Navigating Multiple Identities in Online and Offline Spaces

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For his research project, Kevin Mori wanted to be able to work with the queer Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community, and found himself focusing on how intersecting marginalized identities affect individuals on a day-to-day basis. Kevin was inspired by the interviews he did as a part of his research, seeing people who, despite discrimination and feelings of alienation were able to create vibrant and resilient communities. After graduation, Kevin began working with a data analytics consulting firm. Eventually, he hopes to attend graduate school and continue the research he did on marginalized communities and the impact of online interactions.

Key Terms

- Collective Self-Esteem
- Facebook
- Identity Performance
- Marginality
- Queer Asian American/ Pacific Islander
- Resilience
- Sense of Community

Abstract

Individuals who identify as either queer or Asian American/Pacific Islander (AAPI) are marginalized in American society; queer AAPIs are subject to dual marginalization. This study focuses on how individuals who identify as both queer and AAPI experience a sense of community within online and offline spaces. Participation was limited to individuals who live in Southern California, are between the age of 18 and 30, and use Facebook. Twenty individuals, recruited primarily through snowball sampling, participated in concurrent mixed-methods interviews. During this process participants first completed surveys evaluating their collective self-esteem, sense of community, and Facebook practices. Immediately after, participants completed semi-structured interviews in which they shared their personal experiences related to their queer and AAPI identities. The results of this study detail participants' relationship to and involvement in the queer AAPI community. The study provides a model of resilience and shares how queer AAPI spaces provide support by allowing the presentation of authentic selves. It also suggests a future direction for understanding how individuals' intersecting identities impact experiences online and offline.

Faculty Mentor

Kevin's research advances our understanding of multi-faceted identities in online spaces, particularly people who identify as both LGBTQ and Asian American Pacific Islander. This research is not only important to the overall community interested in social computing as well as issues of identity for under-represented minorities, it also serves as a model project for undergraduate researchers. Building on skills he developed through coursework and supporting roles in research, Kevin was able to launch his own research project, focused on issues close to his heart. I encourage all undergraduate students to consider how they might use a research experience to develop their skills and knowledge while tacking important problems about which they are passionate.

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Introduction

Despite the common misconception that we live in a post-racial society, communities of color still face discrimination and institutional oppression. This includes Asian American/Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) who, despite the model minority myth—the stereotype that certain minority groups have attained success as a result of inherent racial or ethnic qualities—still face issues such as xenophobia, barriers to immigration, and low educational attainment. Similarly, though acceptance of the queer community has become more widespread, queer individuals still experience prejudice on a day-to-day basis.

Resistance against both overt and covert forms of oppression often takes the form of seeking communities of like-minded and supportive individuals. The purpose of this study is to explore how queer AAPI individuals experience community in online and offline settings. This includes understanding how their identity impacts the groups and communities they are a part of and how they present themselves to others. The study shares the firsthand accounts and experiences of young queer AAPIs and their involvement in groups and spaces. Using these firsthand accounts and experiences, the study develops a model of resilience that queer AAPIs practice on a daily basis. It provides an understanding of the barriers marginalized communities face in experiencing a sense of community online and offline, and their strategies to overcome them.

I begin by covering the three main foundations of this study: marginality, community, and identity performance. Queer AAPI individuals experience marginality daily in regards to both their sexual and racial identities. Their sense of community is influenced by this marginality; and, because their existence is on the periphery of the societal norm, these individuals assume different identities depending on the social context.

Next, I provide a more detailed methodology and analysis. To understand queer AAPI individuals' sense of community online and offline, I conducted a mixed-methods study using existing tools, including the Sense of Community Index – II, Collective Self-Esteem Scale, and Facebook usage survey. Additionally, by providing participants with an opportunity to share their stories through semi-structured interviews, I gained an in-depth view of how queer AAPIs experience community.

An analysis of the interviews presents the diverse ways individuals are involved in spaces. Participants shared how they are involved with existing queer AAPI groups and spaces, create new spaces, and engage in alternative strategies. These activities provide a safe support network that allows individuals to be their authentic selves without backlash from others. Finally, I provide a model of resilience based on these interviews as a practice that ensures the survival of one's physical being and authentic identity, and suggest opportunities for further research.

Related Work

This study draws on research in three main topics—marginality, community, and identity performance—in order to provide a framework of how marginality and identity performance may influence one's sense of community.

