to college, but um, UC- the colleges I applied to, um, only one of them offered it as a major, and it was out of state, so it was like really expensive, and my parents were like, "well maybe let's not go out of state because that's really expensive." And I was like, "I agree with that." So, I came here, and I switched to computer science instead because I wanted to make a program to help organize and like patient records and stuff, um, make it a little easier. But then after I took my first semester of college, and I realized, I can't code, so, um, I switched to mechanical engineering because, um, I had this, like, idea of working with prosthetics but, like, instead of actually working with the patient, I work on the prosthetics themselves. So that way I'd like use engineering to like- with like joints and like wrist movement and like range of motion, and making prosthetics more, um, like you know, advancing the technology with prosthetic limbs and stuff. Um, so that's what I'm trying to do now, um, and then for the question about success: I guess I kinda define success as like, um, just being- not necessarily being like super big and like known for what you do- but rather being in a good con- like being content with yourself. And being and - being not comfortable but like, you have something to lean back on, but you still have the resources to keep moving forward, you know? Um, at least that's what I think success is.

**A:** Yeah. Thanks for sharing that.

**P3:** Yeah!

**A:** So, what made you want to first do biomed? It sounds like there is theme of wanting to do medical based things and things of that nature?

**P3:** So, um, all of my family, my mom and my dad, both worked in the medical field. Um, my older brother is a pharmacist. And, I- I guess, sort of family pressure, was like, "You should be in the medical field." But then I was like, "I am not really comfortable with biology and all like, those sciencey, or, more like, I don't know how to say it. I don't. Biology." And so, um, I thought of like different ways I could be involved in like the medical scene without actually having to do with, you know, like, diagnosing patients from like, um, I don't know, examining or like, looking at- I don't, I don't know, like Biology stuff. I did want to be a radiologist at first, but then, I don't know, I kinda just like, as time went on I just sort of lost interest in the whole- instead of being focusing on like the being like radiologist, I thought I was more intrigued by like working the machines that they use to study cancer cells and stuff like that. Or like the scanning machines and making those instead. So...



**A:** What do you think happened that made you lose interest?

**P3:** Um, I don't know, uh, well... For doctors and stuff, you do spend a lot of time at the hospital and like, seeing how my dad is like- not that he hasn't been present in like my life- but like, he's definitely at work a lot. And like, I am super grateful for that, cause like, he gets so much- he does much for our family and all of that. But like, I feel like, I, my personality, or like, my life at home would be a little different if he wasn't like always out at work and when he comes home, he's usually really tired. So, like he might be a little like snappy or like, he'll be like, "Oh, I have to get this done before I go to bed." And then wake up again in the morning for work. So, I don't know, I just, I want to I guess maybe that steered me away from being like a full like, uh, Ph.D. or Doctor and all that stuff, so... yeah.

**A:** Do you ever feel like you had the freedom to do something that's not in the medical field, or what your family wants you to do?

**P3:** Um, I, before I looked at early years of high school, so maybe the first or second year, um, I was- I went to an art school. So, I went there for music and violin and stuff, and so I know at least my dad was okay with me going to a musical based field, but what I wanted to do with that is, if was going to be in the music field, I wanted to be a teacher. Um, I think, it wasn't like they wouldn't let me, it was more like they were worried that I wouldn't get the funding I needed to, um, sustain myself, at least, comfortably. Cause I don't think it's like they would be mad if I wasn't in the medical field. It was more like, they wanted me- they wanted to make sure I would be like, stable, on my own. And like, teachers obviously don't really get like as much they should or like, it's just not as other jobs. And so, I guess it started off as like, "Maybe?" I think when I was younger, I might have thought of it as, "my parents don't want me to," but now that I am older and I like see it from a different perspective, I kinda get it. So, like, I think I could potentially switch if I wanted to, but after thinking about it, like, now I get it and like I don't think I want to anymore. So. yeah

**A:** When I mention the phrase, American Dream- have you heard of the American Dream ideology before?

**P3:** I mean, I have heard people like throw it around but i have never really like sat down and like, looked into it, like, seeing what it is exactly, so.

**A:** So, you've heard it thrown around and you know it exists, that's a thing. What does it mean to you right now, as your processing it in your head right now?

