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Transnational Information Networks: Methods for Cross-Diasporic Research

RACHEL KUO♦[1]
University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA

MADHAVI REDDI
Lehigh University, USA

LAN LI
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, USA

This article outlines a qualitative, community-engaged, and pedagogical approach for studying mis- and disinformation spread across transnational, intergenerational, and multilingual networks within Asian diasporic communities. Asian America is a vast diasporic umbrella with a diverse array of linguistic and cultural backgrounds and histories across local and transnational geographies, and a holistic study across communities requires a methodological process and framework that can account for community-based differences across communication platforms, cultural contexts, languages, and histories. Bringing together a combination of community workshops, oral histories, focus groups,

Rachel Kuo: rskuo@wisc.edu
Madhavi Reddi: mreddi@lehigh.edu
Lan Li: ll12@unc.edu
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and public-facing outreach, this study approaches mis- and disinformation from the lens of how people's lived experiences of survival and migration and positionings across different formations of power connect with their political engagement across national boundaries and consumption of news information.

Keywords: community engaged scholarship, transnational networks, Asian diaspora, misinformation, oral histories

"If we talk about politics, it's difficult, even within family. With my younger brother, we don't talk. You have to be careful here because you don't know what people think. It could make people unhappy," said one of our relatives when we first started exploring this project. In building our methodologies for a research project on intergenerational and transnational information networks, we began by talking to our own family members about their histories of migration and their relationship to politics and news media. The theme of "not talking about politics" was a recurring one. As we probed into their lives and what kinds of information and media they consumed, we found our older relatives as being full of secrets,[2] about their pasts as well as political beliefs.

Drawing from over two years of research to *build* a methodology beginning in 2021, this article details a qualitative and pedagogical approach for studying information spread and political belief across transnational networks within Asian diasporic communities. Using a combination of public workshops, oral histories, and volunteer participant-led semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and community partnerships, this study connects histories of migration with political engagement, media use, and information practices to make an intervention in contemporary debates on mis- and disinformation.

Studies of mis- and disinformation and media manipulation and its impacts have included a focus on bots, troll farms, conspiracy theorists, right-wing political elites, and big tech platforms (e.g., Freelon et al., 2022; Ong & Cabañes, 2018; Tripodi, 2022). Our study expands on this existing body of research to consider our parents, elders, and relatives who fall asleep to conspiratorial channels on YouTube (Moon, 2021); the aunties and uncles who spread inaccurate health information on WhatsApp group chats out of love and care (Rao, 2021; Shah, 2020); the family members who joined their local conservative Baptist church that offered access to community services after migrating to the United States (Liu in Kuo & Peters, 2021); and aging relatives who are losing their memory, which impacts their ability to communicate with loved ones who can only speak English, and turn to in-language nationalistic media as they self-isolate from other family members. We consider the feelings of insurmountable difficulty in communicating about politics across generations and languages, such as being unable to talk to family members about why they might support political figures with racist and nationalistic ideologies (Chilukuri, 2022), or the feelings of shame and guilt of not knowing the languages and histories of our own families and communities. When we think about the costs of mis- and disinformation, we consider the lived, material, and emotional impacts within our intimate domains, such as families, loved ones, and close-knit communities, as well as the political costs.

[2] The common trope of immigrant parents "loving secrets" is pithily described in Hasan Minhaj's 2017 stand-up special *Homecoming King*, where he jokes about the difficulty of knowing his parents: "They love bottling them up deep down, and unleashing them on you later" (Minhaj, 2017, 03:43).

While disinformation has been taken up as political communication given its impact on social relationships to public information (Freelon & Wells, 2020), as a field of study, political communication has focused minimally on race as central to understandings of politics outside of its function as a demographic variable (Freelon, Pruden, & Malmer, 2023; Grover & Kuo, 2023). With a focus on the transnational dimensions of race and politics, we approach mis- and disinformation from the longitudinal perspective of people's lived experiences of survival and migration and their positioning across historical and contemporary formations of power and differential encounters with state and institutional violence. Contemporary problems of mis- and disinformation reveal older, long-standing social and political problems, not just technological ones. Currently, solutions for mis- and disinformation tend to focus on technical aspects and/or corrections of "good" versus "bad" information without considering root causes such as racism, colonialism, and imperialism. Problems of disinformation are ultimately about power and politics, not about what is true and false. How people make discernments about information is tied to political values and how they make sense of their material contexts and circumstances, which requires methodologies that understand people's relationships to information within particular contexts. By looking at diasporic histories, our project aims to highlight a method for addressing mis- and disinformation that moves beyond correcting "bad" politics and false or problematic narratives.

Our study develops a holistic methodology and framework for a relational study of Asian diasporic communities and creates processes and best practices for intergenerational and multilingual conversations about politics and information habits (including what they do and do not consider as trustworthy information) as well as community skills building by conducting oral histories and interviews. Our project is structured around paid volunteer-based data collection by bilingual younger members of different Asian diasporic communities to gather meaningful information from a community member or family member of a different generational status, factoring in both age and migration to the United States for data collection. The main points of volunteer engagement with the project (which we detail later below) include (1) attending an introductory community building and skills sharing workshop; (2) conducting at least one interview; and (3) participating in a follow-up focus group. This process affords community building among volunteer interviewers to share stories and collectively learn from each other as well as provides opportunities between the trained volunteer interviewer and their interviewee to hold conversations and deepen their understanding of each other's perspectives. This article begins with a discussion of why we chose this approach in connection with extant methodologies and scholarship on disinformation in conversation with literature on communication structures and diaspora; it then details the different components of our approach and shares findings from the pilot process on the challenges of navigating intergenerational and multilingual communication.