Marginality

This section discusses theories of marginalization that affect the participants in the study: Orientalism, which marginalizes AAPI individuals, and heteronormativity, which marginalizes queer individuals. I also discuss how the intersection of identity makes the experience of queer AAPI individuals distinct from those who are just queer or AAPI.

Park first introduced the concept of marginality with what he called the marginal man, who was torn between cultures (Park, 1928). Stonequist expands on the "marginal man" by explaining characteristics such as its variation, social situation, and life cycle (Stonequist, 1935). From these early roots, marginality has evolved into a much broader concept. For the purpose of this study, I borrow Hall, Stevens, and Meleis's definition of marginalization as "the process through which persons are peripheralized on the basis of their identities, associations, experiences, and environments" from a normative center (Hall et al., 1994). Rather than focusing on an individual torn between two cultures and the individual response, this definition focuses on the process by which entire communities are perceived as different and systematically oppressed because they do not conform to a socially prescribed norm.

One lens through which to view AAPI marginality is Orientalism. Said originally identified Orientalism as the intellectual and cultural views produced by Western imperialism in the Middle East and India. This understanding places the "Orient" as the "other," an antithesis—one that is exotic and less advanced—to the Western world (Said, 1979). The concept of Orientalism has since evolved and "now often serves as shorthand for negative Western stereotypes about all Asians" (Ngai, 2000). On a day-to-day basis, Orientalism produces perceptions such as the perpet-

ual foreigner stereotype and model minority myth, which alienate and marginalize AAPI individuals (Lee, 2009).

Queer individuals experience marginalization primarily due to heteronormativity, which assumes a gender binary (male and female) and expects individuals to present their identity based on their biological sex (Lovaas, 2007). It defines heterosexuality as the normal sexual orientation and marginalizes those who deviate from this norm (Jackson, 2006). This marginalization can be driven by figures of political, social, or even familial authority.

Forms of oppression mix and inform each other, which makes queer AAPI issues distinct from those of both the broader AAPI and LGBT communities (Szymanski, 2009). For example, Orientalism informs the exoticization of queer Asian American men (Kumashiro, 1999). Additionally, the threat of rejection and stigmatization from the family unit remains a primary concern—a concern that may be perceived as intimately connected to ethnic and cultural background (Liu, 2003). Participants in this study gave firsthand accounts illustrating how heteronormativity affects queer AAPI individuals differently than it does other individuals because of cultural and familial ties. Belonging to the queer community does not automatically absolve one of racist tendencies, just as being oppressed by racism does not mean one cannot be homophobic. Indeed, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute reported that 89% of queer AAPIs agreed that homophobia and transphobia are issues within the broader AAPI community and 78% also agreed that racism is an issue within the LGBT community (Dang, 2007).

Community
We must now think about how marginalization affects queer AAPIs' sense of community and identification with the queer AAPI community. In this section, I define community within the context of this study, explain the related concepts of "sense of community" and "collective self-esteem" as well as their relationship to the queer AAPI community, and touch on Facebook's online role in supporting these concepts.

Gusfield identifies two types of community, geographic and relational. This study is primarily concerned with the relational type, which Gusfield defines as the "quality of character of human relationship, without reference to location" (Gusfield, 1975). Racial and sexual identity-based communities fall primarily under this definition. However, geography also plays a role, especially when we consider the concentration of members of a given community in a given

location. For example, many AAPIs in the United States reside in California and we assume their experiences are much different than those of AAPIs residing in Wyoming, where the population and concentration are lower (Hoeffel et al., 2012).

A person's sense of community is based on four factors: membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection (McMillian and Chavis, 1986). Membership is a feeling of belonging, covered by five attributes: boundaries, emotional safety, sense of belonging and identification, personal investment, and common symbol systems. Influence is defined by how the member has influence over their group, as well as how the group influences the member. Integration and fulfillment of needs is the satisfaction a member feels by being associated with the community. Finally, shared emotional connection refers to members' level of identification with a shared history and the interaction of members in shared events. McMillian and Chavis assert that shared emotional connection is the "definitive element to a true community." The results of this study focus on this last aspect, in that participants expressed a need to be around others who understood their experiences, histories, and struggles.