**P3:** Like the American Dream?

**A:** Mhm

**P3:** Um... excuse me.

**A:** t's all good.

**P3:** When I think of the American Dream I think of like, you're like, separate from your family- not like separate like cut off all communication- you like, branch out off of your family and basically, I feel like, I think of it as like, cause like, before when people came to America, they like, came here from their country and they had no connections and they just, like, made a life there. So, when I think of the American Dream I think of like, leaving your family and to like- not necessarily like somewhere you don't know anybody- but like, um, like making a name for yourself, in a place you might not be familiar with. At least that's what I think.

**A:** Do you think you can achieve the American Dream? Is it something you want to achieve in the first place?

**P3:** I think, I mean, I think everybody can achieve the American Dream, but I think it's just like in different ways. Like, you could be like, hmmm, like some people move out of state and make a life another place or like out of country or anywhere. And then other people could be like, it could a different or like, like, they go on a limb in their job field or something like, they do something that nobody else has ever tried. And I also think of that like an American Dream but like, in a different way if that makes sense? Um, but yeah, I don't know, where it's like, i just feel like, I guess it's like, just trying to make something new. Um... so....

**A:** Growing up, did you ever feel like your family believed in the American Dream and tried teaching you that? Or did they have their own culture and experiences they were trying to put unto you?

**P3:** Well I know that my Dad definitely like had the whole American Dream kinda thing. Cause like, um, he was the first one in his family to go to college. So, he's like the youngest, first one to go to college, first one to come to America, and then, like, he started a family there. Then after him, like, other people in his family started coming. So, like, yeah. But then he never really talks about that, to like, to me and my siblings. Where I like- he's really just like, "yeah I came from the Philippines." And like, I actually didn't know that he was the first in his family to go to college and all that until recently. So, it's- I guess like growing up it wasn't really like a big thing in our family just because my Dad didn't really, like, put it out there for us over and over. Like, I don't know.

**A:** What would you say that are the values you think your family put out to you growing up?

**P3:** I think my Dad just mostly- he's not necessarily big on family- well no he is, what am I saying. He's definitely, like, it's more like just remembering like, where you started from rather, um, I don't- cause i know there was- um, when my Dad was in the Philippines, he was like, kinda like, his family was pretty well off because they owned like uh, a grocery store in- I don't remember what part- but he, they owned a grocery store and it was really big and so they had a lot of money from people coming all the time, and then, like, one night somebody came in and burned the grocery store to the ground so they had to start over and he transferred from like

private school to like a public school and all that. And like, he used to get like- people would like, um, talk about him and be like, "oh he must be the rich kid that has to go with us now. He must be so much smarter than us and all that stuff." And so I think it's more like- um - I think that's also one of the things that he tried to teach us rather than like, um, it's like, even, like, no matter your circumstances, like, if you have like a goal, you should just go for it. Like, there shouldn't be anything to, like discourage you, um from, you know, getting where you want to be. So, I think- I guess in a sense, I don't know - I don't know if this is right or even makes sense but like, um, I guess that's what I sort of think his idea of the American Dream is... yeah? I don't really know where I was going with that.

**A:** No, it's okay! Um, you talk a lot about your Dad, but do you think your Mom has the same ideas as your father or it's different?

**P3:** For my Mom, I guess like, now that I think, my mom doesn't really talk about her life in the Philippines that often with us so like I don't really know much about my Mom's life in the Philippines. Um, other than like, she had a lot of sisters and that's it. Like, pretty much whenever I talk to her about, like, her past is like, she usually just starts from after she was married to my Dad, so, and like, she was an engineer in the Philippines and then when she came here, she like switched over the medical field but that's all I know. Yeah.

**A:** Do you know why your family moved from the Philippines to the United States?

**P3:** Um, well I know my Dad- uh, I guess the reason that my Dad always tells me, like, I don't know if he has another reason for himself, but when he graduated from college, he got a job offer from Mayo Clinic to come to the, to America. And so, that's, that's all he tells me. He's like, "Oh yeah, we came here because I accepted a job position." So, I was like "oh okay."

