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**UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES – DILIMAN**

**3:00 P.M.- 5:00 P.M., Wednesday, 22 February 2012 Seminar Room**

**GT-Toyota Center Hall of Wisdom**

## Title Page

# The Derivative Family Construct among Filipino Amerasians in Luzon, the Philippines

*P.C. (Pete) Kutschera and Mary Grace Talamera-Sandico*

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## **The Derivative Family Construct among Filipino Amerasians in Luzon, the Philippines**

### ***ABSTRACT***

This paper focuses on the phenomena of the ‘derivative’ Amerasian family construct, an ancillary finding in a larger multiple-case study recently published examining stigma and psychosocial risk and its impact upon mental health symptomatology among (N=16) African (Black) and Anglo (White) Filipino Amerasians. Few empirical studies have been conducted concentrating on mental health and socioeconomic issues confronting an estimated 50,000 biracial, mixed heritage Filipino Amerasians abandoned when permanent U.S. military bases were ordered withdrawn from Luzon in 1992. Permutations of the locally described derivative construct included a pattern of Filipina mothers bearing children of servicemen, civilian employees or private defense contractors of different racial or ethnic extraction, mothers often but not always engaging as prostituted women or in casual sex industry liaisons, and passing or attempting to pass such life style choices onto children in inter-generational fashion. Derivative Amerasian families also exhibited various aspects of severe social disorganization found in traditionally dysfunctional families including parental absenteeism or total abandonment, lack of consistent authority at the helm, housing insecurity or a history of homelessness, transient and itinerant lifestyles, physical and mental violence, neglect and abuse, possibly of a sexual nature, and generally materially impoverished lives.

*Key Words: Filipino Amerasians, family dysfunction, military prostitution, stigma, psychosocial risk*

## **The Derivative Family Construct among Filipino Amerasians in Luzon, the Philippines**

*P.C. (Pete) Kutschera and Mary Grace Talamera-Sandico*

The term *derivative Amerasian family* emerged from a three-year long qualitative case study of psychosocial and mental health issues confronting an estimated 50,000 or more African, Anglo and Hispanic Filipino Amerasians including infants and children who remained in the Philippines following the forced withdrawal of permanent U.S. military installations in 1992. Indeed, both the term and the features it encompassed emerged as both an unanticipated finding and a mental health stress factor in the multiple-case study (Kutschera, 2010) titled “Stigma, Psychosocial Risk and Core Mental Health Symptomatology among Amerasians in the Philippines.” Sixteen African (Black) and Anglo (White) Filipino Amerasians were selected in a purposive sample in order to study the impact on long reported stigmatization and discrimination encountered by biracial, mixed heritage Amerasians.

A relatively small population and sub-culture with diaspora like features, the military Amerasian underpinning in the archipelago dates to the Philippine-American War (1899-1902). Then, U.S. American defense planners made a firm decision to maintain permanent bases throughout the colony (Wolff, 2006); a policy which carried through the commonwealth years (1934-1946), including and beyond World War II, to virtually the end of the Cold War Era (Karnow, 1989).

Amerasians, though primarily populating western and central Luzon, and chiefly the locales around the former Subic Bay naval base at Olongapo-Zambales and Clark air base, Angeles City-Pampanga, are actually scattered individually or in settlement neighborhoods throughout the archipelago. The Gastardo-Conaco & Sobritchea (1999) study of 443 Amerasians, “Filipino

Amerasians: Living In the Margins,” examined low socioeconomic status, high poverty and family organizational issues in a structured sample selection methodology. A large and robust study encompassing most age categories, it also reached out to Amerasians in Metro Manila, Leyte and Cebu, concluding they were a highly at risk population needing and deserving of social services attention and protections. An estimated 6000-to- 8000 Amerasians are reputed to be living in the Angeles-Pampanga locale alone (Cervantes, 2011), making it in all probably a domicile to one of the highest concentrations of Pan Amerasians in the Western Pacific Basin.

The unofficial and highly unscientific figure of 50,000 Amerasians residing in Luzon and environs was the one mostly reported when the U.S. flag was finally lowered at Subic naval base November 24, 1992 (Levi, 1993; Sturdevant & Stoltzfus, 1992). However, that number may well represent a significant undercount (Enloe, 1989; Montes, 1995; Kutschera, 2010), especially since news media and anecdotal estimates did not include older generation or geriatric Amerasians still alive at the time. Neither did these projections include succeeding or second generation Amerasians. Or, for that matter, did it envision a new but comparatively diminutive generation of Filipino Amerasian children born since the inception of the 1999 R.P.-U.S. Visiting Forces Agreement, opening the Philippines for continuing and expanding Balikatan U.S.-R.P. joint training exercises, and the re-introduction of U.S. troops on Philippine soil fighting Muslim insurgents in Mindanao in the Global War On Terrorism (GWOT) (Brookes, 2007; Radics, 2004; Tritten, 2011). Another more recent addition are Amerasian children born to Filipina sex industry workers in Japan (Okinawa) and South Korea who since the 1992 Philippine bases withdrawal have mostly replaced Japanese and Korean female entertainers in bars and clubs catering to U.S. servicemen and defense contractors assigned to those locations (Cervantes, 2011).