To further consider an individual's relationship to their community, we consider "collective self-esteem"—the relationship between one's self-esteem and their feelings about the groups to which they belong (Luhtanen and Crocker, 1992). There are four main aspects of collective self-esteem: private collective self-esteem, public collective self-esteem, membership esteem, and importance to identity. Private collective self-esteem is based on one's own evaluation of their group. Public collective self-esteem, on the other hand, is how others think of the group one belongs to. Membership esteem evaluates how the member sees themselves as a part of the group. Lastly, importance of identity covers how important the group is to one's self-concept. The concept of collective self-esteem has been used in research focused both on racial minorities (Katz et al., 2002) and sexual minorities (Crocker et al., 1994). The public collective self-esteem aspect is especially important for our participants because they face social expectations that are unaccepting of both the queer and AAPI parts of their identity.

Online platforms, such as social networking sites (SNSs), play a key role in the development of these relationships. The largest SNS, with 1.11 billion active users, is Facebook (Facebook, 2013). Through Facebook, users can upload photos, post their status, join groups and events, like pages, and communicate with their "friends." Individuals use

Facebook to "increase their awareness of those in their offline community" in addition to connecting with previously unknown users (Lampe et al., 2006). For example, the groups and messenger functions allow queer AAPI individuals to receive support from their offline relationships.

Identity Performance

Queer AAPI individuals are forced to make decisions on how to present their identity within communities as a result of their marginalized positions. Here I explain self-presentation, visibility management, and the concept of passing. Finally, I define context collapse in SNSs and its role in limiting identity presentation options online.

Self-presentation is how individuals perform, interpret other's responses, and then adjust behaviors based on this interpretation (Goffman, 1959). Individuals use self-presentation strategies to make their identity more favorable to their audience. Visibility management is a specific form of self-presentation, which focuses on the visible presentation of an invisible characteristic, such as one's sexual orientation (Schlenker, 2003). Queer individuals engage in this type of visibility management because their sexuality is not often physically discernable; however, when queer individuals choose a less restrictive visibility management, they tend to experience forms of victimization, such as verbal abuse (Lasser and Wicker, 2008). Queer AAPI participants often practice visibility management by passing, which is hiding information that associates one with highly stigmatized identities (Goffman, 2009). Passing plays out in everyday life and has a variety of forms (Renfrow, 2004). It is a negotiation that can be emotionally costly because individuals need to manage multiple expectations.

Context collapse, or the flattening of many audiences into one, forces individuals to make even more decisions when managing their identities online (boyd and Marwick, 2011). Context collapse causes negotiation between the user's expectations of their perceived (or imagined) audience and expectations of authenticity. For example, individuals manage context collapse on Facebook in different ways, including keeping professional contacts out of Facebook networks, creating multiple profiles, and censoring content that could negatively affect them (Vitak et al., 2012). Context collapse adds further pressure to queer AAPIs because it limits their identity performance online. Though SNSs allow for a more managed identity presentation, they do not always allow the flexibility of offline situations. Passing online becomes more difficult because of different audiences for which one needs to perform (Marwick, 2005). Marwick provides the example of a gay man who may want to reveal his queer-

ness depending on the context. Unfortunately, SNSs do not allow this, which results in "a lack of agency that can have real-world implications." Additionally, people have different levels of success at disguising their identity online (Berman, 2001). Mismanagement of context collapse has more serious consequences for individuals from already marginalized communities (e.g., queer AAPI), such as losing a job or parental support.

Methods & Analysis

I conducted a mixed-methods study of individuals who used Facebook and identified as both queer and AAPI. I recruited 20 interview participants from Southern California, primarily Los Angeles and Orange Counties (9 female, 1 genderqueer, 11 male; ages 20–27, M=23). One participant identified as both female and genderqueer.

Using snowball sampling, I recruited participants through personal connections, SNSs including Facebook and Twitter, and queer AAPI community-based organizations. Participants represented a diverse set of ethnic identities: Chinese (7), Indian (1), Japanese (4), Khmer (1), Korean (1), Taiwanese (1), Pilipino (3), and Vietnamese (3). Three identified as mixed race. The participants also represented a diverse set of sexual identities, including: asexual (1), gay (6), lesbian (2), bisexual/pansexual (4), questioning (3), and queer (9). One also chose to dis-identify from any sexual identity. Though not a sexual orientation, one participant identified with the relationship orientation polyamorous and noted it was an important part of her experiences. Table 1 provides additional information.

