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But Where Are You Really From? Microaggressions, Discrimination, and Asian American Politics

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But Where Are You *Really* From? Microaggressions, Discrimination, and Asian American Politics

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Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

by

Vivien Leung

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

But Where Are You *Really* From? Microaggressions, Discrimination, and Asian American Politics

by

Vivien Leung

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

University of California, Los Angeles 2021

Matthew Alejandro Barreto, Co-Chair

Natalie Remi Masuoka, Co-Chair

How do racial microaggressions and stereotypes impact Asian American identity and behavior? While studies in political science have shown a link between discrimination, group attachment, and group behavior, less is known about more subtle exclusion (i.e. peer to peer) and its effects on identity and behavior. This dissertation examines how experiences with racial microaggressions, and stereotypes contribute to group identity. I argue that experiences with racial microaggressions are commonplace in the day to day lives of Asian Americans and influence identity attachment and behavior. This project investigates what types of experiences with racial microaggressions that Asian Americans have, and the degree to which these experiences contribute or do not contribute to Asian American politics. I contend that experiences of racial microaggressions—although related to discrimination—affect individual's racial attachment different from that of experiences with discrimination. My results indicate that for Asian Americans, experiences with racial microaggressions and stereotypes along the model

minority and forever foreigner are frequent and are a racializing event that increase the salience of their racial group identity. My findings indicate the need to consider other ways in which bias is perpetuated and experienced, especially in survey methodology.

The dissertation of Vivien Leung is approved.

Lorrie Frasure

Efrén Pérez

Matthew Alejandro Barreto, Committee Co-Chair

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To my parents 梁學文 (Howk Man Leung) and 曹蔓茜 (Manqian Cao). Thank you for all your love, hard work, and for guiding me along an unconventional path.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

The continued salience of race in the United States continues to play a transformative role in shaping the lives and relations of individuals and groups. Since the passage of the landmark 1964 Civil Rights act, discrimination on the basis of race is illegal, and yet substantial racial gaps continue to persist in all aspects of society especially in income, employment, imprisonment, and more (Gathright 2018; Chetty et al 2020; Flores 2018). Changing norms of equality has also contributed to a shift from "old-fashioned racism to newer forms of indirect and subtle racism such as symbolic racism and aversive racism (Kinder 2013; Sears and Henry 2003; Bonilla-Silva, 2004). Accompanying this shift in norms is a change in racialized language and expressions of bias. In present day, it is no longer socially acceptable to express racist and/or discriminatory beliefs despite what one may personally believe in private. The changing nature of how prejudice is expressed necessitates a reconceptualization of what it means to be discriminated against and how these experiences may be quantified for study.

This dissertation takes a different approach to the question of discrimination and its impacts. I focus specifically on interpersonal discriminatory and exclusionary experiences microaggressions and how they lead minorities to become more attached to their group identity and participate more frequently. Microaggressions are "commonplace verbal, behavioral, or environmental actions that communicate hostility towards oppressed or targeted groups. Microaggressions can be intentional or unintentional and can be insulting or invalidating. Unlike overt discrimination, microaggressions can be portrayed as unintentional, non-racial, or even complimentary (Nadal 2011, Sue 2010). I posit that individuals are more likely to encounter microaggressive comments in their day to day lives. In contrast, self-reported experiences with discrimination are low (Alio et al 2020). This could be due to a variety of factors. Non-Black

individuals may not be socialized to recognize discrimination in the same way that Blacks are. Individuals may also be less willing to report discrimination. Given this trend, I create a theoretical framework to capture more subtle experiences with exclusionary behavior and language. Individuals must first recognize the microaggression happening, and then interpret it as racial (and commonplace for other members of their group). This then strengthens their attachment to the group. These experiences reinforce a person's sense of linked fate to their racial group, but the relationship is complicated by the relative ambiguity of microaggressive statements. Microaggressions inform individuals of their standing in the U.S. racial hierarchy and also stereotype individuals based on their perceived group membership. Despite low self-reported experiences with discrimination, my pilot data finds that individuals were very likely to have experienced a microaggression.

Why study microaggressions, especially given their ambiguity and subtle nature? Some have argued that the U.S. has moved into a 'post-racial society following the election of Barack Obama, but race and discrimination remain integral to the lives of people of color in the U.S. (Tesler 2016). Although there is a body of literature in political science dedicated to how structural and political discrimination may move political behavior, the operationalization of 'discrimination and what it means does not sufficiently capture the entirety of minority's experiences. This is especially true in the realm of interpersonal discrimination and how peer to peer interactions may influence identity attachment. Identity is a widely used predictor in political science and has been found to motivate politics (Lee 2008), but the mechanisms in which individuals take up a group identity (i.e. move from the personal to a political group) has been understudied. If microaggressions can be understood as a 'lite' or more casual experience with discrimination, does it have the same effects on politics? This is especially important for

Asian Americans[1], a racial group that has grown exponentially since 1965. The majority of Asian Americans (65%) are foreign-born and arrived in the United States after the Civil Rights era, meaning that their awareness and understanding of discrimination may be very different from that of Blacks. These individuals may never encounter an experience with overt discrimination but are subject to an intense racialization process all the same.

This project establishes a framework that plots microaggressive comments along two axes (1) positive/negative and (2) individual/group. I argue that this framework captures the types of microaggressions and interpersonal relations that can either motivate individual's identity or disengage them. I also argue that experiences with microaggressive comments (which convey stereotypical content) are a shared commonality among minorities. This common experience links members of minority groups together, even among those who have less shared history (i.e. Asian Americans). Despite coming from different national-origin groups, Asian Americans are homogenized the same way by outgroups, meaning that the microaggressions are similar across the group. This then contributes to the individual's sense of linked fate. Linked fate is defined as "a belief that one's life chances are inextricably tied to the group (Gay, Hoschild, and White 2016_. Linked fate contributes to political homogeneity despite socioeconomic heterogeneity, or in the case of Latinos and Asian Americans, national-origin heterogeneity. The motivators for linked fate vary depending on racial group largely due to disparate histories and contexts (McClain et al 2009). For Blacks, a sense of linked fate is derived from continual discrimination and history in the United States (Dawson 1995). For

[1] I use the term Asian American to mean people with origins or ancestry from East Asia (China, Hong Kong SAR, Mongolia, Taiwan, Tibet, Korea, and Japan), South Asia (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka), and Southeast Asia (Burma, Cambodia, Philippines, Hmong, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysian, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam). Due to size and sampling, the data mostly speaks to the experiences of the largest Asian American groups in the US: Chinese, Indian, Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean, and Japanese Americans.

Latinos, the continued salience of immigration and racialization contribute to a sense of linked fate (Barreto et al 2009).

Literature Review

This study seeks to connect the literatures on identity and linked fate, discrimination, and microaggressions. I first review the literature on identity and what it means for political action. Then I look at discrimination, especially in the way it is operationalized and tested and how it affects politics. Finally, I look at how racial microaggressions have been tested. I aim to show how microaggressions can be understood as a subtler expression of discrimination (with similar effects), and what that means for identity and linked fate.

Identity and Linked Fate

Identification with a racial group is a psychological attachment based on shared customs, beliefs, interests, and ideas with other group members. The presence of a group designation however, is not enough to warrant group identity formation and attachment (Gurin, Miller, and Gurin 1980; Jackman and Jackman 1973; Miller et al. 1981). African Americans find commonality via a shared history and a lifelong socialization process, whereas Latinos share a common language, colonizer, and racialization in the United States (Dawson 1994.; Hughes et al. 2006; Barreto 2007). Research on identity choice find considerable malleability in terms of priming different identities and manipulating their salience even under seemingly arbitrary conditions (Tajfel 1974; Tajfel and Turner 1986). Identity uptake is determined by situational factors such as awareness of shared grievance, and awareness of difference (Simon and Klandermans 2001; Huddy 2013).

Since Michael Dawson first outlined the black utility heuristic, scholars have been interested in examining the link between identity, discrimination, and group behavior (Dawson 1994). Racial group identity (along with partisanship) is one of the most widely used independent variables in political science and other social sciences. Most of the work problematizing group identity is centered around African Americans and their experiences. African Americans draw upon a shared brutal history of slavery and continued subjugation in American society to form a basis of commonality and linked fate that follows each individual (regardless of SES) to the ballot box (Dawson 1995). Scholars have taken this framework and applied it to Latinos and Asian Americans, with varying degrees of success (Masuoka 2006, 2008; Sanchez and Masuoka 2010; Valenzuela and Michelson 2016). This finding is complicated by the diversity of the group, especially for Asian Americans. Asian Americans have very disparate histories in the United States depending on the national-origin group, and the majority of Asian Americans arrived in the U.S. after 1965, meaning that socialization of these new immigrants and their children is not as strong as it would be for African Americans (Wong et al 2011). Asian Americans as a whole are ambivalent about the label "Asian American, instead preferring to identify first and foremost by their national-origin (Lien et al. 2001; Wong et al. 2011). The heterogeneity of the Asian American population makes it difficult to determine and define who "is Asian American (Espiritu 1997; Kibria 1997). East Asians are typically thought of as the prototypical "Asian whereas South and Southeast Asians are considered peripheral members (Park 2008). The usage of the term "Asian creates a perception of a homogeneous community, but this is untrue. Asian Americans lack the traditional qualifiers for group attachment, having very disparate histories and experiences in the United States, resulting in a group identity that may be more situation and context-based.

The ambiguity regarding group membership and definition presents yet another challenge in the applications of group identity to politics (Lee 2008). The activation and strength of racial identity is also constrained by factors such as home language, neighborhood composition, and having same ethnic friends (Ethier and Deaux 1994). Identification can also be socially imposed upon individuals (Hughes et al. 2006). Increasing the salience of a particular identity makes one more likely to identify with said group (Brewer 2003). Individual level characteristics such as socioeconomic status, length of time in the United States, and nativity have been found to increase feelings of group consciousness among Asian Americans and Latinos (Masuoka 2006; Sanchez et al. 2018; Sanchez and Masuoka 2010). Individuals are also simultaneously members of multiple categories such as class, gender, race, and more. Identification thus fluctuates depending on social context and the psychological need to belong to a group (Brewer 2003). In experiments, Asian Americans displayed considerable malleability in linked fate depending on the stimulus (Junn and Masuoka 2008). While these works show that Asian American group identity is an important predictor of political behavior, the question of what exactly influences, and shapes identity attachment is understudied. Group identity and group consciousness is a useful utility to help overcome differentials in socioeconomic status and other barriers to participation, but the mechanisms by which individuals attach themselves to a group are understudied. In order for discrimination to motivate behavior, an individual must first identify with a minority group.