Transnational Networks and Diasporic Politics in Mis- and Disinformation Studies

This study builds on interventions in public and scholarly discourses and approaches about mis- and disinformation. As other scholars have critiqued, studies of mis- and disinformation have a presentist view that focuses primarily on the post-2016 moment and treats disinformation as a so-called toxin polluting an assumed otherwise healthy information environment and as a threat to democracy and civil society (Bratich, 2020; Kreiss, 2021; Kuo & Marwick, 2021). We argue that a critical approach must attend to root causes and histories of mis- and disinformation beyond the current moment—this necessarily entails a

theoretical and empirical understanding of empire and racialized state violence as they shape contemporary politics and information environments. Additionally, studies on mis- and disinformation often universalize and center Whiteness and English-language media (Nguyễn, Kuo, Reddi, Li, & Moran, 2022). This ignores and elides the experiences of diasporic communities of color; the ways in which information moves transnationally; and the plethora of ethnic news, in-language community media (Rajagopalan, 2021), and non-Western owned and -operated platforms and media. Finally, methodological approaches to studying mis- and disinformation have focused primarily on data scraping on platforms, quantitative analysis of message reception, and effects on behavior to capture high-level patterns and trends. However, these methods can be limited in interpreting sociocultural structures, histories, and contexts. Relational nuances among people, power, and information are difficult to measure quantitatively or to determine cause and effect. The overemphasis on computational approaches has also led to popular interest from companies, funders, and researchers that seek to automate fact-checking and content takedowns based on big data sets. This has also led to solutions favor individual responsibility through digital literacy skills development to make people better consumers of information. These solutions cannot adequately apply understandings of how information is used to maintain and consolidate power and exacerbate violence in different local, regional, and transnational contexts nor provide structural solutions that disrupt powerful elites and institutions.

Thus, our methodological framework seeks to offer an intervention on both existing methods and solutions. Our approach addresses existing temporal and spatial limitations by looking longitudinally at people's life course experiences of political and information environments. This allows us to look beyond the study of "individuals and their ideas" and examine the power structures, sociocultural hierarchies, and historical conjunctures that give rise to misleading information (Drążkiewicz, 2022). In building our framework, we consider two major factors in how problematizing and addressing mis- and disinformation can be approached: (1) the diverse transnational migratory histories of diasporic Asians and how these histories connect with people's relationships to politics and information; and (2) approaches to information from the lens of activism and movement building.

First, understanding information in diasporic contexts requires attention to the complexities of interactions between local and transnational place-based contexts and online mediation (Espiritu & Tran, 2002; Shams, 2020; Srinivasan & Pyati, 2007). As Lia Wolock (2020) notes, "Diasporic identifications are always constructed in relation to transnational migrations and imaginaries" (p. 190). The Asian diaspora encompasses a diverse set of places with vastly different histories, thus "Asia" is not a singular unit of analysis. For example, different diasporas have different proximities to the English language based on respective histories of imperialism and the uneven effects of globalization (Mizumura, 2014). English as one of the official languages of India (the other being Hindi) creates a very different experience for diasporic Indians than for places that do not have a history of British or U.S. colonization. Our project brings critical information studies and political communication in conversation with Asian and Asian American studies (e.g., in line with work by Lori Kido Lopez [2021], Jonathan Ong [2021], and Sarah Nguyễn et al., [2023]). The "transnational turn" within Asian American studies (Lin, 2016) redirects us to connections between legacies of empire and imperialism in the Asia-Pacific region through dynamics of power among Asian nation-states and also between "Asia" and the United States in a post–Cold War globalizing economy. This analysis helps us remap the transnational dimensions of collective political identities and ideologies in relation to

information systems across and within geopolitical and historical contexts. For example, diasporic political affiliations traverse between "homeland" and "hostland" dynamics (Shams, 2020).

We use our approach to look at genealogies of migration and movement in connection with politics, media, and information practices. This also enables us to push back on the assumption of immigrant and non-English-speaking communities as merely vulnerable or susceptible to false information due to lack of technological competence. Immigrant communities navigate media and communication environments in ways that are contextualized by their circumstances and in relationship-specific ways. For example, in their long-term ethnographic study of new media as care practices between migrant mothers and children, Madaniou and Miller (2013) point out how the different mediums reflect relationships, so letter-writing, phone calls, texting, and video chats—or polymedia—all have different practices associated with navigating emotions and conflicts. Lori Kido Lopez (2016) draws from a history of media development and original qualitative interviews with Hmong American media creators and consumers to demonstrate the creative uses of conference call software and mobile phones as a form of mass communication in Hmong diasporas. Through life-story interviews, Jason Cabañes (2018) ethnographically explores the extent to which U.K.-settled Filipino immigrants' political imaginaries of refugees are informed by their relationships to popular media and experiences of xenophobia. Directly in conversation with our research project, Nguyễn, Moran, Nguyen, and Bui's (2023) study uses focus groups across two generations to study information disorder within Vietnamese American communities and finds that intergenerational divides and historical traumas underpin the relationship between misinformation and political action. Our research builds on these qualitative, longitudinal, and historically informed approaches to study the links between diasporic media practices and what these habits of engagement and discernment can tell us about disinformation.