**A:** Do you think they liked their life in the Philippines, or do you think they wanted a change?

**P3:** I think my Mom and Dad want to make a change. Yeah, I think they came here cause, not necessarily because they don't like their life in the Philippines I just think- I don't know, um, cause they always talk about, like, they don't really ever talk about going back to just visit or anything which is like weird because, you know, everybody else- oh not everybody else- but like a lot of my friends are like, "oh me and my family are going to the Philippines to see family and all that." and I'm like, "that's cool." and then I'd like, i'll talk to my mom now, and be like, "are we ever going, like, back? Just wondering." and they'll be like, "I don't know. Maybe?" But like, they never truly seem like they want to go really bad. Like they'll go by themselves, but they never bring the whole family. Yeah.

**A:** So, you never been back to the Philippines?

**P3:** mhm (shakes head)

**A:** Do you want to back?

**P3:** I do want to go back maybe once or twice. I do want to go, if I go back, I'd want to go to like the province rather than like Manila like the city life. But yeah, just never got the opportunity to.

**A:** How in-tuned do you feel like you are to your Filipino identity and like Filipino culture?

**P3** The thing is, I never really had a problem being in-tune with my culture even though I have never been back, because like, um, pretty much every aspect in my life has been immersed, because, my mom and- my dad always cooks Filipino cause he wanted to be caterer, but then he was like, "that doesn't put money on the table, so, I'll just do it at home." Um, so he makes Filipino food like all the time, and then, um, ever since I was born my mom and dad had been a part of this like, all Filipino church so everybody in there is Filipino, except for like, you know, like, one or two white people that marry a Filipino girl, but like (cough) but, yeah, so I always had, you know, church every week I'd see only Filipinos, so that's like fine. And then my Mom and Dad, they talk to each other in Tagalog, but they talk to us in English, or like, they like randomly throw in Tagalog words every now and then. So, like, I, I don't always understand a lot, but I like, you know, I get like the gist of most sentences and all of that. And then in school, I guess like, I didn't really have too many like ethn- or like Asian friends, rather. But then definitely after I moved out, it's like all Filipinos now. Well, not all but like a lot. So, like I always had a pretty big Filipino crowd that I always been a part of. Um, so, I mean I feel pretty in touch with it.

**A:** Do you feel as though there is a difference between the American Dream Ideology and like the Filipino Dream of success?

**P3:** Um, shit. I don't know. Um, like, what would be the Filipino dream of su- like idea of success? I- cause- I don't know, I just always think of... I guess American Dream is kinda like- when I think of the American Dream, I think it's something you want. And then, like, when I think of, like, Filipino dream, it's like more like family based or like something your family would want, and they would be proud of you for. Not that your family wouldn't accomplish something on your own, it's just like, it holds more weight with your family, I guess? I don't know.

**A:** That's fine. As you process that though, is there one over the other you think you would prefer?

**P3:** Um.

**A:** These are difficult questions so it's not like a- there's no right or wrong answer, this is your life experience.

**P3:** [Laughter] Um, I don't think- I think I want to be able to do something like, I want to accomplish something that like, I thought all on my own, like something that I have been wanting to do for a long time, not necessarily something my parents would want to do. So yes, I

like kinda get, I guess I kinda prefer the American Dream in that sense, but at the same time, like, I feel like in order to pursue the American Dream, you need to have the back, like, your family behind you. Cause even if like, not necessarily like, if there is something I wanted to do and I couldn't exactly tell my parents exactly what it was, I would still ask them for help and maybe like word it in a different way so it's not exactly the same. So, I guess yeah, the American Dream sounds more appealing now a days, but I, just think that the same values that, I guess the Filipino dream, quote, unquote, is- I feel like there are values in that, that we should carry on into the American Dream. [Cough] Excuse me

**A:** So here in the United States, who do you think achieves the American Dream? Like what type of people achieve the American Dream?

**P3:** Um, well like when you think of like famous people I guess here in America. It's always like, they always have some like really sad backstory or something or like, "oh they were a college dropout and now they are famous," and stuff. So, I don't know. I guess it could be anybody honestly. Um, but I feel like you always hear about, like the famous people you hear about, are like the ones who do, or the ones who like accomplish something that affect a lot of people. Like... Or... I don't know. Cause like, there's just somethings where like if you accomplish it, everyone will hear about it, and there are like other things that could be a big deal but like, not many people will notice, I guess? I don't know, like, Astronauts get a lot of attention for making it in space but the people who actually calculate, like the rocket and stuff to make it in space don't really get much attention. So, I don't know, I guess it all just depends on, like, publicity rather? Cause like, you could, you could achieve like something big, but like if it's something that's not publicized people might not know about it. So... I don't know, like yeah.