The panethnic term "Asian American arose in the 1960s during the Civil Rights movement. Originally the label was used to unite Japanese, Chinese, and Filipino Americans in the face of increasing racial violence (Okamoto 2003; Okamoto and Mora 2014). Saito finds that a proposed ban on ethnic-language signage in Monterey Park, CA led Japanese and Chinese

residents to form a political coalition to gain control of the city's politics (1998). Labor movements have also utilized pan-Asian rhetoric in order to maximize numbers across different Asian ethnic groups (Okamoto 2003, 2006). Asian Americans have also leaned towards Democratic candidates in recent elections, citing perceptions of exclusion from the Republican party (Kuo, Malhotra, and Mo 2016; Masuoka et al. 2018; Leung 2021). While identity has strong implications for political behavior, the ambiguity and malleability of it presents challenges for applying it to groups that are more heterogeneous. Asian Americans may draw their sense of group identity and/or linked fate from factors other than a shared history. Instead, discrimination may play a bigger role in shaping Asian American identity.

Discrimination

Experiences with discrimination have been found to reinforce a person's attachment to their racial and ethnic group (Dawson 1995; Oskooii 2020; Schildkraut 2005). These experiences can lead to increases in collective action (McClain et al. 2009; Miller et al. 1981). There are substantive differences in those who perceive discrimination. In surveys, individuals are asked to self-report if they have ever been discriminated against on the basis of age, sex, race, and more. The majority of Blacks (81%) say they've experienced discrimination, although that number is greater among college-educated Blacks. Whereas 58% of Latinos say they've experienced discrimination, that number jumps up significantly for U.S. born Latinos. 65% of young U.S. born Latinos are more likely to say they have experienced discrimination. 76% of Asian Americans say they've been the target of slurs and derogatory language (Krogstad and Lopez 2017). The notion that discrimination motivates political behavior is considered to be common knowledge in political science. Yet a closer examination of the literature finds that the link

between discrimination and behavior is suggestive at best. One of the earliest instances of discrimination in the study of racial politics is Sidney Verba and Norman Nie's Democracy in America. When examining the differences between Blacks and whites in modes of voting, they surmise that differences in social class inhibit participation among Blacks. That gap is closed for Blacks who mention race (which they dub as a sense of "group consciousness). The authors take this to mean that Blacks who are more sensitive about race and race-related issues in the United States participate more. However, in the existing models put forth by Verba and Nie, a sense of discrimination is not included nor is it explicitly tested (1987).

Subsequent work in racial and ethnic politics more explicitly test discrimination and its impact on identity and behavior, albeit with differing operationalization methods. Louis DeSipio uses a survey battery to find that among Latino non-citizens, those who perceived being discriminated against on an individual level were more likely to engage in non-electoral behavior (2002). Discrimination has been operationalized as political threat against a group and its effect on vote choice and turnout for Latinos, Asian Americans, and Arab Americans (Cho, Gimpel, and Wu 2006; Pantoja, Ramirez, and Segura 2001; Barreto and Woods 2005; Ramakrishnan 2005). This work draws a clear linkage between structural political threat in the form of legislation or elite rhetoric but does not address how informal interpersonal experiences with racism and bias impact behavior. While these studies show that threat against one's group is mobilizing, it is not a direct test of discrimination against oneself. Other studies have relied on survey measures of perceived discrimination but do not delineate between personal experience or group experience with discrimination.

Deborah Schildkraut (2005) looks explicitly at how perceptions of discrimination aimed at two levels (individual and group) and its effects on behavior. Individuals were asked on a

survey about whether or not they felt discrimination against Latinos was a problem (group level discrimination). Individual level discrimination was measured by asking respondents whether or not they have been treated poorly on behalf of their racial/ethnic background. Perceptions of discrimination against the group alienated those who identify predominantly as American, leading to decreased voting. Perceptions of group-level discrimination however, did not impact Latino political behavior (Schildkraut 2005, 2014).

There also exists a separation in terms of personal experience with discrimination and awareness of discrimination against one's group. This is known as the Personal Group Discrimination Discrepancy. Individuals are much more likely to perceive higher levels of discrimination towards their group rather than as individuals (Ruggiero 1999; Taylor et al. 1990). On an individual level, few people believe that they have personally experienced discrimination, but many are aware of the discrimination that their group faces (Crocker and Major 1989). Knowing that your group is treated poorly can lead to an increase in collective action as a response (McClain et al. 2009; Pantoja, Ramirez, and Segura 2001; Pantoja and Segura 2003). An aware- ness of group discrimination can also lead to a "reactive ethnicity, a reaffirmation and increase in shared identity (Rumbaut 2008). Awareness of group stigmatization can lead to withdrawal from society OR a desire to self-protect and seek kinship with other oppressed and victimized groups. In the case of South and Southeastern Muslim Americans, just the anticipation of discrimination led to decreased American identity (Herda 2018).

The measurement of discrimination is also non-standardized and vague across surveys. The American National Elections Survey asks respondents the amount of discrimination groups face in the U.S., whether or not they have personally experienced gender discrimination, and whether or not they have personally experienced discrimination on the basis of skin tone. The first is a

question about discrimination of groups. While the question of discrimination based on skin-toned is racial, it does not differentiate between what type of discrimination or the perpetrator. Other surveys on minority behavior often condense questions of discrimination into one multi-part question. For example, the 2016 Collaborative Multi-Racial survey asks, "Have you ever experienced discrimination on the basis of your race, class, gender, ethnicity, citizenship status, or having an accent?". This makes it difficult to tease out the source of discrimination.

A smaller body of literature looks at how an individual's personal experiences and health may affect their ability to participate. Using the 1998 General Social Survey and the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Ojeda finds that being on the depressed mood spectrum reduces political participation due to a lack of motivation and reduced trust. Individuals who were rated higher in depressed mood experienced decreased probability of voting (2015). Kassra Oskooii (2018) offers a clearer operationalization of discrimination by first separating societal peer to peer discrimination from political discrimination. Societal discrimination is operationalized as experiencing unfair treatment on the street, at a storefront, or at social gatherings. Political discrimination is measured as facing discrimination in hiring decisions, with police, and other encounters with institutions. Political outcomes are measured by having voted in local elections. He finds that experiences with political discrimination led to increased voting behavior. In contrast, experiences with societal discrimination on the street is associated with decreased voting behavior (Oskooii 2015; Oskooii 2018)

Taken together, perceptions of discrimination against one's group can reinforce a person's attachment to their racial and ethnic group (Dawson 1995; DeSipio, 1996; Schildkraut 2005). These experiences can lead to increased collective action (McClain et al. 2009; Miller et al. 1981; Barreto and Woods 2005; Ramakrishnan 2005). However, there is an overreliance on

survey measures that do not differentiate between personal discrimination and group discrimination, making it difficult to disentangle the exact source of discrimination. There are also very few works in political science that are explicitly centered around discrimination as an explanatory variable. Discrimination has been operationalized as a general sense of threat (e.g. Barreto and Woods 2005; Ramakrishnan 2005), and general "mistreatment on the basis of race, age, gender, having an accent, etc. While structural barriers and racialized policies encourage minority groups to mobilize (e.g. Cho, Gimpel, and Wu 2006; Barreto and Woods 2005; Ramakrishnan 2005), discrimination in interpersonal contexts is not examined. Oskooii finds that experiences with inter- personal discrimination (i.e. being called a slur) has depressive effects on political behavior whereas discrimination against one's group is political motivating (K. A. Oskooii 2015.; Oskooii 2018). This finding complicates our notion of how experiences with discrimination influences politics, especially since interpersonal dis- crimination may be depressing political behavior.

In health, psychology, counseling, and other fields, peer to peer discrimination and ostracization in the classroom and workplace is shown to have adverse results on an individual's mental and physical well-being. Work in psychology paints a different picture regarding the relationship between experiences with discrimination and psychological outcomes. Perhaps the most famous illustration is stereotype threat, wherein reminders of negative stereotypes has been found to have adverse results on individual's academic performance (Steele and Aronson 1995). A key difference is that work in psychology is predominantly interested in individual discrimination and its effects on individual outcomes such as mental health. Self-reported racial discrimination is consistently related to negative mental health, but mixed results when it comes to the relationship between discrimination and physical health (Gee et al. 2009; Priest et al.

2013). Discrimination has been shown to increase depression which negatively impacts political participation (Ojeda 2015). While work in political science has found discrimination to have positive motivating effects in the political arena, other fields have found discrimination to have negative and regressive outcomes. Since interpersonal discrimination may actually depress individuals as opposed to perceived group discrimination, microaggressions may offer a more clear and concise way to operationalize and test a particular type of interpersonal discrimination.

Racial Microaggressions

Microaggressions are brief denigrating exchanges that can be both intentional and unintentional. It communicates hostile, derogatory, prejudicial slights and insults towards a group (Sue 2010; Pierce 1970). Microaggressions occupy a grey area in social behavior but can also remind an individual of their social status and identities (Yoo, Miller, and Yip 2015). The threat of being stereotyped is enough to negatively influence mental and physical health, academic performance, self-assessment, and sports performance (Steele and Aronson 1995; Steele 1997; Stoet 2012). Microaggressions are typically studied in lab experiment settings, where a subject is exposed to a microaggression and are then asked to rate favorability towards outgroups or perform a mentally rigorous test (Alt, Chaney, and Shih 2018; Branscombe and Smith 1990; Shih, Pittinsky, and Ambady 1999). A substantial critique of the study of microaggressions is due to the ambiguity in which microaggressions can be presented and how it may depend solely on the "sensitivity of the individual.

While discrimination is of course a negative exclusionary event, there have been very few studies that have seriously engaged in how discrimination on the basis of positive or negative stereotypes affects political psychology and political behavior. The majority of studies on

discrimination are concerned with how groups are denigrated on the basis of negative stereotypes and beliefs about the group (Greenwald and Pettigrew 2014). On the flip side however, positive generalizations about groups also exist. These positive generalizations can also be used to reinforce the racial hierarchy in the United States (Kim 1999). Asian Americans present an interesting conundrum to the study of microaggressions, mostly because Asian Americans are racialized on the basis of a 'positive or 'well-meaning stereotype. Margaret Shih finds that Asian women who were reminded of their gender performed poorly on a math exam, but Asian women who were given a racial cue performed well on the same exam (2001). Positive stereotypes can manifest in microaggressions and/or discrimination. Asian Americans have been found to be the least likely to receive financial aid at the university level owing to beliefs that Asian Americans are doing well and therefore not in need of help (Sampathkumar 2019). Although negatively based stereotypes definitely result in mistreatment and discrimination, positively based stereotypes also contribute to discrimination.