The transnational dimensions of Asian and Asian American information structures (see Nguyễn et al., 2022) are difficult to follow, capture, and document through computational methods that primarily focus on public information on singular platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter. The transnational circulation of information in Asian diasporas means working with information environments that are multi-platform and often involve closed networks. For example, conservative news channels from one country may have a YouTube channel and then make it to the family WhatsApp group or be part of ambient sound in a multigenerational home. Additionally, nearly one in six Asians and Asian Americans use messaging applications such as WeChat, WhatsApp, LINE, and Kakao to discuss politics (Fang, 2021). Each of these platforms has different features and affordances, such as in-app search engines or large group forums, that propagate information and determine how sociality is mediated in various ways (see also Malhotra, 2020). It is also challenging for researchers to consensually access data from these closed network platforms. By using volunteer-based oral histories, we can have a better sense of how people interact with information on different platforms, which is often considered understudied in Western academic research.

Second, our approach to mis- and disinformation emerges from the perspective of studying activism and social movements. Mis- and disinformation have become broad, ambiguous categories to analyze information allowing different stakeholders to grapple with various social problems and issues. We reemphasize that what people categorize and consider disinformation is contingent on their political convictions and values and what they consider common knowledge and truth. As Reddi, Kuo, and Kreiss (2021) point out, disinformation narratives use "identity propaganda" to exploit and weaponize particular

histories and traumas to consolidate existing regimes of power. For example, harmful narratives targeting Asian and Asian American communities exploit historical fault lines to sow divisions not only within these very communities but also in ways that pit Asian Americans against other communities of color (Asian American Disinformation Table, 2022). Contemporary frictions in our communities cannot be solved just by "fixing" the information environment; they require political organizing to shape people's understandings of social structures and efforts to move people and their politics. We study mis- and disinformation because of a wider interest in building transnationally informed political solidarities across language and generation, and we are driven by active commitments to seeking the end of intersecting structural oppressions, including imperialism, White supremacy, patriarchy, and casteism.

For example, to understand problematic information in Asian diasporic communities requires questioning normative understandings of what it means to be "American" and how hegemonic Whiteness and conditions of empire define "American-ness" (Grewal, 2005). So, analyzing how Chinese conservatism propagates on WeChat, the most popular communication platform among the Chinese diaspora, entails understanding different cultural and political fluencies that respond to histories of immigration exclusion with continued investments in meritocratic promises of the "American Dream" (Feng & Tseng-Putterman, 2019). Furthermore, we may understand immigrant survival and assimilation through the narrative erasures, silences, and "secrets" of intergenerational struggles and traumas in response to memories and uneven endurances of U.S. violence under the guise of state benevolence (Baik, 2015; Cho, 2008; Nguyen, 2012). Again, what is understood as the oft-oversimplified and moralized problem of "right" and "wrong" information within our diasporic communities is connected to long-standing forms of state-sanctioned violence while also having a day-to-day lived, material, and emotional impact on our families and relationships.

Across these different strategies for survival and struggles for belonging, intergenerational tensions can also emerge. As studies of family dynamics and migration have examined the emotional consequences of geographic distance and separation (Nguyen-Akbar, 2014; Parreñas, 2001), we consider questions of "distance" in the context of proximities. It is emotionally difficult to talk about divergent politics in some of our most intimate domains and relationships, whether to disrupt false and harmful information from a loved one in a group chat (Malhotra & Pearce, 2022) or to confront community members perpetuating racist and nationalistic politics. For example, in 2016 and 2020, digital crowd-sourced projects such as the Letters for Black Lives Project aimed to raise intergenerational discussions about racial politics with family members by translating discussions about Black liberation, racism, and policing in the United States into multiple languages and with cultural context. At the same time, these formats potentially pose second-generation Asian American children of immigrant parents as couriers of anti-racism while associating Asian-ness with ignorance or naivete (Bae & Tseng-Putterman, 2020). In other words, this associates American-ness with being the harbinger of progress and Asian-ness with being backward, which continues to render diasporic communities as foreigners in the context of their day-to-day life (Dirlik, 1996). These problems of how we talk about politics across generations and languages within Asian diasporic communities are political organizing problems. Looking at the robust and varied histories of political revolution and struggle across Asian and Asian American diasporic communities (e.g., Ishizuka, 2016) and the manifold forms of civic engagement by both youths and elders (Nguyen & Quinn, 2018; Wong, 2021) enables us to understand the importance of relationship building and political education and dialogue as central to social and political change.

Our methodological framework addresses limits in predominant approaches within the landscape of mis- and disinformation research that narrowly focus on platforms and technologies as drivers of both problems and sites for solutions. This is insufficient when applied to diasporic contexts and for addressing sociohistorical problems. For Asian diasporas, the heterogeneity of platforms, languages, cultures, and histories requires a multi-method and multisited qualitative approach that draws on different communities' experiences and expertise. As Asian and Asian American researchers from different ethnic diasporas, we understand that we have gaps and limitations, which exist in shared knowledge about histories (including our own), language capacities, and in-community relationships. Thus, to address the multiplicity of Asian and Asian American diasporic experiences, we have been building our methodology to be a more expansive process that relies on paid volunteer researchers as bridges to different communities. Furthermore, training volunteers to conduct interviews and oral histories within friendship and kin networks through a reciprocal practice of nonjudgmental listening offers an alternative route to intervening in problematic information beyond fact-checking, content moderation and takedowns, and digital literacy.

Designing a Qualitative Methodology

The main points of engagement with the project include (1) attending a 90-minute introductory workshop to share experiences of the impact of mis- and disinformation on familial and community networks and offer skills-based training on conducting oral histories and semi-structured interviews; (2) conducting at least one 60-minute interview with someone of an older generation; and (3) participating in a 75-minute follow-up focus group for volunteers to discuss findings. We started building our methodology in spring 2021, piloting an initial version of this project in the summer and fall of 2021. We have since organized five pilot community workshops thus far that were also research feedback sessions. Our methodology was developed during the height of COVID-19, thus participant engagement in workshops and focus groups was restricted to remote participation only and also led to creativity around digital pedagogy. For example, Google Jamboard (which will now be defunct starting October 2024) was used as a substitute for markers, Post-its, and large poster paper that might be used during in-person workshops. In spring 2022, with the support of undergraduate researchers, we revised the workshop based on additional testing and feedback and piloted another version of the research process in summer 2022. This paper primarily focuses on reflections and findings from the pilot phase of this project between 2021-2023, conducted under Institutional Review Board #21-1552.