Filipina mothers of Amerasians came in contact with air force, naval and marine personnel, U.S. civilian government and defense contract workers through social relationships or sex industry liaisons. A number of researchers, historians and writers (e.g., Enloe, 1989; Gage, 2007; Levi, 1993; Montes, 1995; Perpnan, 1997; Wolff, 2006) held that many Amerasian children, including other Pan Amerasian enclaves on the main islands of Japan, Okinawa, South Korea, Thailand, Vietnam and the U.S. Territory of Guam, were the direct result of a structure of *military prostitution* encouraged, supported or alternately tolerated by U.S. military authorities with the connivance or compliance of corrupt local officials. Despite the many anecdotal

observations about the extent and nature of name-calling, verbal harassment, stigma and discrimination among this historically marginalized population cohort, an investigation found no published, systematic studies of how their impoverished and stigmatized origins may have impacted upon their lives.

#### STATEMENT OF OVERALL PROBLEM

A handful of U.S. and Filipino researchers (i.e., Levi, 1993; Gage, 2007; Gastardo-Conaco & Sobritchea, 1999; Gage, 2007) noted the lack of extant socioeconomic, psychosocial or mental health research on the low-SES and poverty marginalized Filipino Amerasian cohort as opposed, for instance, to Vietnamese Amerasians who by comparison were extensively studied in the 1980s to mid-1990s (Bemak & Chung, 1997; McKelvey, 1999). Many Filipina national mothers of Amerasians came in contact with air force, naval and marine personnel and U.S. civilian government and private defense contract workers through flourishing sex industry enticements or the result of normal boy-girl/man-woman social relationships. Consequently, Anglo and especially Africans often experienced stigmatization and discrimination starting at an early age; common problems included impoverished households, name-calling and verbal or physical harassment over their origin of birth and physical features, housing insecurity or homelessness, dysfunctional family stress, identity confusion, low self-esteem, social isolation and others. A full generation after military bases' closure a glaring gap in the research literature persisted. Fresh research was needed to examine the conditions of racial and ethnic stigmatization and discrimination and to gauge psychosocial risk and stress factors and their clinical relationship to core elements of mental health symptomatology (depression, anxiety and stress).

#### MAIN STUDY BACKGROUND, RESULTS

A multiple-case study, mixed methodology research design was used to explore impact of stigmatization and discrimination-related psychosocial risk and stress and relationship upon a sample (N = 16) of mixed-parentage adolescent and young adult Anglo (White) and African (Black) Amerasians in Angeles City, Pampanga, Luzon, former site of Clark air base, former U.S. 13<sup>th</sup> Air Force headquarters..

Data-gathering instruments, to facilitate participants' answers to questions over how their situations affected mental health, included a semi-structured, researcher-designed interview guide and the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS) measuring depression, anxiety and

stress. Data collection, extensive interviews mental health measurement tests and allied case study research were conducted on a field sample of 16 late adolescents and young adults from 2007- to- 2010 (Kutschera, 2010). Four sub-groups were divided into two ranges (ages 16-19 and 20-39) of equal numbers of females and males and Africans and Anglos. The research site was the Angeles-based Amerasian outreach programs of the non-profit Philippine Children's Fund of America (PCFA) and Pearl S. Buck International. The sample was nonclinical (i.e., not in mental health treatment). Selection was by the purposive method to ensure participants had a reasonable likelihood of encountering stigma due to origin of birth and physical features, or to assure qualities believed typical of the study phenomena (Fortune & Reed, 1999). Sample screening surveys and interview questionnaires and the DASS-21 question materials were provided in both English and Tagalog versions and interviewers were available in both English and Tagalog fluency; sample participant protections and confidentiality precautions were done with approval by the College of Social and Behavioral Science, Walden University, Minnesota, U.S.A. Institutional Review Board in compliance with U.S. Department of Health and Human Services right to privacy and confidentiality requirements.

Findings generally affirmed and provided narrative support for the primary issues raised in the research questions. Participants gave graphic, first hand reports and/or provided eye witness accounts of stigmatization, discrimination and low-socioeconomic status (SES) marginality among both Anglo and African Amerasians. A total of 82 personal or physical risk factors and 76 mental stress factors were identified among the sample starting with the loss of the father's services often from birth which generally impelled the family household into a livelihood of impoverishment. Qualitative cross-case analysis identified multiple physical risk factors, including alcohol and drug abuse, poverty and homelessness. Other factors were stigma related, including exposure to biracial tension and violence, name-calling, abandonment despair, identity confusion, and derivative family strain. Over half the sample (62.5%) scored severe levels of anxiety, depression or stress. Higher risk factor and mental health symptomatology scores were universally elevated for Africans.