Interviews lasted 1 to 2 hours, and were conducted in person (14), over the phone (2), and via video chat (4). Since the interviews covered personal stories and information, it was important that the participants felt comfortable; thus, each participant decided the location and medium of their interview. During the first 15 to 30 minutes of the interview, the participant completed three survey instruments: the Sense of Community Index – II (SCI-II), the Collective Self-Esteem (CSE) scale, and a Facebook-usage questionnaire. The SCI-II uses 24 questions to evaluate the four aspects that comprise one's sense of community (influence, membership, reinforcement of needs, shared emotional connection) (McMillian and Chavis, 1986). The SCI-II was taken three times for the AAPI, LGBT, and AAPI LGBT communities. The CSE scale includes 16 questions that evaluate the four main categories of CSE (private collective self-esteem, public collective self-esteem, membership esteem, importance to identity) (Luhtanen

Table 1
Summary of participant identifications and pseudonyms

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Race/Ethnicity	Sexual Orientation
Anna	Female	26	Chinese	Bisexual/Pan-sexual
Bryan	Male	20	Mixed Race, Chinese, Japanese	Queer, Questioning
Catherine	Female	22	Mixed Race, Pilipino	Bisexual/Pan-sexual
Clark	Male	23	Pilipino	Queer
Craig	Male	27	Vietnamese	Gay
Daniel	Male	20	Vietnamese	Gay
Dennis	Male	26	Chinese	Gay
Hannah	Female	24	Indian	Bisexual/Pan-sexual
Isabella	Female, Gender-queer	23	Taiwanese	Asexual, Queer, Questioning
Jennifer	Female	23	Chinese	Bisexual/Pan-sexual, Lesbian, Questioning
Mariko	Female	23	Mixed Race, Japanese	Lesbian
Mark	Male	22	Chinese	Queer
Matthew	Male	20	Chinese	Queer
Nancy	Female	26	Korean	(None)
Naomi	Female	27	Khmer	Queer
Nicholas	Male	21	Vietnamese	Gay, Queer
Roy	Male	21	Chinese	Gay
Shane	Male	24	Japanese	Queer
Thomas	Male	25	Pilipino	Gay
Trisha	Female	21	Japanese	Queer

and Crocker, 1992). Finally, the Facebook-usage questionnaire was adapted from a previous research study on motivations of Facebook use (Ross et al., 2009). After the participant completed the survey instruments, I conducted a semi-structured interview. The content of the interviews covered individuals' identities, personal experiences, and relations with others both online and offline. I encouraged participants to provide specific narrative examples throughout the interview. Finally, I asked participants to share how they thought Facebook could be improved.

After reviewing the interviews, the research team identified initial emerging themes in a series of discussions. I created a set of descriptive memos that outlined each theme relative to the interview data. Using these memos, the research team further discussed the larger dataset in order to further clarify the scopes of themes, their relationships to each other, and key insights. Statistical analysis was performed on the participants' SCI-II, CSE, and Facebook social practices. The quantitative analysis did not reveal any meaningful results so I will focus on qualitative findings and themes.

Results

Our results show that queer AAPI participants find community in existing queer AAPI spaces. However, within these existing communities participants still felt the expectation to perform certain identities. Therefore, in order to assert their authentic selves, participants created their own queer AAPI spaces. These spaces included private groups of friends as well as public spaces that are meant for the broader queer AAPI community. Facebook assists in the formation of these spaces, and once these spaces are formed, Facebook acts as a maintenance tool for these offline communities. Though some participants were not involved with queer AAPI spaces, they still had relationships that supported their authentic identities and used Facebook services and capabilities.

Participation in Existing Spaces
Participants not only expressed the importance of having a space that is both queer and AAPI, but also explained the nuances and complexities of being involved with relevant spaces that have already been established. These spaces are not always completely safe and participants at times felt like they were expected to perform in certain ways in order to be accepted by the community.

Value of Existing Spaces. Participants said they find value in queer AAPI spaces that already exist, as they provide ways to be involved with the community and meet other members. Examples of participation included going out to Rage's Gameboi night (an Asian-themed night at an LGBT club) and attending community support and activism organization meetings and events. Two of the community organizations in which individuals participated were API Equality and Koreans United for Equality (KUE). Participants also use Facebook groups and email listservs to engage with others in the queer AAPI community. The existing groups bring individuals with similar experiences, stories, and understandings together. Additionally, the groups serve specific needs. For example, KUE fulfills an important need within the queer Korean American community by providing a space for dialogue between generations; during meetings queer Korean youth come together with their parents and share what it is like to be both queer and Korean.