The first part of the research process was the onboarding workshop, which had three primary goals: (1) gathering informational data about volunteer interviewers and potential interviewees; (2) providing an educational overview on the historical and contemporary impacts of mis- and disinformation; and (3) offering skill building on conducting the qualitative interviews. In the initial versions of this workshop, we focused on onboarding volunteer interviewers by detailing the logistics of the project, such as describing the interview guide and how to upload audio files, transcripts, and notes. We had originally designed the workshop to support volunteers with different levels of experience with interviewing and research and structured the workshop around how to do the interview in relation to the project. However, since receiving and implementing feedback, the workshop focused more broadly on education and building skills around interpersonal communication and research gathering. Additionally, the new structure allowed for participants

who attended the workshop but did not follow through with the whole study to still learn something applicable in their day-to-day life.

The workshop was divided into two halves. The first half emphasized learning through reflection and discussion, which is outlined here. The second half of the workshop was an interactive walk-through of the interview guide (learning by doing). The first 45 minutes of the workshop used an activity on Google's Jamboard feature and interactive discussion to open up conversations on how individuals saw the impact of false and harmful information spread in their diasporic communities and intimate networks. Each Jamboard has a prompt and participants used a combination of digital "post-its," image uploads, or text features to respond.

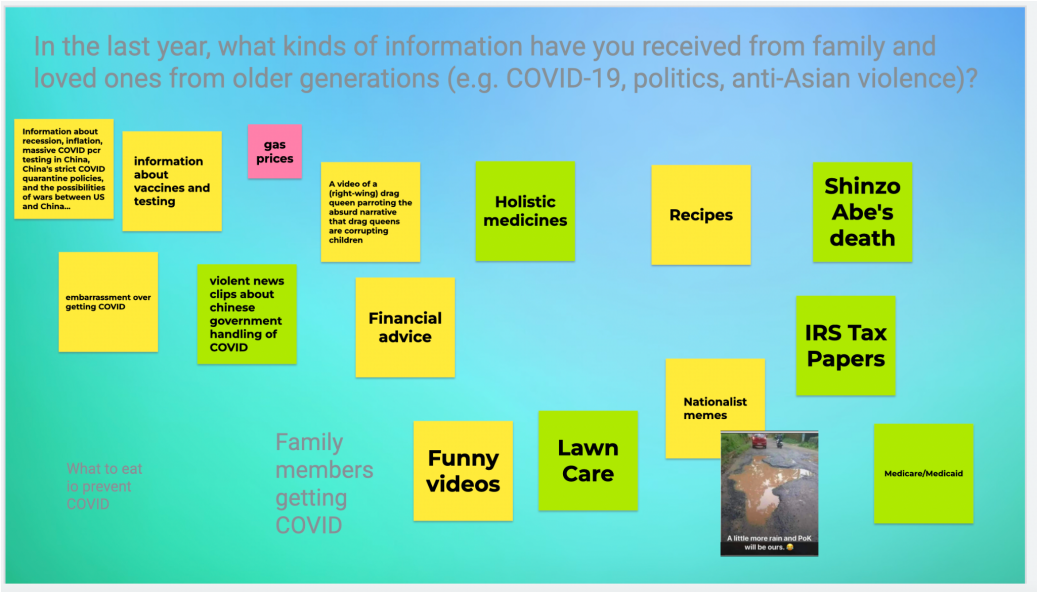

Figure 1. Interactive discussion on Google Jamboard reflecting different examples of information and content participants received from family members and loved ones in older generations.

During this activity, participants responded with a mixture of narratives about contemporary politics in and out of the United States (e.g., China's quarantine policies) as well as information shared out of care (e.g., recipes and kinds of food to eat to prevent COVID-19). For example, a participant who identified as Indian American shared a nationalistic meme sent by an uncle that included a photograph of a rain puddle in the shape of India. The subtext of the text included in the meme essentially stated that with a little more rainwater, the Pakistani part of Kashmir would also become part of India (see image of puddle and caption in Figure 1). This participant also shared that much of the forwarded content they received was "unattributed," meaning that its source was unknown; and visual content was often "grainy" due to "being captured multiple times," resulting in a loss of pixels per inch and lower image quality.

Another prompt asked participants where this information came from. While our study does not make direct attributions to a specific media form or outlet nor trajectory of information flow in connection

to political beliefs, we are generally interested in information environments as one component of live diasporic experiences. The majority of participants named group chats as the primary source of information circulation for diasporic families. WeChat, WhatsApp, Kakao, and LINE were cited as prominent platforms where these group chats were housed, with each app tied to different diasporic communities. For example, multiple participants within South Asian diasporic communities emphasized they received content from family members via WhatsApp. One participant described WhatsApp group chats as a space in which norms and rules around what content to share or not share would be regularly negotiated. Unlike other social media platforms where information is circulated to a wider social network, messaging platforms allow families and communities to maintain some level of privacy while enjoying some of the same features of more public-facing platforms such as image/video sharing, commenting, and liking. The activity provides an initial landscape of what people are experiencing in their everyday life. After the activity, participants discussed each other's responses. Discussion questions may include (1) How do you share news and information with your family and community? (2) Have you received information that you thought was inaccurate or false? (3) What are examples specific to your diasporic communities you have noticed? From these conversations, several themes emerged.