Since norms have shifted, the expression of negative stereotypes and the overall expression of prejudice has decreased (McConahay 1986; Bergsieker et al 2012; Czopp, Kay, and Cheryan 2015). Positive stereotypes are usually in the form of praise and appreciation, and therefore may be considered more socially appropriate to voice (Kay et al 2013; Mae and Carlston 2005). Recipients of positive stereotypes often do not see them as complementary; recipients actually believe that the stereotype is biased towards their group (Czopp 2008; Garcia et al 2006). Whites who complimented Blacks as being 'naturally more athletic were viewed lower than whites who did not stereotype (Czopp 2008). Positive stereotyping has been shown to be depersonalizing (Siy and Cheryan 2013; Tajfel 1978). In intergroup interactions, positive stereotypes signal underlying bias (Siy and Cheryan 2016). Microaggressions, although

superficially innocuous, actually convey a host of prejudicial beliefs about a person's racial group membership. This has ramifications for affect towards non-group members (especially whites) and contribute to negative health outcomes for the target (i.e. stress, depression, and anger).

In summary, discrimination can reinforce identity and lead to increased political mobilization. The determinants of identity are well documented for African Americans, somewhat for Latinos, and understudied for Asian Americans. Discrimination on its own has not been heavily studied in political science. Upon closer inspection, experiences with group threat may mobilize but experiences with peer to peer discrimination can depress outcomes. However, explicit expressions of prejudice and discrimination have decreased due to changing norms of equality in the United States. A specific type of peer to peer discrimination appears in the form of microaggressions. Experiences with microaggressions and other expressions of stereotypical bias lead to depressed mental health and negative evaluations of outgroups. There exists a need to update theories on discrimination and political identity to account for today's social norms. I look at how experiences with microaggressions affect a person's sense of group identity (operationalized as linked fate), and other political outcomes.

Theoretical Framework

I argue that experiences with racial microaggressions serve as commonplace reminders of an individual's social status and position in the racial hierarchy. At the root of prejudice and discrimination are stereotypical assumptions about a group. If discrimination can be thought of as the "action component of prejudice, that is, unfair and unjustifiable exclusion on the basis of

prejudicial beliefs about a group, then racial microaggressions are another manifestation of stereotypes and prejudice. More specifically, I argue that social othering at the individual level leads individuals to link themselves to a group identity. This individual level experience over time forms a shared common experience that unites the individual with other group members. This shared common experience also highlights the salience of their group membership in the individual's life. I operationalize social othering using racial microaggressions. The main argument advanced in this dissertation is that racial microaggressions, which can be mapped on a positive to negative continuum, racialize and politicize individuals. Microaggressions lead individuals to bridge the gap between themselves as individuals to link with group by linking their experiences with other individuals, thus forming a common experience across racial group. fill in the gap in political science literature between identity uptake and reinforcement which has been understudied for non-African American groups such as Asian Americans and Latinos. Furthermore, I offer a more flexible definition of discrimination that is more applicable to the current environment in the United States. I do not challenge the notion that experiences with discrimination shape behavior, but rather that racial microaggressions operate along a similar pathway. In order for individuals to recognize discrimination and react to it, they must first recognize the smaller ways in which they are excluded on the basis of social membership.

Microaggression Content - Positive versus Negative

The coded content a racial microaggression can be placed on a positive to negative scale. The affective content of the stereotype and microaggression should shape group attachment. This can be mapped onto a negative to positive continuum. Groups that receive more positively

affective stereotypes should be less likely to have strong group identity and group politics. In contrast, groups that are the target of negative stereotypes are more likely to form group-based identities and be motivated to participate on the behalf of the group. This is due to stigmatized individuals seeking to band together to bolster self-esteem, group image, and more. Since negative stereotypes about the group recall an individual's membership in the group, it tends to have reactive mobilizing effect because the individuals group attachment is under attack. The racial biases of a negative microaggressions are more blatant and should invoke a reactive group identity. Individuals should then engage in defensive behavior (i.e. doubling down and embracing the group identity, acting on behalf of the group, advocating for common interests etc.).

Asian Americans, for example, are 'racially triangulated between whites and Blacks. Although valorized for being the model minority, Asian Americans are also looked down upon for their supposed inability to assimilate (Kim 1999). In a similar vein, Susan Fiske casts Asian Americans as "competent yet cold, meaning that outgroups see Asian Americans as being competent (a prized ability) but lacking warmth due to deficient sociability (Fiske et al 2002; Lin 2005). Microaggressions depersonalize individuals because they make judgement calls about the individual on the basis of group membership rather than individuality (Branscombe and Smith 1990). Individuals tend to react very poorly when targeted with a microaggression that is negatively based (Fiske 2018; Lin 2018). Less is known regarding how individuals process positively based microaggressions such as the model minority. Understandably, being targeted by negative beliefs evokes defensive behaviors due to group devaluation (Branscombe et al 1999; Pérez 2015). Examples of positive microaggressions include any microaggressions that are

based on normatively prized stereotypes, behaviors or beliefs, such as the belief that African Americans are good at sports, or that Latinos work hard.

Taken together, the content of microaggressions can be determined by whether or not it was directed at the individual or the group and whether or not the stereotype portrayed is positive or negative. There is a need to differentiate the type of microaggression between the personal (i.e. references to the individual only) and references to the group. This can be differentiated in practice by "You must be good at math (personal) and People like you are good at math (group). Similar to work on perceived group threat, there seems to be a requirement for the insult to be somewhat removed from the person in order for it to motivate an individual to take action.

Asian Americans and Microaggressions

The Asian American population has rapidly grown since the abolishment of national-origin quotas with the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act. Prior to 1965, Asian Americans had arrived to the U.S. as laborers, working in the railroads of California and the fields of Hawaii. The majority of the pre-1965 Asian Americans were Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese. The yellow peril narrative portrayed these groups (in particular, Chinese) as inferior, savage, and foreign coolies (Petrosino 1999; Takaki 1994). These xenophobic beliefs resulted in legal discrimination such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, regular lynchings, and expulsion of Chinese from towns. Finally, the Immigration Act of 1917 barred immigration from the Asiatic Barred Zone. Individuals of Asian descent were then excluded from citizenship and denied property rights, the right to vote, and sentenced to internment (Ngai 2004; Junn 2007). Asian Americans are viewed differently from then, but the long shadow of xenophobia, combined with

a highly selected post-1965 immigration cohort has resulted in two views about Asian Americans, that of the model minority and perpetual foreigner.

Model Minority - A Positively Coded Stereotype

Asian Americans are begrudgingly acknowledged to be high overachievers in educational attainment. This has a lot to do with the U.S. federal governments selective immigration process since 1965, and while a wide variation exists among Asian Americans in terms of socioeconomic attainment, the group as a whole is believed to be genetically and culturally predisposed to academic aptitude and possess cultural values that make academic achievement possible (compared to other minorities such as Blacks and Latinos). The model minority is a positive yet stereotypical characterization of Asian Americans that paints this group as having a stronger work ethic compared to African Americans and Latinos, and also possessing cultural values that have led to high socioeconomic attainment despite experiences with discrimination (Kim 1999; Lee and Kye 2016). Asian Americans are often told "You must be good at math and are assumed to be academic overachievers and nerds (Sue 2010; Yoo, Miller, and Yip 2015). This stereotype is often used to invalidate the experiences Asian Americans face with racism and discrimination. When Asian Americans raise issues about discrimination, they are dismissed.

The glorification of Asian Americans in the mass media stretches back to 1966 when a U.S. News and World Report article highlighted Japanese Americans as a "success story in the United States despite experiencing internment and second- class citizenship (U.S. News and World Report 1966). Since then, similar articles and books have also sprung up to reinforce the model minority stereotype of Asian Americans. Perhaps the most famous one in recent memory is Amy Chua's *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* which supposedly offers readers a guide on how

to raise stereotypically successful. By painting Asian Americans who broad brushstrokes, this renders those who are below the threshold of "success invisible (Tang 1997; Rodriguez-Operana, Mistry, and Chen 2017). Asian Americans are also largely absent from discourses on immigration despite being the fastest growing immigrant group. The model minority also homogenizes the Asian American community (Teranishi et al 2004) and disregards the disparities within community and outside the community. (Chou and Feagin 2008; Fiske et al 2002; Wong et al 1998). There been a few empirical studies on how Asian Americans behave in the political arena (e.g. Wong et al 2011; Lien et al 2001) but Asian American political identity on its own has been understudied. The high median socioeconomic status of Asian Americans should lead to increased likelihood of political participation as well as a preference for the Republican party (Cain, Kiewiet, and Uhlaner 1991), but that is untrue as Asian Americans now view the Republican Party as exclusionary (Kuo, Malhotra, and Mo 2016).

Perpetual/Forever Foreigner - A Negatively Coded Stereotype

Asian Americans are positioned in between anti-black racism and orientalism. The orientalist notion of Asian Americans as the "exotic, mysterious, and unassimilable is articulated in Susan Fiskes Cold/Warmth Stereotype Scale (Fiske 1995). Kuo et al (2017) point to how exclusion has especially relevant for Asian Americans especially as it relates to partisanship. In 1996, Asian Americans are depicted as outsiders trying to buy influence with prominent politicians. More recently, Chinese scientists have been ousted over concerns of spying with no federal criminal charges, leading to concerns about racial profiling (Hvistendahl 2019). Although Asian Americans are valorized relative to other minorities, they are perpetual outsiders and

unassimilable (Kim 2000). This leads Asian Americans to be excluded from civic life and political participation (Kim 2007; Kim 2000).

Asian Americans are frequently the focus of negative stereotypes on the basis of being permanent outsiders. For instance, members of this racial group are often the targets of questions, assumptions, and backhanded compliments regarding English- speaking competence (Armenta et al. 2013; Gee et al. 2009; Yoo, Burrola, and Steger 2010). Questions such as "Where are you from? and "Your English is so good; are two examples of racialized slights that some Asian Americans face on the basis of this negative "forever foreigner stereotype which is rooted in the belief that Asian Americans are foreigners (Kang and Bodenhausen 2015; Kuo, Malhotra, and Mo 2016; Nadal et al. 2015). Fiske's stereotype scale places Asian Americans as competent but cold by whites and thus suspicious (M. H. Lin et al. 2005)

Experimental research on how Asian Americans process and experience racial bias is limited (Cheryan and Bodenhausen 2000; Leets 2003; Shih et al 1999; Siy and Cheryan 2013; Tran and Lee 2014). Stereotypes and other subtle forms of bias and discrimination are associated with negative mental health outcomes for Asian Americans (Ong et al 2013; Armenta et al 2013). Stereotype threat finds that high- lighting a person's racial identity and the stereotypes associated with it can lead to decreased academic and physical performance among high achievers (Steele and Aronson 1995; Levy 1996; Steele 2010) A lot at Asian Americans however, finds mixed results. Asian women perform worse when gender identity was manipulated on a math exam compared to Asian women whose racial identity was primed. In this instance, the positive stereotyping served to enhance performance among individuals. Whereas traditional stereotype threat is focused on negative stereotypes and its effect on behavior, Shih (1999) finds that Asian Americans who were subjected to a positive stereotype

prime also under-performed in tests of aptitude (Shih et al 2002; Shih et al 2001). The content of the stereotype and the degree to which it can be seen as racial vary widely. Asian Americans who were "complimented on their English-speaking ability also reported negative feelings towards whites (Tran and Lee 2014).