Additionally, there was a clear co-occurrence among those participants with severe presentations of core mental health symptomatology (anxiety, depression and stress) and multiples of risk and stress factors. Overall, results reflected a general pattern that the greater the number of psychosocial factors, the greater were mean symptomatology (anxiety, depression and

stress) scores. Of particular note was that aggregations of eight or more of these factors appeared to cross a threshold and symptomatology scores climbed precipitously. Significantly, the mean risk factor number total per capita was 9.93. Thus, these findings suggested a plausible relationship between these variables beyond the mere co-occurrence of risk factors and higher symptomatology scores, a conclusion borne out by McKelvey, et al., (1992, 1993).

## DERIVATIVE AMERASIAN FAMILY CONSTRUCT

An unanticipated finding emanating from the overall study was the surfacing and identification of the descriptive term derivative Amerasian family construct, characteristics of which were found among seven (44%) of the sample. Signs of the construct were spread across both late adolescent and early adult age cohorts including four Anglo and three African Amerasian participants' families (Kutschera, 2010, p. 126). The complaints were also spread more densely among Amerasians with above mean total numbers (9.93) of psychosocial physical risk and mental health stress factors and concomitantly exhibited more elevated core mental health symptomatology levels. Given the frequency of the construct and its apparent impact on nearly half of sample participants a decision was eventually made to include the condition as a mental health stress factor within the main study.

Use of the term derivative Amerasian family was verified by social workers and behavioral health practitioners during field trips to west central Luzon (specifically Angeles City and Olongapo) in 2007, 2008 and 2010. In some instances Amerasian interviewees themselves employed the term pejoratively. This occurred when Amerasians were queried about the size, makeup, quality of familial relations and cohesiveness within either their own or neighboring Amerasians' nuclear and extended families. Social workers and counselors, conversely, used the term more objectively and generally with clinical detachment. A social services aide from the Pearl S. Buck Foundation observed:

A typical derivative Amerasian family...it is one often that the mother chose more than one U.S. military [*sic*] for their children. Sometimes White, Black, or both, and often times later on in life you might find the mother having one or more children with a Filipino male or another foreigner father. Truthfully, oft times such family arrangements were what would be highly dysfunctional, socially disorganized...in the traditional sociological sense. The fathers were itinerants...usually unsupportive in

any financial or emotional way; the mothers, many times prostitutes, or engaged in promiscuous relationships, were having, from time to time, what they would sometimes call 'accidental' children. Usually, but certainly not always, that is often where maternal care either ended or became tentative. Often the mothers would leave the children with their own mothers or the grandmother, an older sister perhaps, cousins or godparents. Sometimes the mother would return, in and out of the picture, to support and nurture their children... whatever were left, if they were not scattered in too many places. Some of them were. Some of them, you know, especially in the early years when the bases left, and there was the Mount Pinatubo eruption (1991), which devastated Angeles; many of these little Amerasian children wound up on the street. They wound up on the streets and dying, in Manila, down in Olongapo, or whatever. Now, sadly, this kind of behavior is carried on to the next generation. We see some of the daughters of these irresponsible mothers engaging in the same kinds of behavior over time, all over again ...so these kinds of practices are repeated and they become a cycle, similar to the cycle of poverty that social scientists study and which so many social workers deal with on a daily basis here when you are dealing with Amerasians..

Aretha, an African Amerasian in her late 30s with a history of joblessness and personal family turmoil, including bitter quarrels with her Filipina stepmother, regarded the term "derivative" and the condition it represented with disgust. "Another f----- , all mixed up derivative Amerasian family – that's all they are" is the way she described one family made up of mixed African and Anglo siblings and parents.

You've got Amerasians stuffed into their resettlement *kubos* (huts), all with different skin colors and facial fixtures, all kinds of clashing shapes of noses and thick or thin lips...one with blond hair and blue eyes and another kinky hair and coal dark skin, *diba*? They'd have to keep a score card to know who is the real father of whom, who is the sister, half-sister or half-brother, the *Ate* (older sister), the *Kuya* (older brother), the cousin or nephew, *diba*? . Derivative families are magulo (a mess)."

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Root (1992) outlined characteristics of the dysfunctional or socially disorganized family syndrome as one often lacking parental authority, basic housing insecurity and riddled with household financial deprivation. Other characteristics may include the lack of a permanent home or family gathering place, transient lifestyles, alcohol, drug abuse or dependency, physical and mental violence and abuse, sometimes of a sexual nature. Referring to Asian American populations, some very similar to the mixed heritage, biracial makeup of Amerasians, Root (1985) explained the inherent cultural and psychological barriers encountered in getting this cohort to utilize mental health services conducive to alleviating psychological problems brought

on by such a lifestyle. “Often, the importance of the individual’s cultural context, as it is involved in the referral of someone for therapy, their hesitation to come in, premature termination, or successful treatment is not recognized” (Abstract).