Most participants who were part of these group chats indicated that they received information that they deemed inaccurate or false. Many alluded to a sense of media and political literacy that has helped them filter these messages. However, when it came to their elders, they often highlighted class and education status as a marker for how likely their elders were to engage with misleading content. Participants also described avoiding discussions around politics and directly addressing false information. Many also noted that they were unlikely to outright correct the sender of any misleading content as a way to keep the peace within the family group, and others noted that "correction" was not such a straightforward task of merely presenting the "right" kind of information.

After the workshop, the participants conducted a semi-structured interview with a person of their choosing or the oral history component. The information we received back from participants included the audio file, a transcript, if possible, and a structured set of notes summarizing the interview. To prepare participants for this, we offered them an interview guide, which had gone through several iterations. We continued to adjust this guide based on feedback from participants as many participants were using it verbatim, and several of the questions and sequencing led to clunky and awkward conversations. Some participants found themselves rewording or adapting questions based on how the interview was going.

The second half of the workshop introduced participants to the interview guide in a more interactive way. Participants joined the workshop with some idea of who they wanted to interview and had to be guided in navigating the question order and process. We led participants through a guided self-reflection activity on what they already knew about this person, what they liked to know, and any challenges they foresaw. For example, participants expressed interest in learning about their interviewee's connections and histories with their home countries after years of migration. One participant shared that her mother "has secrets" and wondered, "What's her [my mother's] relationship with Korea? Why hasn't she gone back in these years?" The self-reflection also supported the participant in anticipating potential reactions from themselves as well—what do they find most challenging to listen to and respond to? What are their emotional triggers? During the workshop, each participant annotated their own interview guide to change and adapt the

questions and sequencing based on their knowledge of the interviewee. We wanted the interview guide to offer a loose structure but also be adaptable based on someone's interviewee and their relationship with them. Additionally, we also supported participants in navigating challenging moments during the interview by showing them de-identified transcripts of challenging moments and having participants discuss potential ways to navigate them.

The final part of this process was a focus group where volunteer participants of a similar workshop cohort came back together to discuss their experiences of the interview and their findings. These focus groups offered perspective through interviewee interpretations of the primary data collected from the interview. For example, several participants shared that during the interview, a relative said that they did not use social media, or that they did not like and trust different platforms; however, having personal insight on this person, they were able to add context during the focus group that this person was actually very active on platforms such as Facebook. Other members of focus groups thus far had noticed defensiveness from their interviewees, which made it hard for them to gather information. The focus group was also a way to get additional feedback on our methodological process, as well as provide an additional sense of community building among participants.

Navigating the Challenges

In moving people from workshop to interview to focus group, we had preliminary data about *how* to build a multilingual and intergenerational research process given specific perspectives, challenges, and considerations across different diasporic communities including Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese, Vietnamese, Chinese, Indian, Filipinx, and Pakistani diasporas and also interviews conducted in Mandarin, Tagalog, Hindi, and Urdu. Using the data collected during the pilot studies, we started a preliminary analysis of the interview and the focus group data and identified three key challenges and patterns that emerged from the analysis of the interview and focus group transcripts. Based on this, we continued to refine our methodological process.

Talking About Politics Without Talking About Politics

An emergent theme was also the difficulty between interviewer and interviewee in talking about politics directly (see also Nguyễn et al., 2023). We had to find ways to restructure the interview guide to support ways to "talk politics" without actually asking about politics. This builds on Diane Wong's (2019) conception of intergenerational "shop talk" in Manhattan's Chinatown, described as informal community dialogue for political strategizing and collective memory making. Everyday sites of discourse and media use are integral to politics (e.g., Harris-Lacewell, 2006). On the surface, what may seem like a lack of interest or nonengagement in political discourse were actually active strategies by interviewees, such as for navigating relational dynamics in civic communities or processing experiences of institutional violence. Additionally, different interviewees also had varied definitions of politics.

For example, one person reflected in the focus group that it was interesting how her mother defined "what was politics and what was not" as well as her understanding of the relationship between politics and different kinds of media technologies. During the interview itself, when bringing up the recall of Gavin Newsome, California's governor, her mother said, "*That's not really politics, but it's good to know.*"

Interpretations of what constitutes political engagement or activity may also differ across geographic sites, which requires nuanced understandings of cultural, geographical, and even interpersonal contexts. This level of nuance, we argue, can be only achieved through qualitative methods. For example, when asked about how Taiwanese people engaged politically, the answer focused on "voting for presidents," including highlighting that people would fly back to Taiwan to vote. It was not until the last question, when the interviewer asked "Is there anything else you want to tell me?" that her mother mentioned that her sister "believes in Trump" as a gesture to how her political beliefs differ. When asked, the mother explained

> You gotta watch news to know what's happening now. She doesn't have a TV, I don't know why. They [her siblings in Taiwan] watch everything from Google. They watch everything in front of the iPhone. They talk on LINE, [go to] YouTube about politics . . . I watch the news. That's why some people believe in weird stuff, like riots in capitol. They have their own beliefs.

She emphasized that her sister got her sources from YouTube and shared, "I don't trust YouTube." By asking questions about how people were communicating with friends and family, assumptions about the relationship between digital media platforms and technologies with political bias surfaced. Interviewees also mentioned strategies of diverse media consumption to address their concerns about political bias in information systems. One person shared that her uncle would mention "flipping through channels" rather than having a "one-stop shop" for news, such as visiting both Fox News and CNN to stay updated during the pandemic. Another interviewee also mentioned, "I watch a lot of news on different channels—a lot of people are using these systems to steer opinions."