Potential Mediating/Moderating Variables

Internalized Racism

Internalized racism is the "conscious and unconscious acceptance of a racial hierarchy. It can manifest both consciously and unconsciously in the form of acceptance of negative racial stereotypes, applications of white cultural standards, and a denial that racism exists (Campon and Carter 2015; Pyke 2010). Among African Americans, high internal racism has been linked to negative mental health outcomes (Neighbors et al. 1996).

This phenomenon of internalized racism is critical to my theory because it dampens support for group-based identity and group-based behavior. Individuals who are supportive or neutral of the racial status quo fail to see the ways in which their ethnoracial background factors into their wellbeing and odds in life. Those with high internalized racism should either brush aside experiences with racial bias and dis- crimination and also fail to link that experience to that of their larger racial group. In other words, individuals with high internalized racism deny the larger systemic reasons that happen as a result of their ethnoracial group. Such denials mean that those with high internalized racism are more likely to view these discriminatory experiences as one-off experiences and not part of a larger systemic structural issues. Asian Americans who do not recognize the microaggressions as being racial should have weaker political engagement.

Internalized racism is especially pertinent for Asian Americans. As previously explained, the model minority seems complementary, praising Asian Americans for their hard work ethic and their aptitude for academic success. This means that individuals high in internalized racism who come across the model minority fail to see it as a negative and are unwilling or unable to recognize that it is a way to denigrate the group in the long term and uphold the racial hierarchy.

A present-day example of Asian Americans who internalize the false narrative of the model minority are those believe that Asian Americans are 'discriminated against in the college admissions process and not rewarded for hard work with admissions into elite universities. These individuals believe that instead, spots at elite institutions are taken by undeserving Black and Latino students and that there is a "penalty for being Asian American (Chang 2018). These folks believe that Asian Americans, as the model minority, should have increased access to elite universities due to beliefs that Asians work harder than other minorities. Therefore, comments such as All Asians are so smart! are taken as a compliment. Because these comments are interpreted as compliments, there is no need to mentally debate the intentions of the other person.

Sociodemographic Characteristics

I expect that length of time spent in the United States (i.e. generation status) will be a key moderating variable in the microaggression to identity pathway. I expect individuals who are born in the United States or those who have arrived in the U.S. on a permanent basis before the age of 12 to be more sensitive to the racial content of microaggressions 3. Consistent with other empirical work (e.g. Park 2008), Asian Americans who have grown up in the United States have been exposed to the context of "Asian American their whole lives. This includes outgroups that refer to the group as "Asian American, as well as popular culture more broadly.

Furthermore, microaggressions on the basis of the perpetual foreigner also rob native-born Asian Americans of their sense of American identity. In contrast, more recent Asian Americans should not take much offense to having their foreignness or English-speaking ability questioned. Foreign-born Asian Americans should also arrive to the United States with relatively strong national-origin identities.

Overview of Chapters

In Chapter 2 I do an in-depth review at the concepts of identity, paying special attention to why and where individuals ascribe to a racial group identity. I also trace the usage of identity as a key predictor in various political outcomes such as voting. I also examine the usage of discrimination in political science, both in terms of measurement as a variable and its effects on politics. I then define the primary concept in this dissertation microaggressions and briefly examine the effect microaggressions have on individuals. I then present my theoretical framework for how, when, and why microaggressions matter for identity uptake. The theory incorporates research from social psychology, political science, and health to explain how the different types of interpersonal exchanges can lead to different outcomes and why microaggressions capture a different aspect of exclusion that discrimination does not. I outline the potential impacts that different types of microaggressions may have on identity, and when and where microaggressions may lead to increased identity attachment.

Chapter 3 is an analysis of pre-existing political surveys that include Asian Americans. Since discrimination is an oft-cited covariate, but seldom the center of analysis, the goal of this chapter is to provide a general look at how Asian Americans respond to items about discrimination. I look at the 2008 National Asian American Survey, the 2012 Pew Asian

American Survey, and the 2016 National Asian American Survey. Using these three surveys, I examine how discrimination is measured in large-scale surveys, provide descriptive statistics for Asian American responses to these items, and model how the effects of discrimination on a variety of political outcomes such as identity, partisanship, and likelihood of voting.

Drawing from my findings in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 is an analysis of a pilot survey (N=363) conducted in December of 2018. I ask Asian Americans about their thoughts on racial and gendered tropes, as well as their experiences with racially stereotypical comments. Using this data, I aim to establish that experiences with racial microaggressions are a separate and distinct experience from that of general discrimination. I show that Asian Americans of all national-origins and generations experience racial microaggressions and that these experiences are influential for identity, but not necessarily behavior.

Chapter 5 is a stricter test of my theory. The data from this chapter comes from an original survey (N=1050) of Asian Americans conducted in February of 2020. I expose respondents to one of three primes: a vignette based on the model minority, a vignette based on the forever foreigner, and a control. The model minority vignette claims that Asian Americans are preferentially hired due to their academic success and work ethic. The forever foreigner vignette claims that Asian Americans are not as likely to be hired due to beliefs that they cannot speak English well. I show that exposure to primes about Asian Americans as the model minority impact an individual's sense of linked fate. A prime of Asian Americans as the forever foreigner increases an individual's sense of racial group attachment.

Chapter 6 is the concluding chapter. Here I will recap the contributions made in this study, review my findings, and discuss plans for future research.

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE AND THEORY

Race remains a salient factor in American society. Although popular discourse following the election of Barack Obama makes claims that the U.S. is a "post-racial" society (Tesler and Sears 2010; Tesler 2016), race and the impacts of racial discrimination continue to affect persons of color. While in general, blatant displays of racial discrimination have decreased following the Civil Rights movement (Dovidio and Gaertner 2000; McConahay 1986; Steele 1997; Sue and Sue 2007), racial bias continues to perpetuate, albeit in more subtle forms (Omi and Winant 1994; Bonilla-Silva 2016).

The general understanding of discrimination in political science is that experiences of discrimination lead individuals to be dissatisfied with their current standing, leading them to engage more in political behaviors such as voting, demonstrating, and more. When someone experiences discrimination, this makes them more aware of their status as a minority, and thus motivates them to be more engaged in politics as a way to change said status (Barreto and Woods 2005; Cho, Gimpel, and Wu 2006; Pantoja, Ramirez and Segura 2001; Ramakrishnan 2005; Ramirez 2013). Attribution of discrimination to being a larger structural/political problem (rather than a problem of individual failure) is an important factor in the link between experiences of discrimination and collective action.

The degree to which racial discrimination affects individuals depends on the source of discrimination (perceived versus experienced) and the degree to which an individual racially identifies with the racial group. Armenta and Hunt (2009) find that perceived discrimination (i.e. awareness that your group experiences discrimination) is associated with increased group identification and bolstered self-esteem whereas personal experiences of discrimination are associated with lower self-esteem. Individuals who are high group identifiers are also more likely to perceive higher levels of discrimination, suggesting a feedback loop effect wherein individuals

who are high racial identifiers see higher levels of discrimination against their group which reinforces their strong racial identification at no cost to their self-esteem (Armenta and Hunt 2009). This finding reinforces Crocker and Major's (1989) theory that attributing negative events to bias and discrimination (rather than personal failures) has protective psychological properties for stigmatized groups. This psychological protective effect has been shown to be a moderating variable for Black Americans, for whom otherwise would retreat from politics and society.

The personal/group discrimination discrepancy (PGDD) also reinforces the positive benefits of high racial group identification. The PGDD refers to "the tendency of disadvantaged group members to report higher levels of discrimination against their group in general than against themselves personally". Although paradoxical, the personal/group discrimination discrepancy may contribute to increased *group* collective action as opposed to individual action (Quinn et al 1999; Taylor, Wright, and Porter 1999; Crosby 1982). Using perceived discrimination as a measure of group consciousness (Sanchez 2006; Sanchez and Vargas 2016) captures one element needed to attain group consciousness but does not address whether or not an individual is aware of the group's positioning in the racial hierarchy (Masuoka and Junn 2013). For instance, new work on white racial identity also finds that a growing number of white Americans perceive "discrimination" against their group even though discrimination against the dominant group, by definition, is not possible (Jardina 2019)

Although discrimination is widely used as a variable, it is rarely the center of analysis. Almost exclusively, discrimination is used as a covariate in studies of political behavior (i.e. in Cho, Gimpel, and Wu 2006, discrimination is used in conjunction with other socioeconomic variables to look at Arab American participation post 9-11). Other studies, such as Barreto and Woods (2005) utilize a general sense of "group threat" in the form of anti-immigration policies

against Latinos as a proxy for discrimination. Masuoka (2006) uses perceived and experienced discrimination as two distinct independent variables helps us to better understand how discrimination can influence political participation. She finds that individuals who are high perceivers of discrimination have elevated group consciousness. This elevated group consciousness then, should lead to greater Latino and Asian American participation.

Oskooii (2020; 2018) finds that among Muslim Americans, structural/political discrimination has different impacts on behavior compared to interpersonal/societal discrimination. Societal discrimination, such as antagonism, intimidation, being called a slur, and/or assault, were linked to internalization of group stigma. This internalization resulted in withdrawal from political action. In contrast, being the target of structural discrimination (i.e. discriminatory policies and laws, antagonism by elites, etc.) contributed to an increase in political behavior. When making this distinction, Muslim Americans who were subjected to interpersonal or societal discrimination were actually less likely to engage in politics whereas individuals who experienced political or structural discrimination were more likely to engage in politics (2020; 2016). This finding, although only among Muslim Americans and Muslim Britons echoes findings in psychology regarding the different outcomes as a result of perceived versus personal discrimination. This research suggests that political science needs to more carefully examine the various multifaceted sources of discrimination and bias, especially when it comes to interpersonal experiences, rather than assuming all discrimination stems from a singular source and has a singular manifestation. Oskooii's findings also suggest that structural/political discrimination can be motivating, partially because the source of bias is somewhat removed (and enshrined in politics), which an individual may find more likely to change rather than the behaviors of individuals around them

The measurement of discrimination is also non-standardized and vague across political surveys. The American National Elections Survey asks respondents the "amount" of discrimination racial groups face in the U.S., whether or not they have personally experienced gender discrimination, and whether or not they have personally discrimination on the basis of skin tone. While the question of skin-tone discrimination is racial, it does not differentiate between whether the experience was structural (i.e. denied benefits on the basis of skin tone) or interpersonal (i.e. a slur on the basis of skin tone). The skin-tone question is also problematic because South and Southeast Asian Americans also experience anti-Blackness due to skin tone, but albeit in different ways from Black Americans.