Nancy, a 26-year-old Korean American woman involved with KUE, described the value of existing queer AAPI organizations and community spaces:

> The first time I ever went to a KUE gathering…we were joking about kimbap and moms and kimchi and what it's like to date a girl and lesbian sex and I remember leaning back and thinking, "Wow this is the first time I've ever been able to experience that." It was really cool that I could combine both worlds. And also later on I wrote this play called "Broken English" and it's about being a gay Korean and the mom's lines are all written in Korean and the boy's lines are all written in English. The purpose of the play thematically is that they don't understand each other emotionally and linguistically and it creates a tension with the audience because the audience can't understand the mom…But when I [present-ed] it at [the KUE] banquet, I thought, "Oh it was the first time the majority of the audience would be able to understand both [themes]." It was a very interesting experience.

Many queer AAPIs experience a sense of community in existing spaces that bring together individuals with the same intersecting identities. Nancy experienced the support of a queer and AAPI space for the first time at KUE. In this instance, because the audience viewing the play had the same identity as Nancy, she experienced what it was like to have people understand her experiences. Her identity is something that she often has to compartmentalize, illustrated by her surprise that she could "combine both worlds." KUE fostered an understanding environment and brought together individuals who could directly relate to her experiences and support her.

Even participants who are primarily involved with communities other than those designed for queer AAPIs expressed the usefulness of queer AAPI spaces, such as email listservs.

> People who are fellow Asian Americans get it, they understand it, they're more sympathetic…so there's a lot of camaraderie and kinship through shared suffering in a lot of ways. Those groups I generally access for…issues of cultural appropriation or my family's giving me crap or I'm so tired of being in the closet to my family but I know it's the best choice but I want to rant about it anyways…I just want to rant to people who are not just going to tell me to come out. Because in white dominated queer spaces if you complain about, "Oh I have

to be closeted," they're like, "Boohoo. Cry yourself a river. Just come out. It's your own damn fault." They just don't get it.

Queer AAPI spaces provide individuals unique support that cannot be found in general queer spaces or general AAPI spaces. Hannah, a 24-year-old Indian American female, sees a common understanding within the queer AAPI community that she does not in the broader queer community. Hannah is primarily involved in spaces outside of queer AAPI ones, but she still acknowledges the usefulness of the email listserv. The listserv meets a specific need for her: it is a support network that understands the frustrations specific to queer AAPI individuals. It provides an outlet for community members to engage in self-care and seek resources and support.

As illustrated by both Nancy's and Hannah's experiences, participants value queer AAPI spaces as places where people understand and relate to their experiences. However, queer AAPIs face a number of barriers when interacting with the community.

Importance of Identity Presentation. Though many of the queer AAPI spaces provide necessary support and care for participants, identity performance is still an issue in existing spaces, both online and offline.

For example, Mariko, a 23-year-old mixed race Japanese American who is an avid queer AAPI dance club participant, described how, she feels like she needs to make herself look "queer" when she goes out to the club in order to be identified as part of the community:

> When I go to a gay club I try to add something to my appearance so people can identify me because I'm very, very, very girly so people won't look at me and say she's lesbian. So before I used to have a lip ring just because I wanted people to know. And then I have a huge tattoo on my back and I always wear tanks when I go to gay clubs because I want people to see it because I want people to be able to identify me.

Visibility is an important strategy for queer AAPIs to feel allowed to be part of the community. In Mariko's case, she tries to make herself look "queer" so that other members of the community will identify her; she has to adapt and change her identity presentation in order to be accepted into the queer AAPI space. She is anxious to be identified with and accepted by the community. Even in spaces that

might be made for their queer and AAPI identities, participants still run into expectations that may result in differing identity presentation.