Interviewees also generally approached the idea of "politics" as contentious. In addition to intergenerational political conflict, several interviewees mentioned divisions with their friends and siblings and that potential conflict and tensions were reasons to not talk about politics. One participant shared that the newsworthy topics her mother primarily talked about with friends and family included catastrophes and natural disasters, given the common experience of earthquakes. During the focus group, she re-interpreted her mother's response to politics as, "Politics is when she turns things off and chooses to ignore it, especially if conflict might arise in discussion." In another interview, one interviewee shared that she would never "forward news" nor discuss politics on LINE, a phone app common in Taiwanese communities, given the potential fighting and conflict. She says, "It's manners. I don't want to listen to politics so I left. All my forwards are jokes, but I don't pass on news. Politics and religion, I don't discuss."

Additionally, experiences under governments with political corruption or authoritarianism may lead to an aversion to politics and perceptions of U.S. political institutions as corrupt. During a focus group earlier on in our pilot process, a participant reflected on his interview saying, "My mom doesn't want to discuss politics." In the interview, he asked his mother what it was like for her to leave the Philippines. She shared she had left during martial law under Marcos, and when probed about what she remembered about the government at the time, she replied, "It was dirty." Throughout the interview, when asked who she talked with about politics with or what she thought about politics, she repeated, "I don't engage too much in politics . . .I would say that politics here is dirty. There's the same problem with the United States and the politics is also dirty. More corrupt and corruption." Follow-up probing questions then led to one-word responses.

In early versions of the pilot study, participants shared difficulties in digging deeper into political perspectives. One participant shared during the focus group that he tried to ask his aunt about what she discussed in one of her WhatsApp groups and reflected that she was "hesitant to share." Later, the aunt mentioned that topics were "not discussed in the general population" and included mentions of geopolitical violence in Kashmir, Palestine, and Afghanistan as "hot topics" shared in the group while remaining hesitant to disclose more during the interview itself. Another participant reflected on similar challenges, saying, "I don't know if the interview has substantive stuff of what she believes." Feedback regarding challenges in discussing politics also prompted iterative updates to the interview protocol to be more flexible. That is, rather than providing a highly structured protocol laden with numerous questions and follow-up prompts, over the course of the piloting process, we consolidated the interview protocol around a few key components to create more leeway for volunteer interviewers to adjust, rearrange, and organize the questions in ways that would facilitate a more comfortable conversation. In our interview guide, we then adjusted our questions to ask about experiences of political conditions and histories in broader ways, such as, "What was your day-to-day life like growing up? Can you describe where you lived?" We also adjusted questions seeking an opinion to emphasize memory recall or third-person perspectives, such as "Who was in power at the time?" or "What do your friends think about this? What are other people saying?" During our initial workshop, we also facilitated a process for participants to tailor their interview questions.

Additionally, in these conversations, people also shared concerns around Asian diasporic mental health, which is often invisibilized in our communities, and emphasized the need for support and care to heal divides that have emerged. The emotional challenges of political conversations in our communities are also embodied. As one participant said, we are "feeling this in our bodies." In later iterations of the workshop and versions of the interview guide, we provided resources on incorporating reassurance and affirmations throughout the conversation; as one participant suggested, it is important to build in reminders that there are no "wrong answers." Our reflections on these challenges also remind us that mis- and disinformation are not individual problems but structural problems. Our method looks to individual experiences and intimate domains of structural problems to connect the dots on how interactions with information live within longer histories.

Relational Dynamics Between Interviewer and Interviewee

Incongruencies between the focus group and interview transcript data illustrated trickiness around relational dynamics between interviewer and interviewee, which is also connected to the difficulty of "talking about politics." In one example, a participant talked in depth about her mother's experience of martial law in Taiwan (or "White Terror" under the Kuomintang party's government rule) during the focus group; however, during the interview itself, when asked directly about her experiences of martial law, or as the interviewer posed, "How Taiwan was under military law during Chiang Kai-Shek?", the mother had replied, "No martial law." The line of questioning was shut down abruptly during the interview, while the participant shared her speculation about the impact of martial law on her family's history during the focus group. While this is also an example of the challenges of language interpretation and translation (discussed further below), this example also reveals much about the interviewer's desires for particular narratives and stories about their interviewee. In addition to learning more about the interviewee's history and media use, we

learned more about how the relationship between interviewer and interviewee shaped the contours of the conversation.

As exemplified above, interviewers may have had questions and expectations around what they hoped to learn from the conversation (e.g., their family's immigration history) when the interviewee was a parent or close relative. In another example, an interviewer shared during the focus group that she thought her mother was intentionally not sharing information and giving her a "practiced answer." While she knew that her mother had left the Philippines in 1982, during the Marcos regime, her mother told her that the country was "peaceful and nice and quiet" and instead focused her migration story on meeting family in the United States and how she got a job. The interviewer reflected, "I think there's history there, purposefully left out." These rehearsed answers also stem from the first-generation immigrant interviewees having to narrate a story the same way for so many years. Interviewers may also hold their own understandings and perceptions about events that they compare against the answers provided by their interviewees.

Close, preexisting relationships between the interviewer and interviewee, such as a parent-and-child relationship, as well as prior knowledge of certain historical and political contexts can bring some benefits (e.g., in pursuing follow-up questions or using linguistic intimacies, which are discussed further below) as well as challenges (e.g., complexities and tensions embedded in the relationship or power dynamics, such as age hierarchies or financial dependency). Participants occasionally noted not being taken completely seriously during the interview or receiving rehearsed answers. One interviewer shared the concern that if they dug too deeply, there could be repercussions on the relationship. "It's tough to get a more robust answer." From interview transcripts and reflections during focus groups, probing into personal and political views occasionally led to shorter answers and made the interview awkward. One participant interviewing her uncle overcame this challenge by changing questions or engaging in different conversations to get him to open up again. Other participants' experiences led them to change the question order. The political and cultural context of the country where the interviewee immigrated from; the age of the interviewer (younger or older); and gender dynamics between the interviewer and the interviewee are also factors that may contribute to how openly or challenging navigating certain conversational topics can be.