Other surveys on minority behavior often condense questions of discrimination into one multi-part question. For example, the 2016 Collaborative Multi-racial Post-election Survey asks, "Have you ever experienced discrimination on the basis of your race, class, gender, ethnicity, citizenship status, or having an accent?". This question conflates gender-based, race-based, class-based, and other ways in which a person can be marginalized into one. This makes it difficult to tease out the exact nature and source of the discriminatory experience.

Taken together, perceptions of discrimination against one's racial group can reinforce a person's attachment to their racial and ethnic group (Dawson 1995; DeSipio 1996; Schildkraut 2005). These experiences can lead to increased collective action (McClain et al 2009; Miler et al 1981; Barreto and Woods 2005; Ramakrishnan 2005). However, there is an overreliance on survey measures that do not differentiate between personal discrimination and perceived group discrimination, making it difficult to disentangle the exact source of discrimination. This is an important distinction that needs to be made due to other scholarly work that finds that personal experiences with discrimination can be demobilizing and demotivating, whereas perceived group

discrimination can be motivating, especially when an individual has a high racial identity. There are also very few works in political science that are explicitly centered around discrimination as an explanatory variable. Discrimination has been operationalized as a general sense of threat (e.g. Barreto and Woods 2005; Ramakrishnan 2005) and general "mistreatment on the basis of race, age, gender, having an accent, etc." (Barreto et al 2018). While structural barriers and racialized policies encourage minority groups to mobilize (e.g. Cho, Gimpel, and Wu 2006 in the case of Arab-Americans post-9/11), discrimination and bias on an interpersonal context is understudied. In the case of Muslim Americans, experiences with peer to peer discrimination (i.e. being called a slur and mistrusted by your community) has depressive effects on political behavior whereas structural discrimination against one's group is politically motivating (Oskooii 2015; Oskooii 2018). This finding complicates our notion of how experiences with discrimination influences politics, especially because in health, psychology, and counseling, peer to peer discrimination and ostracization in the classroom and workplace is shown to have adverse results on an individual's mental and physical well-being (Gee et al 2009).

Work in psychology also paints a different picture regarding the relationship between experiences with discrimination and psychological outcomes. Perhaps the most famous illustration is stereotype threat, wherein reminders of negative stereotypes have been shown to have adverse results on an individual's academic performance (Steele and Aronson 1995). Self-reported racial discrimination is consistently related to negative mental health, but mixed results when it comes to the relationship between discrimination and physical health (Gee et al 2009; Priest et al 2013). While work in political science has generally found discrimination to have positive motivating effects in the political arena, other fields have found discrimination to have negative and regressive outcomes. Since interpersonal discrimination may actually depress

individuals as opposed to perceived group discrimination, microaggressions may offer us a more clear and concise way to operationalize and test a particular type of interpersonal bias.

Discrimination not only impacts a person's political behavior, it also impacts an individual's life chances. Experiencing discrimination leads to poorer mental health (i.e. depression and anxiety, lower self-esteem) and physical health (e.g. higher blood pressure and respiratory issues) (Carter 2007; Clark et al 1999; Harrell et all 2003; Herek 2009). Asian Americans who self-reported having experienced discrimination were also more likely to experience chronic health issues such as pain (Gee et al 2007), lower mental wellness, and were more likely to rate their health as poor even after controlling for other socioeconomic stress factors such as poverty (Gee and Ponce 2010; Gee et al 2007). Common experiences of racialization, discrimination, and marginalization are a potential site for generating racial solidarity and identity (Espiritu 1992; Kibria 1997, 1998; Lopez and Espiritu 1990; Park 2008). Asian Americans are homogenized the same way and outgroups apply similar beliefs and stereotypes to Asian Americans generally, despite differences within group. East Asians (Chinese, Japanese, and Korean) being seen as the "prototypical" Asian American and Southeast and South Asians seen as "periphery" members (Park 2008)

In summary, discrimination can reinforce identity and lead to increased political mobilization. The determinants of identity are well documented for African Americans, somewhat for Latinos, and understudied for Asian Americans. Experiences with group threat may mobilize but experiences with peer to peer discrimination can depress individuals and lead them to withdraw (Ojeda 2016; Ojeda and Slaughter 2019). Explicit expressions of discrimination have decreased due to changing norms of equality in the United States, however bias still perpetuates in the interpersonal space in the form of microaggressions. This dissertation

seeks to broaden theories of discrimination and political identity to account for today's changing social norms. I look at how experiences with microaggressions affect a person's sense of group identity, group consciousness, and other political outcomes.

RACIAL STEREOTYPES

While discrimination is of course a negative exclusionary event, there have been very few studies that have seriously engaged with how bias on the basis of positive or negative stereotypes affects political psychology or behavior. The majority of studies on discrimination are concerned with how groups are denigrated on the basis of negative stereotypes and beliefs about a group (Greenwald and Pettigrew 2014). Work on negative stereotypes has predominantly been focused on the experiences of Black Americans and women in the workforce. However, positive stereotypes and generalizations about groups also exist. Women and female-bodied individuals can be seen as "maternal" or "domestic", traits that have a positive connotation, but such stereotypes can be negative when applied to women who violate these norms (ex: a female executive seen as "cold" or "bossy" when trying to do their job. Men and male-bodied individuals on the other hand, are not seen this way). These positive generalizations can also be used to reinforce the racial hierarchy in the United States, especially in the case of Asian Americans (Kim 1999). Asian Americans present an interesting conundrum to the study of discrimination, mostly because Asian Americans are racialized on the basis of a 'positive' or 'well-meaning' stereotype. Margaret Shih finds that Asian women who were reminded of their gender performed poorly on a math exam (inadvertently fulfilling the stereotype that women are bad at math), but Asian women who were given a racial cue performed well on the same exam (fulfilling the stereotype that Asians are good at math) (2001). Positive stereotypes can manifest

in aggressions and/or discrimination, albeit in different ways from what is typically measured. Asian Americans for instance, have been found to be less likely to receive financial aid at the university level owing to beliefs that Asian Americans "do well" economically and are therefore not in need of help (Sampathkumar 2019). Although negatively based stereotypes definitely result in mistreatment, positively-based stereotypes and notions of groups also contribute to marginalization.

Since norms have shifted, the expression of negative stereotypes and the overall expression of prejudice has decreased (McConahay 1986; Bergsieker et al 2012; Czopp, Kay, and Cheryan 2015). Positive stereotypes are usually expressed in the form of praise and appreciation, and therefore may be considered more socially appropriate to voice (Kay et al 2013; Mae and Carlston 2005). Recipients of positive stereotypes often do not see them as complementary, and actually believe the stereotype to be biased towards their group (Czopp 2008; Garcia et al 2006). For example, whites who compliment Blacks as being "naturally more athletic" were viewed lower compared to whites who did not stereotype (Czopp 2008). Athleticism is a positive trait to have, but when applied to an entire group of people is shown to be depersonalizing (Siy and Cheryan 2013; Tajfel 1978). In intergroup interactions, positive stereotypes signal underlying bias (Siy and Cheryan 2016). Microaggressions, although superficially innocuous, actually convey a host of prejudicial beliefs based only a person's racial group membership. This has ramifications for affect towards outgroup members (especially whites) (Kuo, Malholtra, and Mo 2017; Tran and Lee 2014), and contribute to negative health outcomes for the target such as stress, depression, and anger (Steele and Aronson 1995).

REVIEW OF IDENTITY

At the core of work in racial and ethnic politics is the concept of 'identity' and what an individual's 'identity' means for politics. In a racially stratified social environment such as the United States, racial identity is becoming increasingly consequential for a whole host of political outcomes. At a psychological level, social identity theory (SIT) posits that individuals want to belong to a socially constructed group and belonging to a group improves self-esteem. Although racial groups are a socially and politically created artifice, one's racial group membership (regardless of whether or not a person actually believes in it), has major implications for one's life chances.

The majority of work in studies of race and identity focus on Black political identity and participation (Verba and Nie 1972). Concepts such as group consciousness, linked fate, and the idea that a strong racial group identity lead to increased political action (Lee 2008; McClain 2015), all stem from studies of the Black experience in the United States. Michael Dawson (1994) theorized that a shared history of slavery and continued subjugation in U.S. society lead Black Americans to form a sense of linked fate, or connectedness with other Black Americans. Utilizing this group utility heuristic, Black Americans evaluate politics to determine that what is best for the group is also best for the individual due to the interconnectedness of Black Americans despite differences in socioeconomic status. Since Asian Americans have a much more disparate history in the United States, the theoretical grounding for Black linked fate is not as clear cut (McClain et al 2009; Sanchez and Vargas 2016). The unique experience of Blacks in the United States and subsequent Black linked fate may be the exception, not the rule, and other minority groups may have more mixed results compared to Blacks (Citrin and Sears 2014).

The exceptionality of Black American group consciousness does not necessarily mean that other groups cannot achieve group consciousness. Miller et al. (1981) theorized that group

consciousness can arise from any socially created group so long as (1) individuals identify with a group, (2) have a sense of awareness of the group's marginalized position in society, and (3) decide to commit to collective action for the group's interests. Lee (2008) expands on this identity-to-politics link by also including an awareness of sites of action (protest, polling box, etc.) as a further step to collective group action. Merely identifying with a group however, is not an automatic step to group consciousness as individuals may identify with the group but fail to see that the group is marginalized. Individuals may also attribute issues as being a problem of individual failure rather than structural inequality. The attribution of issues to a structural (ergo political) problem rather than a problem of individual failure is an important aspect of attaining group consciousness (Miller et al 1981). Finally, individuals may also refuse to identify with a marginalized group to begin with out of shame and/or refusal to identify with a marginalized group.

Due to the focus of political identity work on the Black experience in the U.S., the application of these frameworks does not apply as readily to non-Black minority groups (McClain et al 2009; Sanchez and Vargas 2016). Racial identity is not always so straightforward even among Black Americans. For instance, Dominican and Haitian immigrants are socially seen as Black, but personally refuse the label, instead stressing their national-origin identities as "Dominican" and "Haitian" (Waters 1999). Among Latinos, the same fractalization by national-origin can also occur, wherein individuals identify as "Cubans" or "Guatemalans" rather than as "Latino" (Okamoto and Mora 2014; Beltran 2010). In a similar vein, Filipino Americans, due to a legacy of Spanish and American colonization, may not feel connected to other Asian Americans (Ocampo 2016). This dissertation seeks to address Asian American identity, an understudied and undertheorized group. In the case of Asian Americans, due to the existence of

national-origin identity and disparate histories in the United States, may not even identify as Asian American to begin with (Wong et al 2011).