Barker (2003) generally described group or familial dysfunction “as a deficiency in a system that precludes its optimal performance and is synonymous with ‘malfunction’” (p. 133). A dysfunctional or less cohesive family was more likely to “derive less companionship in their family relationships, spend more time with peers outside the family, and are more vulnerable to family breakdown” (p. 155).

In many dysfunctional families, “the problems can be traced back several generations...dysfunctional families do not negotiate difficulties and are unable to resolve conflicts. Instead, there is no open communication of conflict and the existence of difficulties is denied,” Bilynsky and Vernaglia (1999). Discussing structural and organization patterns and characteristics of disorganized or dysfunctional families, Bilynsky and Vernaglia also noted a “chaotic power structure where either one parent holds all the power or children take control because parents have withdrawn from this role.” Characteristics included family patterns of erratically or poorly defined power structure; inadequate or ineffective communication patterns, boundary violation issues and in some instances sexual abuse. Extreme family dysfunction among Australian high school students and adolescents (mean age 15.2 years), self-reporting perceptions of their family dynamic, showed that family dysfunction measured on the MacMaster Family Assessment Device is associated with severe depression as well as thinking about and planning suicide (and) deliberate self harm (Martin, Rotaries, Pearce & Allison, 1995).

Bilynsky and Vernaglia (1999) developed a six-stage, short therapy problem solving model for school guidance counselors dealing with students from dysfunctional families which could conceivably be useful for social workers and mental health counselors working with derivative construct Filipino Amerasians. The procedure includes stages such as successful identification of the child from a dysfunctional household, problem assessment, from the child’s perspective and making initial contact with the family. Other steps include assessing the family’s level of functioning and problem-solving ability, brainstorming solutions, follow-up procedures and re-evaluation of the problem as time progresses (p. 305).

Impoverished dysfunctional families and various forms of social disorganization harbored within them were widely researched written about among a variety of U.S. American racial or

ethnically mixed heritage groups including African Americans residing in festering inner city slums (Rainwater, 1970; Ryan, 1976); Chicanos, U.S. citizens of Mexican American descent (Vasquez, 1970), Puerto Ricans living in Spanish Harlem in New York (Thomas, 1997) and Anglo coal mining families in the eastern mountains of Kentucky (Caudill, 1962).

Use of the term derivative is not normally found in social science applications; a Google Scholar and internet search engine check of standard academic research journal and data bases including EBSCO Host, Sage Journals, Psych Articles, Questia and similar sources did not reveal use of the term either in a familial capacity or related social term application description.

Traditionally, a derivative is defined as a value or substance originating from single or multiple sources of similar, related or fractionally different parts; through a series of stages or processes a derivative develops into its final end state. Though a term popularly used in the fields of finance and chemistry, it may be applied to other disciplines or subjects as well. In chemistry, Mish (1987) described it as “a substance related structurally to another substance and theoretically derivable from it,” or “a substance that can be made from another substance in one or more steps,” (p. 342).

#### DERIVATIVE FAMILY CONSTRUCT - FINDINGS , DISCUSSION, CASE STUDIES

During conduct of interviews for the main mental health study relating to discussion of parental, familial stability, and social support issues for the main mental health study, the psychosocially descriptive term derivative Amerasian family arose with some frequency. This was especially so whenever the conversation and discussion turned to levels of conflict, absenteeism, confusion or disorder generally found in Amerasian families, whether of the severe derivative variety or not. Use of the term was freely offered and described both by social services personnel and Amerasians and their immediate family associates.

Sometimes Amerasians themselves would make misuse or misapplication of the term referring to an Amerasian family with a single U.S. military father as being “derivative,” or “a deriv,” [*sic*], even though the family would not have the more complex, biracial makeup of an Amerasian family with siblings from two different biracial, or mixed heritage strain fathers. Such inaccurate or misunderstood references, however, were the exception.

Based upon these observations in the field I made the following observation in the main study, “While interviewing sample participants I often heard this term essentially referring to many Filipino Amerasians deriving from inherently fragmented, transitory or highly dysfunctional

family units” (Kutschera, 2010, p. 134). My continued interest and inquiries into the phenomena resulted in the following template of traits; sometimes they were consistent and patterned, and at other times offered varying permutations. The description below is updated from the original study with more current and precise detail provided:

1. A Filipina mother who has borne two or more children from two different U.S. servicemen partners of different racial or ethnic mix. The mothers may be engaged as a prostituted woman, or births of such children may be the result of sex industry liaisons
  
2. A mother who has borne a child from a serviceman of either different races or ethnic background, and also a child with a Filipino father or other male partners such as another foreign national.
  