Going into these conversations from the workshops, participants shared feeling more distant from their family and community members with divergent political beliefs. For example, there could be different perceptions on who is consuming "false information," such as one instance where an older family member believed that alignment with Black Lives Matter or progressive movements was the younger generation being indoctrinated by misinformation and being radicalized as "communists." In another example, one participant shared that the person they wanted to interview and understand why and how they came to their political beliefs—a relative who held beliefs about Hindu nationalism—was someone that they would not feel readily comfortable talking to or pursuing a conversation with.

As Nguyễn and colleagues (2023) have also found, political tensions in familial relationships can occur due to language barriers and intergenerational divides. Our method provides an interactive way to navigate and address these tensions. In our research process, we emphasize the importance of active listening without judgment and make clear that the goal of the interview itself is not to convince or persuade anyone of anything but rather to understand their perspective. Participants found that this process supported

them in practicing nonjudgmental listening by allowing them to ask follow-up questions and broach challenging topics from a position of curiosity and inquiry versus a position of debate. Picking up on the importance of relational dynamics in these interviews, as well as some gendered patterns of who volunteer interviewers seemed to more frequently select (e.g., mothers, aunties), subsequent pilot workshops explicitly asked participants to envision whom they would like to interview and then work through a learning-by-doing activity with said interviewee in mind. From initial analysis of the data, and over the course of the workshop development process, participants were then asked to actively imagine these potential (tricky) conversations. think through possible points of tension, and collectively brainstorm ways to work around these difficulties, and thus iteratively uncovered a greater depth of understanding around the challenges they may face based on relational dynamics.

Language Translation and Interpretation

The project is one that emphasizes transnational listening across generations and languages. One of the most difficult challenges is the question of language translation and interpretation. At the level of data analysis and interpretation, this poses difficulties given that interviews may be conducted in a range of languages outside of the research team's proficiencies or move between English and another language. Most auto-transcription cannot record multiple languages or English with varying accented inflections; existing multilingual language models have gaps and limitations, including an understanding of local language contexts (Nicholas & Bhatia, 2023). Furthermore, human translation and transcription get expensive quickly. However, just as significant is the role of language when it comes to the interview guide itself.

One of the main reasons we relied on volunteer interviewers was because of limited language capacity, given the many different Asian languages and regional dialects. Volunteer interviewers and interviewees in this study had linguistic intimacy, where each person had an established communicative rapport and understood each other's use of particular words and phrases. Due to the potential mutual understanding of the linguistic strengths and differences between the interviewer/interviewee, such as different fluency between English and Asian languages, participants could better maneuver through barriers and reach mutual understanding even if both parties might not have had the precise vocabulary in a particular language. For example, one interviewer described starting their interview in English, but then as the conversation progressed, it transitioned to Urdu. In other cases, the mediating language was entirely in English, and the linguistic gaps were more challenging to bridge. One participant shared that she was unable to communicate in Bicol, a language spoken in the southern Philippines, and needed "to speak in another language [English] they share." As shared during the onboarding workshop by several participants, not being able to communicate fluently with the interviewee's mother tongue (including one's parent) can introduce feelings of guilt, shame, frustration, and further disconnection.

Intergenerational communication involves navigating not just linguistic barriers but also cross-generational cultural and social understandings. While one of our goals was to create versions of the interview guide in multiple languages, we still did our training in English. Thus, participants may have needed to translate parts of the interview questions into other languages or into English words more readily understood by themselves and the interviewee (e.g., information, news, app, or platform). What is considered "information" or "news," in English can be interpreted in multiple ways (e.g., updates that occur within familial circles or news

from broadcast television), let alone translated into another language. Thus, asking someone how they receive "information" is not such a simple question, but asking more specific questions about news may lead to narrow interpretations about news that elicit nonresponses. We directed participants to ask questions more openly (e.g., "What do you talk about with your friends?") or be specific about persons and platforms (e.g., "What do you talk to [insert auntie's name] about on WeChat?" While interviewees responded first with examples that seemed nonpolitical on the surface (e.g., recipes and animal videos), further probing about the content revealed that some recipes and recommended food ingredients were shared as COVID-19 mitigation strategies or viral animal videos that depicted state cruelty were shared as a means to criticize different governments.

Language barriers introduced tensions in the conversation that connect with the above two themes of relational dynamics and politics. One participant shared during the focus group, "The words cannot be conveyed . . . even if using Tagalog, it was tough to elicit specific examples." He described how when asked about sources of information, his mother "cannot name them even though she spent a lot of time on her phone." These difficulties manifest as overly general responses, awkward pauses, or gaps in the answers and at times, can only be filled in through preexisting knowledge.

We might also think about language access and fluency as always constantly changing. One workshop participant shared concerns about an elder in her family getting dementia. This person could no longer speak English, making it difficult to communicate with loved ones who could not speak the home language. Their return to monolingualism may also mean that elders in similar situations could become more socially isolated as well as isolated within information networks by consuming only home language news. This example highlights how bringing care and intention into communication processes is necessary to build mutual understanding across linguistic barriers. These challenges have led us to reflect on how direct translation is often not enough and that processes of translation are also about a contextual and relational dynamic. This helped us rethink how to structure the workshop to help lead interviewers through the conversation and what additional considerations have to be kept in mind depending on the relational connection between the interviewer and the interviewee. We are in an active stage of exploring different ways in which issues of language can be better addressed in future workshops as well as how to foreground the voices and agency of the interviewee more through refiguring the focus group.