Similarly, identity presentation online affects one's involvement with the queer AAPI community. Not being "out" on Facebook may affect the groups and events one can join. Dennis, a 26-year-old Chinese American gay man, feels disconnected from the queer AAPI community on Facebook:

> I'm not out on Facebook. So when I came out three years ago to my family, they were very clear about how they don't want people back home finding out…and since then I have not been out…I'm not really involved in gay Facebook things. Like I'm not part of gay Facebook groups. I'm part of Asian American Facebook groups. I have gone to and said I am attending Asian American Facebook events. I don't think I've said that for gay ones. I don't even know how many gay Asian American things there are on Facebook.

Queer AAPI individuals who are not explicitly "out" in online or offline settings experience a sense of disconnect from the community. Though Dennis heard about queer AAPI activities, such as gay clubbing, without "liking" the page or being part of a group, he still is not explicitly connected to the gay Asian American community on Facebook. Because he is not "out" on Facebook, his (non) involvement in the online queer AAPI community is contingent on his identity presentation.

Being involved with the queer AAPI community online, especially for individuals who are not completely "out," comes at a cost. For instance, fourteen participants use the limited profile feature on Facebook, which allows users to restrict what content specific individuals can see. They do this to prevent family members, friends and co-workers from seeing details about their lives, especially in relation to their queer identities. A few participants went so far as to create multiple Facebook profiles to manage their different audiences. Catherine, a mixed race Pilipina, created two separate profiles to make sure that her religiously conservative family would not find out about her pansexual identity. For Catherine, creating two completely different profiles was easier than using Facebook's limited profiles feature:

> It's a lot easier to have two separate profiles even down to things like your interests and stuff. I can put people in restricted lists on my personal account who can't see my interests but then I have

no interests. Then I look boring. At least with my other account I can at least kind of be myself to an extent, but to an extent that is appropriate.

To present their authentic identity online, many queer AAPIs create multiple profiles and manage their identity presentation based on their audience. For example, Catherine wants to be authentic online, but only as far as her audience allows. With limited profiles she feels that she would not be able to be authentic to either her queer AAPI friends or her conservative family. She believes that separate profiles are easier to manage and provide a more accurate depiction of her.

Much of the anxiety around participation in existing spaces seems to be over having to perform a certain identity (not necessarily a desired identity) in order to be recognized or accepted.

Creating Spaces
To assert their authenticity, participants create their own spaces. In addition to creating personal networks of friends, participants also formed public groups to provide support to and awareness of their communities.

Creating Authenticity. As already demonstrated, queer AAPI individuals often adjust their identity performance so that they "pass" or are accepted in different situations. To avoid sacrificing their preferred identities, queer AAPI individuals create their own personal and public spaces. The spaces then can provide a sense of community for others.

For example, Naomi, a 27-year-old queer Khmer American, stated that she deals with so much on a daily basis that she wants to create a community where she can be herself:

> Sometimes people are like, "Why do you hang out with all these queer Asian people? Don't you feel like you are limiting yourself in some way." [I] think about it that I have to deal with a lot of other bullshit all day, every day, so why shouldn't I have this bubble?

Having a space that is both queer and AAPI is important for individuals because it provides a refuge from the marginalization they feel in other settings. Naomi states that she is so frequently in spaces that are not conscious of, or sensitive to, her identities that she deserves a space where she can be herself. Though others criticize her for living in a bubble, she explains that it is a way to deal with all the other expectations and oppression she faces due to her identity.

A queer AAPI community is what she needs to have a safe and healthy space. Hannah further elaborates:

> I definitely use Facebook as a venting space more than people realize and I also very carefully curate my friends…But then people see that and assume that I live in a bubble where no one disagrees with me, which is not true…And I have to sometimes clarify with them that this is my way to vent, steam, to get opinions from my friends, and to not have to deal with people who don't believe in certain basic things that I believe in.

Community extends beyond having friends who are queer and AAPI. Friends need to be people who share basic understandings and values. For example, Nancy explains that people on her Facebook can't be anti-feminist or she will block them from certain posts to make sure it is a safe space for her. In fact, at the time of the interview, she had blocked 156 individuals on Facebook. Hannah works hard to "curate" her friends so that she can create a productive and healthy online space to satisfy her needs.

Both participants mentioned here expressed a desire to create safe spaces for themselves. Even in existing queer AAPI spaces, people may not be completely comfortable, so creating their own spaces is sometimes the only way for them to assert their authenticity without the concern of a negative reaction.