3. A family with a severely dysfunctional or socially disorganized household, including evidence of lack of parental authority or household authority figure, housing insecurity or a history of homelessness, irregular household income patterns and materially impoverished lives, transient lifestyles, alcohol or drug abuse, dependency or addiction, and physical or mental violence, neglect and abuse, possibly of a sexual nature.
4. Over the course of time some of these characteristics including dysfunctional family lifestyle, or engaging in and out of the sex industry, would become intergenerational in nature, much in the manner that traditional cycles of poverty and disadvantage are carried forth from one generation to the next.

It is significant that seven (44%) of participants revealed that their origins were rooted in the so-called derivative family social construct. Five of the seven participants describing lives as derivative family Amerasians recorded clinically elevated DASS 21 measurement cutoff level scores. These ranged from ranges of borderline moderate depression and anxiety to borderline severe depression, extreme severe anxiety and in the case of participant Karen, profiled below, a rating of extremely severe anxiety. The five participants with elevated anxiety and depression scores also reported personal risk or mental stress factors in excess of the 9.93 risk factor mean recorded for the sample; totals ranged from 10 to as high as 13 risk factors each. .

Presence of the derivative family construct was considered traumatic enough in the main study to be reported not only as an unanticipated result; it was also listed under the category of a mental stress factor and therefore one which could negatively influence mental health symptomatology score measurements. Under prescribed DSM-IV (APA, 1994) clinical guidelines procedures, conditions described in the derivative Filipino Amerasian family construct and its characteristics of chronic family dysfunction would probably classify as an Axis “IV: Psychosocial and Environmental Problem (PEP)” issue (Munson, 2002, p. 186), which provided the primary basis and guidance for many of the physical risk and mental stress factors described and identified in the main study.

### Case Study Profiles

Representative, abbreviated case study summaries covering four of seven participants reporting derivative Filipino Amerasian family construct conditions among the original 16 participants and contained in the main Filipino Amerasian case study, (Kutschera, 2010, Appendix III), follow:

#### Karen, African Adult Female

Karen, an adult mother of an Anglo teenage daughter, two African Amerasian sons of U.S. servicemen fathers, as well as another child from a second Anglo foreigner, admitted that she is a “living example” of the multigenerational derivative family. Karen herself was the daughter of an African U.S. air force servicemen from Texas who was stationed at Clark in the late 1960s. She described her turbulent upbringing as a factor leading to a life of unstable male relationships, prostitution, alcohol and drug abuse, marginal employment opportunities, and eventual impoverishment.

Karen’s Anglo daughter, Sunrise, who was also one of the sample participants and is profiled below, was the offspring of her liaison with an Anglo marine stationed at Subic Bay. Like Karen’s father, this partner basically abandoned or estranged the family in Luzon and returned stateside to resume previous lives. Karen herself was born in Olongapo and raised in an indifferent, permeable household; her mother often had her shifted from relative-to-acquaintance-to-relative as she grew up. Her momma worked in the Olongapo-Metro Manila-Angeles sex industry axis for most of Karen’s formative years. Maybe it was providential that Karen’s life would fall into the same orbit. Hers oldest son, a 20-year old African Amerasian

lives today with his grandmother, Karen's momma in Olongapo, but she is reserved and tentative when discussing the whereabouts of another African son, other than to say he "is with one of the three god mothers." Karen, Sunrise and an eight year old son whose father was her ex-Anglo Canadian boyfriend occupy a tiny, two room cinderblock and tin roof construction *kubo* off a MacArthur highway side street in Angeles. Karen's cousin, Amber, also shares the household and helps with housekeeping chores and laundry.

When employed in the sex industry as a "bar fine" dancer, featured stripper, or hostess and bartender Karen, like many of her peers, drank regularly, and frequently used the club drug of the moment which back in the early 1990s was ecstasy, a choice later shifting to cocaine. Later came the low budget cocaine substitutes - crack and the volatile amphetamine shabu - which entertainer Karen frequently used frequently for recreation and excitement. On the dance circuit Karen tells how she changed her performance names and outfits from month-to-month. One month her dance name was "Ebony," the next "Sister Chocolate, the next 'Jada Fire" or "Exquisite," and so forth. "We thought the dancing, the drugs and all the attention, excitement and partying would never end." But it did. Today Karen reports her financial situation and personal life are so bereft that, "I really can't afford to even send my youngest child to public school." After the clubs Karen found work as a maid, baby sitter, laundress and house cleaner. "Most of my employers treated me bad [*sic*], sometimes never paid me...forced me to work bone hard." Harder also was simply not being able to keep whatever semblance of a family was left to take care of her kids. So the emptiness and insecurity she experienced growing up shifted to them, as Sunshine and her older brothers were packed off to the grandmother, or family acquaintances as changing circumstances warranted..