Conclusion

In building this research methodology, we begin to connect how histories and lived experiences undergird political analyses. Beyond research, this methodology is also a political project that brings together intergenerational memory and care work (see also Wong, 2021); language justice and access; and critical pedagogy. Reflecting on this process, participants shared that they found value in participating because it helped them better understand their own histories and get to know a loved one more deeply. Some also mentioned that the research study provided a "good excuse" and "bubble of nonjudgment" with which they could engage in more difficult subjects that were often challenging to bring up.

Ultimately, in doing this work, we are interested in the role of Asian and Asian American racialization and politicization in building movements across an uneven politics of difference and understanding the tensions and challenges that make collective struggle outside of parochial nationalisms difficult. This study

aims to do what Minju Bae and Mark Tseng-Putterman (2020) suggest as a "return to internationalism" (para. 42) in our politics and movement building as a critique of American-ness that requires building shared analysis of intertwined and transnational systems of racism. To do this, we have demonstrated our work in building a set of tools for conducting oral histories and interviews to learn about different diasporic histories across languages and generations to further transnational analysis in Asian American politics. As we highlighted earlier, we see many of the fractures and frictions made more visible by our information and technological landscape as requiring solutions of political organization as a mode of longer-term intervention versus fact-checking and content takedowns.

While different diasporic groups in the United States may know a lot about U.S. politics or their specific diasporic contexts, there is much shared learning to do to understand politics in and across Asia, especially given the forms of cross-cutting ethno-nationalisms, incommensurable encounters with war and militarism, and different histories of migration. We see this method as one part of the process of building collective knowledge about transnational and diasporic Asian histories. In creating this methodology, the principal investigator (Kuo) also had multiple scoping conversations with potential community partners, including a range of national organizations, local groups, and diasporic-specific organizations that are already conducting research or seeking to develop research-based strategies on mis- and disinformation in Asian American communities. Most of these initiatives have focused on media monitoring and creating bilingual interventions for sharing accurate information. This leaves room and interest for research that can offer a historically informed contextualization of circulated content and a deeper understanding of different media ecosystems. These conversations focused on potential areas of collaboration and the application of this research to political organizing, as well as sought out potential interest for co-organizing versions of the workshop for political education as well as research recruitment. Beginning in 2024, a version of this project building on top of this methodological framework, works closely with the Filipino Young Leaders Program's Tayo Project and the Alliance of Filipinos for Immigrant Rights and Empowerment (AFIRE) Chicago to do a deeper dive into diasporic memory, media use, and political engagement.

For our 2021 pilot project, we also invited staff members, organizers, and stakeholders from these different groups to attend early versions of the workshop and offer feedback. Community organizers who participated in the pilot project highlighted that this process could also support learning more about their membership base, such as Asian migrants, when it comes to organizing against problematic narratives in the community. By bringing together these different histories, we also aim to reveal aspects of intra-community dynamics among the different Asian diasporas as well as consider how Asian Americans also play a role that links U.S. expansion and dominance to geopolitical tensions across Asia and between the United States and Asia—in other words, bridge different contexts and scales beyond the United States to understand diasporic relationships to media.

There is much to unpack and understand about Asian American diasporic politics across generations particularly as they become mediated through various digital technologies such as mobile chat apps. As Wolock (2020) reflects, "Digitally mediated experiences of diaspora allow space for such communities to build or strengthen novel connections, imagining new configurations of identity, solidarity, and belonging" (p. 200). The process of building this method has been slow and showcases messy and iterative processes of figuring out *how* to do research. Even within Asian diasporic contexts, there is much to expand and adapt

on, such as how we factor in experiences such as those of Asian and Asian American transnational adoptees, multiracial and multiethnic households, and international students interested in doing intragenerational research. In spring 2023, an undergraduate student researcher on the team adapted parts of this process as an interactive workshop for a student organization she co-leads for Asian-identified students who also feel "in between" their identities and cultures.

In sharing parts of this methodology at different conferences and workshops, we have received feedback and interest in adapting this qualitative methodology to study other diasporic groups and communities of color, especially given the limitations of data scraping and other quantitative methods in addressing the politics of race, migration, and history. We see this methodological process as a framework that can be applied elsewhere and adapted with different community nuances and contexts in mind. While the overarching design of this methodology has been specifically developed to consider Asian and Asian American diasporas in the United States, elements such as guiding participants through potentially challenging conversations with family members across generational and linguistic divides are aspects that future qualitative, ethnographically driven studies and interventions may draw from and build on to better understand media and politics in different place-based communities. Additionally, this methodological pipeline could be useful at the intersection of global communication and political communication for understanding migration and media across different geopolitical contexts, cultures, and histories and to intervene in Western dominance and Anglo-centrism (see also Nguyễn et al., 2022). Intergenerational dialogue offers opportunities to attend to how histories and contemporary formations of imperialism, colonialism, capitalism, and militarism shape differential experiences of migration and displacement globally in ways that impact language, political and identity formation, and day-to-day transnational flows and consumption of information. When transposing and applying this framework to other communities, we suggest taking time to think through the different dynamics and factors shaping those groups' experiences of media and politics.

Beyond just producing new knowledge, moving slowly through the process can function as a kind of community care work, particularly among researchers and participants jointly navigating different experiences and relationships. The "true costs" of mis- and disinformation are our relationships as well as the future directions of Asian American political formations.

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