Group consciousness, one of the earliest and most widely used measures of minority identity and participation, stems from work by Miller et al (1981) who found that racial identity was the most salient 'identity' for Black Americans. In comparison, other potential group-based identities such as age, class and income, due to the fluidity of these categories did not remain as salient for individuals over time. Group consciousness among Asian Americans is not so straightforward. The label of "Asian American" arose in the 1960's out of a desire among Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino students to advocate for great civil rights. The label of Asian American today is externally imposed, by federal, state, and local governments as well as socially (Okamoto 2006; Dhingra and Rodriguez 2014). The increase in national-origin diversity spikes considerably after 1965, when the U.S. formally rescinded national-origin quotas, leading to a spike in first-generation immigrants from Asian countries, and with it, a downturn in Asian American racial unity. The spike in Asian immigration is also uneven, with China and India becoming the biggest senders of Asian immigrants whereas Japanese immigration to the U.S. has stalled (Kibria 1998; Kim and White 2010; Masuoka 2006; Okamoto 2003).

After 1965, generational status has also become a salient feature that influences Asian American identity uptake. First-generation Asian Americans, by dint of having deeper connections to their homelands, culture, religion, less American acculturation, among other reasons, are much less likely to have Asian American racial identity compared to later generations. The divisions in national-origin, history, language, and culture also mean that first-generation Asian Americans are more likely to live in distinct ethnic enclaves and less likely to come into contact with Asian Americans outside their national-origin. (Dhingra and Rodrigeuz

2014; Lien et al 2001). Scholars have found that second-generation Asian American racial identity is much stronger, likely due to increased contact with other Asian Americans, acculturation, social mobility, and other factors (Masuoka 2006; Okamoto and Mora 2014; Wong et al 2011, Raychaudhri 2020).

In summary, Asian American identity is not a given due to the outgroup imposition of the racial category and the existence of strong national-origin identities among this diverse group. The application of Black American theories of identity onto Asian Americans is not so straightforward, due to the disparate histories of each national-origin group. Taken together, identity serves not just as a way for individuals to order the world around them, but for marginalized groups, identity can also serve as a gateway to collective action (Lee 2008). Having high racial identity is also associated with a series of positive psychological benefits, especially in the face of negative bias that one can encounter in society.

Microaggressions are a relatively newer concept in the study of discrimination and bias. In the 1970's, Chester Pierce, a Black psychiatrist at Harvard and his colleagues catalogued and analyzed portrayals of Blacks in television. They found that African Americans were predominantly portrayed as undesirable, unattractive, and dependent (1970). In later work, Pierce observed that while "microaggressions can seem harmless...the cumulative burden of a lifetime of microaggressions can theoretically contribute to diminished mortality, augmented morbidity, and flattened confidence" (Pierce 1995, pg 281).

In their seminal work, Derald Sue and colleagues defined racial microaggressions as "brief, denigrating exchanges that can be both intentional and unintentional. It [the microaggression] communicates hostile, derogatory, prejudicial slights and insults towards a group". Racial microaggressions are often "unconsciously delivered in the form of subtle snubs

or dismissive looks, gestures, and tones…[and] often dismissed and glossed over as being innocent and innocuous (2007; Sue 2010). The dismissal of microaggressions as well-meaning or innocuous is a key component of microaggressions that differentiate the experience from that of traditionally understood overt discrimination[2]. In particular, due to norms of equality, white Americans believe themselves to not harbor racial bias or be capable of expressing discriminatory beliefs (Solorzano et al 2000). Microinvalidations, such as the assumption of an Asian American as a foreigners or that the U.S. is a colorblind society, negate and invalidate a marginalized person's experiences. Being treated as subtly alien also leads Asian Americans to feel isolated and inferior (Sue et al 2007).

The relatively innocuous nature of racial microaggressions make it confusing for individuals who receive such comments or actions. The person on the receiving end of the comment has to determine for themselves whether or not the comment was racist and whether or not if they should respond (Sue et al 2009; Wong-Pandoongpatt et al 2017). This ambiguity is stressful because they undermine a person's sense of self, and also potentially make the individual feel responsible for the microaggression. Furthermore, the individual may also worry that they have misinterpreted the situation (Wong-Pandoongpatt et al 2020; Matheson 2021). The increased stress of wondering whether or not something was racist contributes to increased cortisol levels, depressive symptoms, and poor mental health (Nadal et al 2014). The psychological effects of microaggressions can also be long lasting (Yosso et al 2009).

While the effects of overt discrimination on persons of color has been well documented in psychology (Clark et al 1999; Herek 2009), employment (Pager and Shepard 2008), sociology,

[2] Sue et al identified nine categories of microaggressions: (1) alien in one's own land, (2) ascription of intelligence, (3) color blindness, (4) assumption of criminal status, (5) denial of individual racism, (6) myth of meritocracy, (7) pathologizing cultural values and/or communication styles, (8) second-class status, and (9) environmental invalidation. I do not focus on environmental invalidation in this dissertation.

and other fields, the effects of racial microaggressions is less obvious, even though individuals may experience microaggressions more often than explicit discrimination (Sue et al 2009). The negative impacts of racial microaggressions have been found in therapy, academia (Cartwright et al 2009; Constantine et al 2008; Blume 2012), and society (Wang et al 2011; Burdsey 2011). Although scholars believe that microaggressions have long-term effects, the relative new-ness of racial microaggressions as a point of study makes it difficult to track the long-term effects, with one exception being a study by Torres, Driscoll, and Burrow who track African American doctorate students (N= 107) over time. They find that prolonged experiences with microaggressions is a significant predictor of depression, even after controlling for coping mechanisms and depression traits (2010).

The lack of precision in political science when it comes to the study of discrimination presents a significant limitation to our understanding of the ways in which minoritized individuals can experience bias; whether it be peer to peer, structural, overt or subtle, or ambiguous. In this dissertation I focus on interpersonal, ambiguous, and subtle expressions of bias more formally known as microaggressions. Microaggressions are understudied in the realm of political science, and yet due to norms of equality, scholars in other fields suggest that individuals may encounter *more* microaggressions in their day to day lives than discrimination. Whereas norms of equality make it so that it is a social faux pas to call someone a slur, snide suggestions of undeservingness (ex: "There are too many Asian American students in higher education.") are a different way in which outgroups can express biased views without violating cultural and societal norms.

Generational and nativity status should also be important factors to consider when it comes to how microaggressions influence identity and group consciousness. Research among

Asian Americans has shown a divide between first-generation Asian Americans (i.e. those born in a foreign country) and second-generation Asian Americans (i.e. the children of immigrants born in the United States) when it comes to identification, and behavior. Although first-generation Asian Americans make up the lion's share of the Asian American community at 65%, second-generation Asian Americans, having been born and socialized in the American context, are much more likely to be politically active and somewhat more likely to have progressive or liberal views compared to their first-generation counterparts (Wong et al 2011; Raychaudhri 2020; Chan and Hoyt 2019).

Second-generation Asian Americans are more likely to have Asian American friends of different national-origins, attend college, and work outside of ethnic enclave, all of which are instrumental in shaping their social and political lives. Working in a diverse environment fosters connection with other Asian Americans and also exposes you to outgroup mistreatment. There is limited work however on the identification levels of third (sansei) and fourth (Yonsei) generation Japanese Americans and third and fourth generation Chinese Americans due to difficulties in targeting these populations as well as the lower numbers. Recent work by Tsuda (2021) suggests that some third and fourth generation Japanese Americans do not identify as Asian American at all.

The underlying stereotype of a racial microaggression can be placed on a positive to negative scale. The different valence of the stereotype and microaggression expressed has different consequences for group attachment. Racial groups that receive more positively valenced stereotypes should be less likely to have a strong group identity and group politics. This is because at least superficially, positive stereotypes (such as the idea that all Asian Americans are academically successful), do not automatically invoke stigmatization or a reaction to protect

one's self esteem. In contrast, racial groups that are the target of more negative stereotypes are more likely to form group-based identities and be motivated to participate on behalf of the group. This is because stigmatization and marginalization (at the political level) lead stigmatized individuals to band together as a way to bolster self-esteem and group image. Negative stereotypes can also be ascribed to wider societal bias rather than individual failure, leading to a boost in group identity. Since negative stereotypes about a group recall an individual's membership in a group, it tends to have a reactive mobilizing effect because the individual's group attachment is under attack. The racial bias of negative stereotypes is also much more blatant and thus invokes defensive behavior. Individuals who are the recipients of negative stereotypes should then engage in defensive behaviors such as doubling down and embracing the group identity, acting on behalf of the group, etc.

Asian Americans for example, are "racially triangulated between whites and Blacks. Although valorized for being the model minority, Asian Americans are also looked down upon for their inability to assimilate" (Kim 1999). In a similar vein, Susan Fiske finds that Asian Americans are seen as "competent, yet cold, meaning that outgroups see Asian Americans as being competent (a prized ability) but lacking warmth due to deficient sociability (Fiske et al 2002; Lin 2005). Microaggressions depersonalize individuals because they make assumptions of the individual on the basis of group membership rather than individuality (Branscombe and Smith 1990). Individuals tend to react very poorly when targeted with a microaggression that is negatively based (Fiske 2018; Lin 2018). Where my theory makes an intervention is how individuals process positive based microaggressions such as the model minority. Understandably, being targeted by negative beliefs evokes defensive behaviors due to group devaluation (Branscombe et al 1999; Perez 2015). Examples of positive microaggressions

include any that are based on positively valenced, normatively prized stereotypes, behaviors, or beliefs, such as the belief that African Americans are good at sports, or that Latinos work hard.

ASIAN AMERICANS STEREOTYPES IN THE LITERATURE

The Asian American population in the United States has rapidly grown since the abolishment of racist national-origin quotas with the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act. Prior to 1965, Asian Americans had arrived to the U.S. as laborers, working in the railroads of California and the fields of Hawaii. The majority of pre-1965 Asian Americans were Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese. The Yellow Peril narrative portrayed these groups, in particular Chinese, as inferior and savage foreign coolies (Petrosino 1999; Takaki 1994). These xenophobic beliefs resulted in legal discrimination such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, regular lynchings, and expulsion of Chinese from towns. Finally, the Immigration Act of 1917 barred immigration from the Asiatic Barred Zone. Individuals of Asian descent were then excluded from citizenship and denied property rights, the right to vote, and sentenced to internment (Ngai 2004; Junn 2007). Asian Americans are viewed very differently from then, but the long shadow of xenophobia, combined with the highly selective post-1965 immigration cohort has resulted in two views of Asian Americans: the model minority and the forever foreigner.