**A:** And it's okay not to know either. You're a 19-year-old who just got into college. These are difficult questions so don't feel like you have known the answers to them.

**P3:** [Laughter] Yeah.

**A:** So, what do you think it takes to achieve the American Dream?

**P3:** Um, honestly, I just think... I think... well honestly you do need, like, resources and you have to be able to, um, not saying that, like- oh well- I feel like you do have to have some sort of like financial resources to help you like get started at least, um, but honestly it's, i think it's all about mindset where like, if you were like really passionate and focused on like what you want to achieve, you'll find your way through. Like any options that come around. Cause like, I think, yeah, so I think, financial resources, a good mindset, and I also think support system has to be there because, like obviously, in order to achieve, like, not everything is going to be easy and like, some things, like, hit people harder than others or like, some things just like affect other people, and then, so there's like, like you have to take into your account your background, like, what you been through, what you never experienced before but have experienced before. And so like, you just have to have like the right people around you as well, it's like, or people to fall back

when like, something might not go your way and you need somebody to talk to about it, or somebody that will help you like set you back on track, you know? Um, so yeah.

**A:** Do you think your parents work towards this or worked towards something?

**P3:** What do you mean?

**A:** Do you think your parents worked towards this definition of the American Dream, or something else?

**P3:** I think my- hmmm- I think yeah, hm. My- I guess for my dad causes I don't know much about my Mom's past- I think my Dad definitely had, like, some sort of, like, idea. Like idealistic life he wanted. He's like driving towards it right now still. Like, cause he's still working, like full hours. I think he picked up a second job or something. But like, he's still going, and like, I think- I definitely think there is something like that he wants and he's trying to get there. Or at least, he's trying really hard and like- I think, like, definitely if it was me in his position, I guess, like, like, we're not, we're like pretty good, like i think like family wise and financial wise we are fine, but like he just want to get out there, like, keep going, like, keep helping me people I guess? Which might be his definition of the American Dream, so, i guess in a way, he's still working towards it, but he's also sort of already there. Uh, yeah.

**A:** Okay! That's fine. So, I will share with you the definition of what the literature in sociology is, and I would be curious if you have thoughts on this. According to, Hoschild is her last name, she found in her research that the American Dream consists of the idea, "All people in the United States, can achieve whatever they want to achieve, through hard work and their own efforts." What do you think about that statement? That way the American Dream ideology is phrased.

**P3:** I think that, it's like, it makes sense but like you can achieve whatever you like with your hard work and efforts, but I think it's not only those things where like there are other factors that can, not necessarily, like- no, I think everybody can make, or like it's true that they can through their hard work and... What was it? Hard work then whatever?

**A:** Hard work and their own efforts.

**P3:** Yeah, own efforts, like yeah definitely. And I'm not saying you can't do it without other things, but there are people who get to the American Dream, I feel like they don't only use hard work and effort, like they, they have that support system and they, not necessarily have the financial funding, um, but it's definitely not just their efforts and, um, hard work.

**A:** What do you think gives you that perspective, understanding there is more than just, um, hard work and efforts?

**P3:** I guess it's just like, uh, cause I'm a pretty social person, like, so my social group is pretty big, and I just know that like if I am working towards something, like, I can work really hard and