Personal Spaces. Many individuals create private spaces for themselves, which provide them not only with a sense of community, but also a way to build their queer AAPI network. For example, Hannah helps organize and facilitate an informal queer game night. Additionally, several individuals also mentioned that they have peers that act as support and allow them to be themselves. These communities are not public, in that they are all built on existing relationships. Personal friends act as the primary support group for some individuals, especially those who might not want to interact with public spaces.

Public Spaces. In addition to personal spaces, individuals create public spaces, in which other members of the queer AAPI community can participate. These communities are public in that they are not only open to those outside the individual's personal friends, but they are also created to benefit the broader community. For example, Mariko created Team Ferosha, a queer Asian dance group. Though it was originally created for members in the queer AAPI dance community to come together and have fun, they perform dance pieces that educate audience members about queer issues. In a recent performance titled "Don't Ask, We Tell," the team performed a piece referencing and mocking the United States military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. Shane, a 24-year-old queer Japanese American, helped organize a Gender and Sexual Positivity group at a conference that brought together queer Japanese Americans to discuss issues within the community. Additionally, Nancy and Naomi were involved in the creation of a lesbian Web series titled *That's What She Said*, which features the stories of queer AAPI women.

Facebook as a Tool for Community Maintenance. For many of the participants, Facebook is a maintenance tool for offline communities. For instance, the Japanese American Gender and Sexual Positivity group uses Facebook to organize offline meetings, such as potlucks, that maintain the existence of the group. Additionally, the group provides a space for members to post articles, videos, and thoughts relating to queer Japanese Americans.

Similarly, Team Ferosha is primarily maintained through an online Facebook group:

> On Facebook we have a Team Ferosha group and we post in it. And it's not only about dance; 90% of the things that get posted in there are totally not dance related. It's like drag Cinderella or a picture of a rainbow unicorn or an LGBT related conversation I just had with someone else on the team or a coupon for Rage tonight.

Offline groups use Facebook to maintain their cohesiveness in an online setting that allows for more frequent interaction. In the case of Team Ferosha, the amount of content dedicated to building relationships illustrates how the Facebook group helps maintain relationships and build a sense of community. The Facebook group is an online tool used to increase camaraderie and sense of community in the dance group.

Even close offline friendships can be maintained and strengthened by Facebook. Isabella, a 23-year-old Taiwanese American genderqueer individual, explains:

> I use Facebook is to interact with my close friends and…almost all of them are queer…I think of Facebook so much as a vehicle for communication rather than an actual community in itself that it's like a reflection of what I experience in real life

except less so because I only interact with people I want to interact with on Facebook.

For some, Facebook is a tool that individuals and groups use to maintain their communities, rather than creating new ones. Isabella uses Facebook to maintain contact with individuals and does not see it as a place where community actually happens. For her, it is a "vehicle" of communication and a way for her to maintain the friendships that she created offline.

Alternative Strategies

There were participants who did not see themselves as involved in either existing queer AAPI spaces or creating their own queer AAPI spaces. For many of the participants, part of this was because the queer AAPI community feels too small or restrictive for them. However, participants still find support in individual relationships. For example, Trisha, a 21-year-old queer identified Japanese American, explains how though she does not see herself involved in the queer AAPI community, she still finds support in specific relationships:

> There's just a lack of spaces [for the queer AAPI community]…But, I found really good, cool people to talk about my queer identity with especially because I have one friend who has such similar experiences as me of being a person of color, a woman of color, going through this stage of I'm not just straight and being in a hetero-committed relationship and all these other things and so that's been someone who's really cool to talk with.

Even if individuals are not involved in queer AAPI spaces, they still find necessary support. Trisha explains that, for her, there are not enough queer AAPI spaces for her to get involved with. Though she is not involved directly with personal or public queer AAPI spaces, she still relies on individual relationships and the support they provide her.

Overall, participants find spaces in which they can receive support and assert their authentic selves. The pressures of identity performance are present in many spaces that are not queer and AAPI, so participants seek out existing queer AAPI spaces or create their own. However, some individuals find the necessary support in other spaces.

Discussion

Participants' approaches to spaces included participation in existing queer AAPI spaces, creation of new queer AAPI spaces, and involvement in other non-queer AAPI spaces. Participants' involvement with groups supports their practices of resilience.