THE MODEL MINORITY – A POSITIVELY CODED STEREOTYPE

Asian Americans are begrudgingly acknowledged and thought of as high overachievers in educational and employment attainment. This has a lot to do with the federal government's selective immigration process post-1965, and while a wide variation exists among Asian Americans in terms of socioeconomic attainment, the group as a whole is believed to be

genetically and culturally predisposed to academic aptitude and possess cultural values that make academic achievement possible, especially when compared to other minoritized groups such as Blacks and Latinos.

The glorification of Asian Americans in the mass media stretches back to 1966, when a U.S. News and World Report article highlighted Japanese Americans as a "success story" in the United States despite experiencing internment and second-class citizenship (Pettersen 1966).The model minority is positively valenced, yet stereotypical characterization of Asian Americans as a group that has a stronger work ethic compared to compared to Blacks and Latinos and also possessing cultural values that have led to high socioeconomic attainment *despite* experiences with discrimination (Kim 1999; Lee and Kye 2016). This stereotype is used to invalidate the experiences Asian Americans face with racism and discrimination, while simultaneously denigrating Blacks and Latinos for their supposedly ineptitude of attaining socioeconomic success. When Asian Americans raise issues about inequality, mistreatment, and other issues, they are dismissed.

Since then, similar articles and books have also sprung up to reinforce the model minority. A more famous one in recent memory is Amy Chua's "Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother", which supposedly offers readers a guide on how to raise stereotypically successfully children (Chua 2011). By painting Asian Americans with broad strokes, this renders those who are below the threshold of "successful" invisible (Tang 1997; Rodrigeuz-Operana, Mistry, and Chen 2017). Affirmative action has also become a flashpoint in Asian American politics, with Asian Americans being used by white conservatives as a reason to take down race considerations in college admissions (Poon et al 2019). This is yet another example of using Asian Americans as the model minority as a "wedge" to distract groups from white supremacy.

FOREVER FOREIGNER – A NEGATIVELY CODED STEREOTYPE

Asian Americans and Asians as the "forever foreigner" stems from a long-standing tradition of viewing Asian Americans and Asians as the "yellow peril". During the 19th century, the yellow peril was first invoked as a way for railroad barons to extract cheaper labor from Chinese workers compared to Irish workers (Takaki 1998; Wu 1995). After the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, fear of Asians shifted to Japanese immigrants on the West coast (Daniels 1988). Although Japanese Americans were highly successful at turning arid California lands into successful farms, they were shunned and despised. Following the outbreak of World War II, this fear turned into a few of Japanese Americans as disloyal and potential spies.

Economic fears of Asian Americans have been around since the railroad and have resurged from time to time. After World War II, the rising Japanese automobile industry threatened to undercut long-standing American automobile supremacy. The fear of a Japanese "takeover" and the homogenization of Asian Americans as being the same contributed to the murder of Vincent Chin, a Chinese American whose murderers believed he was Japanese. After World War II, and with the rising Civil Rights Movement, the public image of Asian Americans shifted away from the "foreigner" discourse and instead towards the "model minority". This was partially as a way to directly attack Black Americans for wanting full legal citizenship by pointing out that if Japanese and Chinese Americans can "make it" despite structural and societal racism, why couldn't Black Americans?

There has been a dramatic and growing increase of reports of harassment against Asian Americans (Jeung 2020). The resurfacing of xenophobia against Asian Americans during the COVID-19 pandemic can also be partially attributed to Trump and GOP anti-Asian rhetoric

(Chan, Kim, and Leung 2021). By casting Asian Americans as foreigners, it makes it easier to justify anti-Asian racism and also blame Asian Americans for "importing" the disease, forever changing everyone's lives (Liu 2020).

The rise of China as an economic and authoritarian power has callbacks to the threat of Japan in World War II and the economic threat of Japanese goods post-WWII. Asian Americans are positioned in between anti-Black racism and Orientalism. Legal scholar Ancheta (2000) notes that Asian Americans are racialized as "non-Americans and as the model minority". This notion of Asian Americans as foreigners permanently relegates this community to a second-class citizenship (Tuan 1998). European Americans are much more likely to be seen as American relative to other minoritized communities. (Devos and Banaji 2005; Devos, Gavin, and Quintana 2010; Devos and Heng 2009). Whiteness then, is equated with being a true American.

The forever foreigner stereotype also manifests itself in microaggressions such as asking individuals "Where are you from? Where are you *really* from?", complimenting someone's English, and/or mistaking an individual as being a foreigner (Liang et al., 2004). These microaggressions are disguised as innocuous questions or comments, but signal exclusion, second-class citizenship, and inferiority (Sue et al 2007). Cheryan and Monin (2005) find that Asian Americans are keenly aware that they are not seen as American even though they may feel American on in the inside. In response to this identity denial, Asian Americans may try to overcompensate to assert their American-ness by demonstrating awareness of American pop culture.

Claire Kim (1999) theorizes that Asian Americans are racially triangulated relative to Blacks and whites (as opposed to a strict pyramid with whites at the top). Kim positions the racial groups (white, Black, Latino, and Asian) along two axes (superior/inferior and

insider/foreigner). Asian Americans rank highly on superiority, a phenomenon Kim calls "relative valorization" wherein whites view Asian Americans more highly relative to Blacks. On the insider/foreigner axes however, Asian Americans are seen as "lower" relative to whites and Blacks. This process is called "civic ostracism" wherein whites see Asian Americans as foreign and un-American. This false imagination of Asian Americans as perpetual foreigners restricts Asian Americans from achieving belonging and engaging in full citizenship in the United States.

In studies of Latino and Asian American college students, awareness of being a forever foreigner led to significantly lower life satisfaction and lower belonging in American society even after controlling for a sense of perceived discrimination (Huynh, Devos, and Smalarz 2011).

Theoretical Framework

Group membership and attachment provide a way for individuals to make sense of, and respond to, the world around them. Individuals can think of themselves as members of multiple groups and communities, albeit some groups more strongly than others depending on context and other factors. This dissertation seeks to connect the literatures on identity, discrimination, microaggressions, and stereotyping into a theory of how microaggressions can impact a person's sense of attachment to their racial group. I argue that the work on discrimination, as broadly understood in political science, can be applied to microaggressions as both discrimination and microaggressions draw from the same stereotypical biased beliefs about racial groups. The inclusion of micro aggressions into political science is necessary as attitudes of equality have dramatically affected how individuals express racial bias. Furthermore, the pathways to racial identity are undertheorized for non-Black minority groups, for which the application of more

traditional political identity literature may not be as relevant to their experiences. Both discrimination and micro aggressions stem from stereotypical and biased beliefs about individuals on the basis of their supposed racial group membership. What we traditionally understand as discrimination can be thought of as overt exclusion on the basis of racial stereotypes, and microaggressions can be thought of as subtle exclusion on the basis of racial stereotypes. I theorize that the positively coded racial microaggressions affect racial identity and behavior. Whereas most scholarly work on stereotypes focuses on negative, positively coded tropes can still be pejorative. Although minorities all receive negative stereotypes about their racial group, each racial group is stereotyped a different way. Asian Americans for instance, receive messages of their group as superior and inferior at different points in time. In contrast, Black Americans receive overwhelmingly negative messages about their racial group.

At the root of prejudice and discrimination are stereotypical tropes about a group. If discrimination can be thought of as the "action" component of prejudice, that is, unfair and unjustifiable exclusion on the basis of prejudicial beliefs about a group, then racial microaggressions are another manifestation of stereotypes and prejudice in an interpersonal setting. I argue that experiences with racial microaggressions serve as commonplace reminders of an individual's social status and position in the racial hierarchy. More specifically, I argue that social othering at the individual level leads individuals to link themselves to a group identity. This individual level experience with microaggressions over time unites the individual with other group members as a shared common experience. This shared common experience also highlights the salience of their group membership in an individual's life.

The main argument advanced in this dissertation is that racial microaggressions, which can be positively or negatively framed, racialize and politicize individuals even if said

individuals never experience personal discrimination. Microaggressions lead individuals to bridge the gap between themselves as individuals to link with a group by linking their experiences with other individuals, thus forming a common experience across the racial group. I fill in the gap in political science literature between identity uptake and reinforcement which is understudied for non-Black groups such as Asian Americans and Latinos. Furthermore, I offer a more flexible definition of discrimination that is more applicable to the current social environment in the United States. I do not challenge the notion that experiences with discrimination shape behavior, but rather that racial microaggressions also operate along a similar pathway. In order for individuals to recognize discrimination and react to it, they must first also recognize the smaller ways in which they are excluded on the basis of social membership.

Discrimination as typically defined and understood only constitutes a narrow range of experiences. As typically defined in surveys and in popular discourse, discrimination is thought to have a clear and recognizable outcome such as denial of job, service, or unfair treatment on the basis of perceived racial group membership. Popular consensus of "discrimination" is that these behaviors are intentional and purposeful and always clear to both the perpetrator and the victim. In contrast, racial microaggressions are often couched in seemingly innocuous questions or statements. This means that the intentionality of the statement is unclear to the recipient. There is also a lack of a clear recognizable exclusionary outcome. For example, a white male college student (Dave) turns to his classmate, an Asian American male (Steven) and asks, "Steven, so where are you from?". Steven now has a multitude of potential responses. He could tell Dave that he was born in Los Angeles, CA, or perhaps Dave was asking what his ethnic background was, in which case he could also respond by saying he is Vietnamese American,

with parents from Vietnam. Steven also notes that he could potentially be overthinking his response, but also wonders if Dave would ask the same thing to someone who was Black or white. Although Dave's question was innocuous, the ascription of foreign-ness to Asian Americans and the desire to know a person's background is reserved typically for individuals who do not look stereotypically American. Although Dave may genuinely curious, for an Asian American, the ascription of foreign-ness has become routine.

Kurt Bardella, a Korean American writer, notes in his 2021 op-ed that he has had so many questions about his heritage and background that he has a reflexive 30-second answer. Rather than pointing out that this question, although seemingly innocuous, is couched in racial stereotypes of Asian Americans as a forever foreigner, he chooses to avoid conflict and instead respond with, "Los Angeles, but my parents are from South Korea." The question of "where are you from" is not just an innocent question to an Asian American but rather a sign of passive racism. Wu (2002) notes that "everyone with an Asian face who lives in American is afflicted by the perpetual foreigner syndrome. We are figuratively and even literally returned to Asia and ejected from America". The question of "Where are you from?" is at best, an innocent question, and at worst, a denial of a person's belonging to American society on the basis of phenotype.