like, at least in my case, I'll like, I'll go really hard, I'll do everything I can, but like there are going to be ti- there's always times where I'm like burned out that I need to recharge with, like, people who I know will like, understand what I am going through and people i know who won't, like, cause, when you're, you're doing, you're doing that hard work and sometimes like there are choices you have to make where like you have to choose like, um, not going, like, i guess like, there's a friend's birthday party, test tomorrow. You study for the test, right? It could be like, it looks like you are flaking. Um, and I guess it has an negative impact, but like, and then, let's say you study for the test and you still fail the test so you skipped that birthday for no reason or whatever. Um, and then so, so then you're sad about the test but your friend sad about you missing your birthday, but like, so like if that happened to me, I, I would help me a lot in that, just because I have friends there who like, they would understand and be like, "it's okay, like, you worked really hard for it, but like, you need, like it'll be like- yeah, you worked really hard for it and we understand and then like now we understand that you're sad and so we're going to help you get through that and get you back onto the track that you were at, like before, so, cause like, I feel like if you're doing all that hard work and like, yeah that you'll fail and then like you'll back on on your own, but like after a while if you like fail over and over again and like you hit that bumb every, every- like you're going to get really discouraged and like, I know at least in my case like, if I get discouraged a lot, like, I'm going to need to like, I'm go- if I, if there's nobody there to like get me back on track, I will like steer off. I'll like try going somewhere completely different. Um, but I think having that support group that are like, that, "this is what you wanted, like, you told me, like, you wanted this, and I'm telling you that you can't give up on it. Like having those people to help you set you back I think is such a, just such a, big, big deal. Um...

**A:** Before getting into college and in high school and growing up, do you think your family was a good support system to you in capacity and that's where you learned it from, or do you think it's from other places.

**P3:** Um, I guess, yeah, it's from my family, it's mostly, i think my older brother. Um, cause, like definitely my mom and dad like, yeah, they were like, they're good parents but like obviously like, not everything goes well with your parents all the time. And I just think like my older brother has just been like a really steady person. Like, somebody I could- solid rock that I could always just- he's always just like, "you told me you wanted this, so why aren't you doing it anymore?" and if I can't give, like, a genuine explanation, he's like, "then go back." You know what I'm saying? So...

**A:** It sounds like he holds you accountable.

**P3:** Yeah, so which is, so, I don't know, I just feel like he's the reason, I think yeah, he's influenced a lot of my ideals and my mindset.

**A:** Do you think that your brother and you share similar views about the American Dream or about success and how it works in society?

**P3:** I think so. Yeah. I think so, because, I don't know, I just like... we just... oh, we just know. I don't know.

**A:** How much apart are you in age?

**P3:** He's three years older

**A:** What is he doing now, you said pharmacist?

**P3:** He's a pharmacist.

**A:** Okay you said pharmacist. You might have discussed this already, but I'll ask again. Describe your beliefs on the way people can succeed in the United States.

**P3:** Uh, yeah, um, yeah... hard work and all that, and then definitely, yeah, just having the support system. [Laughter]

**A:** Yeah, I think you covered that, just making sure. So, what's your life goal? What does that end goal look like for you and how do you think these goals have come to be?

**P3:** Hmmm, well, I know for a fact, when I was growing up, I've always wanted to be something where I can see that I am helping people. Like, um, not necessarily like I am literally in the process of helping them, but like, I'll do something and like maybe later down the line I'll see that same person, like, benefiting from what I did. So like, I guess that's where I got whole the idea of prosthetics where like, I manufacture these prosthetics and then- I guess I'll also work cause my dad, um, in the hospital, he works as a physical therapist rehab- so for amputees we have to get re... like, what do you call that? Re...

**A:** Rehab? Rehabilitation?

**P3:** Yeah, rehabilitation. Yeah, getting use to their new arms and stuff or like, people who just, i don't know, um, had major surgery and they need help getting back on their feet, so like in that sense I would like be able to see the people who are using my prosthetics and seeing them work out, or like work through every life like nothing is wrong. Um, so like I just always wanted to, not necessarily be helping the person, but like, do something that helps people and I can see it. So, that I think is like my number 1 goal. Just to have- just be able- like feel good about what I am doing, and I know that it's helping other people. And like there's obviously there's like the other goals that I really want. I want a really big house, and like two dogs, and like a nice family and stuff like that. Um...

**A:** You said you want that?

**P3:** I do want that, but I'm like, "everybody wants that."



**A:** Do you have any other questions comments or anything of that nature?

**P3:** Not in particular.

**A:** You can always contact me, and I'd communicate with you for sure. I good with everything. I really appreciate your honesty and I know you're kinda processing in this moment some of these concepts and I know that can be a lot.

**P3:** Yeah

**A:** I really appreciate that and thank you. Again, what's going to happen is i will transcribe for every word that was said, and then go through the interviews, analyze it and then you all will be able to see my thoughts. And then we'll go from there! That's all! Thank you again!

**P3:** No problem!

[End Interview]