Recently employed as a provisional, part-time corporate commercial call center associate Karen brings home a monthly income of between PHP \$3400-7000. Even though such income is better than usual, it still left Karen and that part of her family she is able to provide for with a basic essentials existence. She and her household dependents fell within or lower than the parameters of the US\$2 to \$2.50 per capita income per day, the median extremely poor level range formulated by the World Bank.

Called "African monkey," "nigger" and "mustafia," or unsightly woman while growing up, Karen saw her African friends humiliated, even attacked on the street or inside or outside clubs, discos, strip joints and honky-tonks. Her understanding of the stigma and discrimination she has

experienced and lived is not perceived but real. “I’ve been turned down for so many jobs. I applied for a position at (a pizza franchise). Straightaway I was told we don’t hire Black staff. They told me to save my time and not bother with the application.”

Similar to other sample participants drawn from derivative Amerasian families who experienced above the mean number of psychosocial physical risk and stress factors in their lives, Karen also recorded severely severe levels of anxiety (99<sup>th</sup> percentile) on the DASS-21. Other scores included recordings of borderline severe depression (95<sup>th</sup> percentile) and moderate stress (87). Karen’s severely high anxiety score suggested presentation of an serious anxiety disorder, possibility acute anxiety or stress disorder. Her borderline severe depression score is notable given that episodes of clinical and chronic depression have a causal relationship with high family dysfunction. Karen’s severe anxiety and depression scores place her among Africans and women in the sample presenting high dual levels of elevated mental health symptomatology when compared with the rest of the sample.

#### Sunrise, Anglo Adolescent Female

Sunshine is the daughter of an Anglo U.S. Marine father who her mother Karen (included in the sample, above) met in a honky-tonk near Subic Bay naval base. Sunshine, single, unemployed and in late adolescence at the time of her interview, is representative of a third generation, derivative Amerasian family; her grandfather was an African American U.S. airman stationed at Clark who also met her grandmother in an Olongapo night spot and sired her mother Karen. Sunshine was handed off to family members and often lived in insecure, “squatter” housing arrangements during her infant and toddler years while momma Karen performed as a long time dancer-stripper, cocktail waitress, club door greeter and prostituted woman. Like her grandfather, Sunshine’s poppa basically abandoned the family an disappeared stateside.

Besides the standard brickbats reserved for pale skinned Anglo Amerasians hurled at her during her school years, Sunrise was also called “kirara,” a slur word which described the dark-skinned Aeta children of west central Luzon. “Even though I had lighter skin they would do it because my mother is African, and it always angered me severely...made my stomach sick.” Sunshine, who graduated high school but lacks money to further her education and searches frantically for a job, resides in the cramped, two-room resettlement hovel with her mother, and her eight year old Anglo half-brother. Using the Tagalog word pagasa (hope), Sunrise says she

had to “fight my way through high school; I graduated.” Strongly rejecting her grandmother and mother’s sex industry lifestyles, Sunshine insists she is “committed” to finding a job, finding a way to further education, and moving her life “in an upward direction.”

Similar to her mother, Sunshine’s DASS-21 scores reveal severely elevated levels of anxiety (97<sup>th</sup> percentile), but comparatively lower but notable moderate depression (87%) and borderline moderate stress levels. Sunshine’s elevated depression cutoff scores suggest derivative family stress could be taking a toll on her mental health and coupled with her somatic complaints, described below, may be cause for concern. For instance, Sunshine described her sometimes hypersensitive reaction to stressful events, such as recalling her mother’s sporadic references to her long gone father, or her inability to find work to contribute to the household budget. Such episodes appeared to produce symptoms of panic attack onset including feelings of sharp anxiety, trembling hands, dry mouth, shivering, shaking, profuse sweating and “feeling jumpy all over.” These anxiety ridden symptoms co-occurred with psychosomatic complaints or somatic illness, a condition reported by nine (56%) of sample participants. Her somatic discomfort included often daily and persistent headaches, upset stomach, intestinal and gaseous discomfort, diarrhea with symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome, extended menstruation and general physical discomfort of unexplained origin, all DSM-IV criteria for somatization disorder diagnosis.

#### Trisha, Anglo Adolescent Female

Single teenage mother Trisha claimed her prostituted mother “gave me away” when she was barely an infant. The daughter of an Anglo marine who has four estranged half brothers from her natural Filipina mother; her poppa and mother met each other when momma was a “bar fine” dancer and customer relations entertainer at a disco in Olongapo and her dad was assigned at Cubi Point naval station. “My momma and dad were cut from the same coconut tree. They were very young when they had me. I think my poppa was too self-centered to start and give to a family. My mom was in love with the dirty bar business. I think she have many babies [*sic*] with many different men.”