Based on the data of this study, I present a definition of resilience as the practice individuals use to survive and preserve their identities despite being marginalized by mainstream society. Resilience includes both literal physical wellbeing and the preservation of one's authentic identity. My model of resilience includes two different strategies: conformity and authenticity. Each of these strategies has a value and a cost to the individual.

The strategy of conformity focuses on conforming to societal norms and expectations in order to escape discrimination and physical, emotional, and mental violence. The conformity can be proactive, such as presenting a fake identity, or reactive based on the perceived expectations of other individuals. Almost every participant employs this strategy in some situations. Typical spaces in which this strategy is used are professional work settings or with family members to whom the individual may not be "out." This strategy provides individuals with security; for example, by conforming to the heteronormative culture of many corporate work environments, participants remain secure in their jobs, relationships with co-workers and managers, and opportunities for promotion. However, conforming can also leave individuals feeling conflicted by the difference between their presented and actual identities.

In contrast to conformity, authenticity focuses on an individual prioritizing the survival of their authentic identity. One's identity is asserted even at the cost of relationships and reputation. Participants who used this strategy often chose to confront individuals who made insensitive homophobic or racist remarks even though it meant bringing attention to their marginalized identity. Individuals gain satisfaction and a sense of empowerment by claiming their identities.

Because of different contexts and audiences, the participants in this study engaged in a combination of the two strategies to varying degrees. Participants evaluate the value of each of the strategies in different situations and decide which strategy provides a higher value than cost. For example, being "out" to a boss who is suspected of being homophobic might have more severe consequences than being "out" at a bar or in a social setting. Both conformity and authenticity are forms of resilience. However, negotiating between the two adds stress by constantly forcing individuals to make decisions about their identity performance.

In order to manage the stress, queer AAPIs create and participate in spaces that both affirm their identities and provide support. Since individuals are often expected to perform inauthentic identities in different situations, they need a space to assert their authentic selves. The support groups and the sense of community that accompanies them help sustain resilience by providing a space where one can be genuine without fear of backlash. For example, both Naomi and Hannah mentioned that they created a space where they can interact with other individuals who have similar experiences and understandings, which provides them with a day-to-day support structure to survive marginalization.

The availability of community members and spaces online allows participants to engage in strategic authenticity online as well. Specifically, in this study participants turned to Facebook to create and participate in support environments. As an SNS, Facebook makes it easier for individuals to receive support and affirmation on a more constant basis than offline interactions do. By using Facebook groups, offline communities can communicate with each other more frequently virtually than they can physically. However, to avoid the consequences of context collapse inherent in SNSs, queer AAPIs must engage in specific maintenance activities. For example, participants discussed "curating" their friends, creating limited profiles, or even creating multiple Facebook accounts. Though there is a cost to creating a safe space on Facebook, the cost is worth it for many participants because the space helps support their resilience practices on a more ubiquitous basis than offline spaces.

Limitations

There are many limitations to this study. Since the experiences of queer AAPIs are diverse, this study cannot generalize the experiences of the community nationwide. Additionally, though it was intended as an AAPI study, no Native Hawaiians or Pacific Islanders participated. Furthermore, some queer identities, such as the transgender community, were not present in the study. Both of these groups may have very different experiences than the study participants reported.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have demonstrated how queer AAPI individuals experience community both online and offline. I discussed how they are involved with existing queer AAPI spaces, are creating new ones, and are involved in alternative strategies outside of the queer AAPI community. I highlighted a common thread between all these spaces,

namely, that they provide places for participants to be their authentic selves. Finally, I presented a model of resilience as a practice in which individuals focus on their physical survival as well as the preservation of their identity. Queer AAPIs practice resilience in their daily lives by negotiating different strategies of identity presentation. Communities provide support for resilience practices by providing spaces that affirm identities. This research provides a better understanding of how dual marginality affects individuals' experiences with communities, and how those communities are built and maintained.

Though there are several limitations of this study, many individuals, especially those who face multiple forms of marginalization, may be forced to engage in resilience practices in the same way that queer AAPI individuals are. Future research might compare the experiences of queer AAPI individuals with others who experience dual marginalization. Additional opportunities for research include exploring ways SNSs, such as Facebook, can improve to foster safer online spaces for marginalized communities. Additionally, research can be done on how Facebook can be used as a better maintenance tool for individuals, like queer AAPI individuals, who also experience serious consequences of context collapse.

Acknowledgements

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