When she was 13, her mother attempted to force her into prostitution, a fate befalling poor and destitute Filipinas in Angeles City, many from the poorest and most remote provinces of the

archipelago. Cradling her two-week daughter born just before her interview, Trisha vowed, “These things like giving me away and trying to force me into that sex life; they will not happen to my daughter.”

It was a cruel and depressing life, Trisha admits, and for a while she almost didn’t make it. Some of her mother’s “boyfriends” and live-in partners abused her physically, mentally and sexually. “They’d get out of my mother’s bed naked and come over to mine and I was a little kid!” For a while she too followed a promiscuous life style with boys and experimented frequently if not heavily with strong alcoholic content beer, rum, weed, and shabu.

There was not much joy growing up in an on-again, off-again family nesting place; it depended largely on when her mom was in town. Trisha and at least some of her four now estranged half brothers lived from time to time with her mom’s laundry lady who she describes as “my beloved guardian.” Her four brothers, who these days mostly live apart from each other, include an African Amerasian brother from another U.S. serviceman, another Anglo brother born from her mom’s ex-Australian lover, and two others from two different Filipino fathers. She says life for her brothers “is hell. They were raised on the street, just street kids going here and there; one was sexually abused, raped by a crazy step father. I am probably the most stable one, though for now we are very poor.”

Indeed, Trisha may be the closest she has in her lifetime to being a sprightly survivor. She has a nice young boy friend, a steadily employed young man who works as a produce checker. Though her household income is just PHP\$6440, or US\$140 a month, a sub-poverty income for a three member family household; she loves her new man and her tiny baby. “I managed to graduate high school with a lot of trouble in my life.” Trisha proudly states she was “class president for two years. I am going to start taking in some laundry next week. We can do this. We will get ahead!”

#### Felix, African Adolescent Male

A thick chested unemployed African American laborer, Felix lived in a cramped two-room, cinder block construction house in the EPZA resettlement district in east Angeles with his 15-year old half sister who was of Anglo Amerasian origin. Unlike six members of other derivative Amerasian families in the sample who could provide general descriptive information about origins and identities of their fathers, both Felix and half sister Kimberly, candidly admitted they

were not exactly sure whether their fathers were U.S. American servicemen, government civilian employees, or military private contractors. Felix explained he brought Kimberly along to the interview “to provide as much accurate family information as I can.”

As with the majority of the sample, Felix never met “Poppa,” the popular and affectionate appellation for father in most languages and regional dialects of the Philippines. Hesitant and tentative when questioned over both his personal origins and those of his half-sister, Felix says he believes his mother, a native of Bohol in the southern Visayas, used to be a bar hostess and so called night club “door girl,” or outside customer receptionist, and also a part-time prostituted woman. Truth be told, mother and son never talked very much about Poppa at all during the brief and infrequent times they lived under the same roof. For a number of years the itinerant mother left the children with a series of relatives or personal acquaintances, sometimes generically referred to as “cousins” or “god parents.” Now home is with a local barangay couple who informally “adopted” Felix and his sister a few years back. Most of the time high school dropout Felix spends the majority of his days unproductively dawdling around the family’s tiny food stall or “sari-sari” store attached to the side of the house. He sometimes drinks up to a dozen bottles of Red Horse, a strong high alcohol content beer popular with the working class, getting drunk. He then stops his binge drinking when his credit dries up at another nearby store, where he makes his clandestine beer purchases.

An alternate recreational escape is getting high on plentiful, local marijuana or an occasional snort, swallow or smoke of shabu, a local form of powerful and sometimes lethal crystal methamphetamine. “I get high. I guess it help me dull the pain. I guess you could call me throwaway kid,” he smiled through a mouth of missing teeth. Consequently, the household where Felix now lives is ridden with tension and rancor. The stepfather, who drives a “trike” or three-wheeled motorized Pedi cab for a meager living, thinks his step son is aimless and lazy. The stepfather wants Felix out looking for a job, any job, even if it means only putting 100 pesos (about USD\$2.50) on the table daily. At least such an amount would buy a few kilos of rice, the stepfather reasons. .

In addition to worrying about his own unsure future Felix obsesses over what kind of life is in store for his “tween” aged sister who is just starting to mature physically and encountered her first menstruation period a few months back. “You know there are ‘recruiters’ who come through these barrios looking for women not much older than Kim; they are looking to pick them up to

work in the clubs. She has whiter skin and looks very much like Americana [*sic*]. It is a hard to resist when, *diba*, the rice is running low and there is not going to be much to eat.”

Felix thinks Kimberly’s dad was probably either a U.S. American or Canadian national contract worker, possibly even Australian. Unsure of his father’s precise identity, and conflicted over his own, he reflected much of the personal discord, low self-esteem, loneliness, social isolation and alienation found in other derivative and marginalized Filipino Amerasian families. In a paean often reflected in the thoughts of other derivative Amerasian family members, Felix observed, “There is mother, a ghost, I never see [*sic*], a father I know nothing of, a stepfather I don’t like, a stepmother who will always decide with him, a house I am not welcome in, and my sister. She struggle [*sic*], in her own way; in many ways we struggle apart.”

DASS-21 scores show Felix contends with borderline severe anxiety and moderate depression, conditions reflected in his DASS-21 score ratings. He complained of anxiety, worries and feelings over gloomy employment prospects and past family hurts, particularly his mother’s long absences and the instability over his daily living arrangements. Felix also amassed a total of 13 psychosocial risk and stress factors, among the highest number of any sample participant. Especially painful was stigma and harassment from his days as a dark skinned Amerasian arriving at grade school and finding he at immediate object of ridicule and rejection.

Among an accompanying host of psychosomatic symptoms Felix said he often encountered a general feeling of physical discomfort, insomnia, nervous energy, back pain, acute tension headaches and gaseous intestinal pain episodes. In addition to exhibiting symptoms of an undiagnosed general anxiety disorder. Felix also reported Post Traumatic Stress Disorder like symptoms on the DASS-21 including experiencing trembling in stressful situations, worry about situations in which he might panic, fear he was actually going to panic, startle affect, sleeplessness and nightmares.

## CONCLUSION

Despite absence of findings and results of larger studies confirming or negating the presence of the derivative family construct among Filipino Amerasians, social workers, social services personnel, home health care providers and aides and mental health counselors working with this population are likely to encounter clients or patients exhibiting characteristics of this social phenomena. This is plausible given the higher than anticipated occurrence (44%) presenting within the (N=16) participant sample. Markedly elevated levels of depression and anxiety

derived from the DASS-21 were found to be present in the summaries of case studies presented for participants Karen, Sunrise, Felix and Trisha and at least one other participant in the main study; two other participants in the main study interviewed from derivative type Amerasian families recorded relatively low elevation or normal DASS-21 core mental health symptomatology levels.. Such findings are also cause to take note given the results from the Martin, Rotaries, Pearce and Allison (1995) adolescents' study which demonstrated a strong if not causal relationship between highly dysfunctional family living arrangements and depression, suicide ideation and deliberate self harm actions by respondents.

Bilynsky and Vernaglia (1999) presented a brief therapy, six-stage model that could be used to guide school student counselors in identifying adolescents from highly troubled or dysfunctional families which resemble many features presenting in the Angeles City Amerasian sample. Such short term and economically feasible therapeutic interventions are worthy of investigation and study as they may have potential use for health care practitioners including social workers or social services personnel who are called into contact with severely dysfunctional Filipino Amerasian families. This is especially true given the tremendously high level of chronic poverty in the Philippines and the limitations of the Department of Social Welfare and Development and many provincial and local welfare departments in providing clinical social work and psychiatric nursing services, or home visit social work services, particularly in rural, outlying regions (Lee-Mendoza, 2008).

Ultimately, larger samples of the magnitude of 150 to 170 participants employed in the Vietnamese Amerasian refugee studies (McKelvey, et al., 1992, 1993), or the 443 Filipino Amerasians selected for the Gastardo-Conaco and Sobritchea (1999) research analysis are in order. Study samples of such magnitudes would be more than justified to confirm or dispel anecdotal claims and occasionally occurring news reports of a highly marginalized and at risk population suffering in the Philippines two decades after the closure of permanent U.S. military bases. Further clinical research is also needed to clarify the relationship between stigma-related psychosocial stress and elevated depression and anxiety and what impact somatic illness has in such an equation. Further clinical research, especially claims of intergenerational aspects, are also needed to examine the ramifications and implications of the derivative Amerasian construct as it was found in the comparatively small sample within the multiple-case Filipino Amerasian mental health study (Kutschera, 2010). Needed are the research study resources to confirm

whether the derivative construct has generalizability, and will continue to reveal itself among the broader Filipino Amerasian population. Also significant are the derivative construct's potential impact or meaning on other Pan Amerasians in the Western Pacific Basin including Okinawa (Japan), Thailand, South Korea, the U.S. Territory of Guam, etc. In this regard use of other alternate recognized and reliable sample selection methodologies including random and structured sample selection processes may be scientifically feasible...

Ultimately the necessity for continued Pan Amerasian research takes on greater significance given the continued forward deployment of U.S. military servicemen and defense contract support personnel in the Western Pacific Rim, East and Southeast Asia and parts of Central Asia. Social change implications include the need for more emphasis by the U.S. Departments of State and Defense on preventing negative consequences for local inhabitants and their children conceived with U.S. servicemen and the rising number of private contractor personnel that accompany such deployments during extended and even brief duration deployments.

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