Given the lack of a clear exclusionary outcome, the microaggressions to politics pathway is a lot less clear compared to experiences with overt discrimination. When it comes to microaggressions, a person has to recognize that the microaggression happened in the first place and recognize that the comment or question was racially based in order for it to have an effect on their identity. In contrast, experiences with discrimination are much clearer to individuals, making it easier to apply that experience to identity attachment and behavior. For

microaggressions, the experience must pass through additional cognitive layers where a person has to decipher the coded language before it can be applied to their identity and experiences.

Experiences with racial microaggressions create a point of commonality among group members (i.e. "Everyone who is similar to me has similar experiences") and reinforce a person's racial identities (i.e. "I am a member of this group and people think of me as a member of this group"). This then encourages political action (see: Lee 2008; Verba and Nie 1972) wherein "Given our experiences, my group's interests are similar to mine").

SUMMARY

Microaggressions signal societal exclusion despite its seemingly neutral or positive content. Racial microaggressions can be directed either at the individual or the group and can refer to positively valenced or negatively valenced stereotypes. Whereas discrimination has a clear exclusionary outcome, the outcome of microaggressions is mixed, and therefore the pathway to identity may not be as readily apparent. However, given that minorities are much more likely to experience microaggressions compared to overt discrimination, this expression of bias needs to be taken into account.

The content of the microaggression can be determined by whether or not it was directed at the individual or the group, and whether or not the stereotype baked into the microaggression is more positive or more negative. There is a need to differentiate the type of microaggression between the personal/individual only and group. This is because personal-directed microaggressions could be mistaken for individual failure and lead an individual to withdraw due to shame or guilt. This personal/group dichotomy can be differentiated in practice by "You must be good at math (personal)" and "People like you are good at math (group)". Similar to work on

perceived group threat, there seems to be a requirement for the insult to be somewhat removed from the person in order for it to motivate an individual to take action. We can expect the relationship between discrimination and behavior among Asian Americans can be moderated/mediated by sociodemographic characteristics such as nativity and national-origin.

Chapter 3 – Observational Data: Discrimination and the Correlates of Identity and Behavior

Introduction

The microaggressions to politics theory presented in the previous chapter provides an opportunity to address shortcomings in the political identity and behavior literature. The theory posits that experiences with racial microaggressions are common and distinct from experiences with racial discrimination. Experiences with racial microaggressions are critical to understanding the social and political ways that minorities, especially Asian Americans, interact with and understand U.S. society. My theory suggests that due to the positionality of Asian Americans, they may encounter very mixed racial microaggressions, based on the model minority and forever foreigner stereotypes. The framework I present in Chapter 2 posits that there is a distinction between experiences with microaggressions and experiences with discrimination, and each of those have differing effects on identity and politics.

In this chapter I look at Asian Americans' responses to racial microaggressions and discrimination questions in large-scale nation-wide surveys. I draw from the 2008 National Asian American Survey, the 2012 Pew Survey, the 2016 National Asian American Survey, and the 2016 Collaborative Multi-racial Post-election Survey. The observational data will allow me to paint a picture of the degree to which Asian Americans perceive discrimination in their daily lives through descriptive statistics as well as look at the correlates of identity and behavior. Given the relatively new introduction of microaggressions to political surveys, this analysis serves as a way to establish that microaggressions and discrimination are interrelated, but distinct variables.

Throughout the different datasets, I look generally at how discrimination variables are correlated with identity and behavior among Asian Americans. By relying on these surveys, I can examine how socioeconomic factors, demographic characters, and other variables are associated

with identity and behavior. Where possible, I also include measures of racial microaggressions. I find that experiences racial microaggressions affect a person's sense of identity, but do not seem to influence behavior. The findings from the multiple datasets suggest that racial microaggressions are a distinct variable from measures of discrimination and affect identity rather than behavior. In contrast, as found in the literature, experiences with discrimination are associated with greater political behavior. This metanalysis is important due to the limited number of studies that look at the correlates of discrimination and racial microaggressions among Asian Americans.

Across the datasets examine, I find that discrimination (both experienced and perceived) has effects on racial group identity (broadly defined) and behavior. However due to a lack of consistency between survey question wording and the fact that the 2008 NAAS and 2012 Pew Survey do not contain any questions on microaggressions, the full scope of Asian American's lived racial experiences is not captured in these surveys. A sense or experience with racial group discrimination (as found in the 2016 NAAS) affects identity and behavior, however perceptions of national-origin discrimination (as found in the 2012 Pew Survey)

Within the 2016 NAAS, experiences with racial microaggressions are typical for Asian Americans across all national-origins, and these experiences are associated with politicizing effects. Those who have had experiences with racial microaggressions are more likely to express a sense of linked fate and believe that Asian Americans have common political interests.

What the findings of these surveys suggest is that more care needs to be taken in order to adequately survey and study Asian American racial group experiences, as standard "discrimination" questions may not accurately reflect the lives of Asian Americans. These

findings inform my pilot survey (shown in Chapter 4) and my survey experiment (shown in Chapter 5).

Review of the Literature – The Role of Discrimination on Identity and Politics

Discrimination is typically defined as (1) unequal treatment on the basis of race that disadvantages a racial group and (2) treatment on the basis of inadequately justified factors other than race that disadvantages a racial group (Pettigrew and Taylor 2000). Discrimination is typically motivated by prejudice and negative affect towards a group on the basis of stereotypical beliefs about a group. Discrimination in political science is typically operationalized as having experienced unfair treatment or exclusion on the basis of race, gender, or other markers of social group membership. There is a commonly understood belief that individuals who experiences discrimination will be more likely to participate in politics (see: Barreto and Woods 2005; Ramakrishnan 2005; Cho, Gimpel, and Wu 2006; Valenzuela and Michelson 2016). Structural discrimination by elites and institutions contributes to increased political participation among minorities (Parker 2009; Ramirez 2007). Minority groups participate in politics as a way to change policies that are associated with their status in society (Oskooii 2016; Stokes 2003).

However, the link between discrimination and politics may be one-sided since many surveys use only one measure of discrimination (Oskooii 2016; Williams 1997; Krieger et al 2005). Since discrimination and exclusion can manifest in many different ways, a singular measure may not capture this multi-faceted experience. There are a growing number of studies that suggest a more comprehensive survey and evaluation of discrimination needs to be developed (Ren et al 1999; Thompson 1996). Ren et al (1999) create a scale that assess discrimination in seven

domains: school, medical, housing, justice system, on the street, at work, and in job hiring. The idea being that discrimination is not just a major stressful one-off incident but rather continuous and ongoing in the day-to-day (Essed 1991). Oskooii (2016) categorizes discrimination into societal and political. He finds that political discrimination (i.e. systemic or structural discrimination) is mobilizing, however societal discrimination (i.e. interpersonal discrimination) is de-mobilizing.

Despite the link between discrimination and political action, its applicability to Asian Americans is unclear. As the 'model minority', Asian Americans are assumed to not experience racism or discrimination in their day to day lives (Alvarez, Juang, and Liang 2006; Sue et al 2009). Part of this notion has to do with how racism and racial discrimination are expressed in present-day; whereas Asian Americans may not seem to be visible targets of 'old-fashioned' racism (Sears 1993), Asian American racism tends to manifest in more subtle ways, such as racial microaggressions. For example, an Asian American may be assumed to be good at mathematics on the basis of their racial group membership. Asian Americans are also more likely to face questions about their perceived foreign status and academic ability rather than questions about criminality (Sue et al 2007).

Asian American racial identity is also not an explicit given. Due to the heterogeneous nature of the community, the existence of a racial Asian American identity is not as straightforward due to the existence of national-origin identity. Asian Americans seem to be largely ambivalent about the racial group identity and typically do not select it as their first identifier (Lien et al 2001; Wong et al 2011). While studies on Black Americans have shown that continued social exclusion and discrimination reinforce their group-based identity and politics, this link is not as

straightforward for Asian Americans due to the presence of different national-origins, languages, and experiences.

Although Asian American identity is not as explicit as Black identity, evidence has shown that Asian Americans do engage in group based collective action. Dina Okamoto's (2006) study of Asian American collective action finds that Asian Americans come together in pan-Asian solidarity as a reaction to prejudice or discrimination. A study of the 1960's Asian American movement also found that Asian American youth from different national-origins engaged in collective action to promote pan-Asian American issues at university campuses (Espiritu 1992). When Asian language signage was under attack in Monterey Park, Japanese and Chinese Americans banded together to politically pressure the city to protect the right to use Asian languages (Saito 1998). All of these cases lend credence to the theory of reactive ethnicity, wherein in the face of threats, exclusion, and discrimination, identity formation increases rather than decreases (Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Rumbaut 2005). What these cases may show is that Asian American identity may not be due to a long history but rather as a reaction to outgroup pressures. In addition, due to the lack of numerical dominance by any one particular Asian American national-origin group, Asian Americans may see the racial identity of Asian American as a way to assert greater numbers, and therefore greater political leverage.

While Asian American collective mobilization happens, how individual level experiences or perceptions of discrimination and microaggressions contribute to the construction of identity (and therefore consciousness) are undertheorized. Masuoka (2006) finds that Asian Americans who have personally experienced discrimination to be more likely to have a sense of group consciousness. She notes that Asian American racial identity may be the byproduct of life

experiences and social interaction rather than psychological attributes such as a perception of discrimination (2006).

Experiences with discrimination may move Asian Americans to express greater solidarity with one another and with other minorities (Masuoka 2006), but the survey questions used are largely informed by a post-Civil Rights idea of discrimination and assumes that the individual recognizes their experiences as discriminatory. Since Asian Americans are thought to not experience discrimination as the model minority, and also face different barriers due to their status in the racial hierarchy, there needs to be a more nuanced way to study Asian American experiences of exclusion as part of a way to better understand how Asian Americans form commonality with one another. After all, the Asian American experience with different forms of discrimination and exclusion may not necessarily be encapsulated by more "traditional" discrimination questions.

Asian Americans may experience more subtle forms of exclusion such as microaggressions (Nadal et al 2012; Sue et al 2009; Yoo et al 2008). The growing literature on microaggressions has found evidence that links racial microaggressions to physical and mental distress. For instance, Asian Americans who were 'complimented' on their English-speaking ability reported greater negative feelings towards whites (Tran and Lee 2014). This presumption of foreign-ness has also been found to drive Asian Americans away from the Republican Party (Kuo, Malholtra, and Mo 2011). Asian Americans are also more likely to evaluate indirect racist messages as harmful and also spend comparatively longer time and energy interpreting indirect racist comments (Leets 2003; Rowe 1993). These findings suggest that Asian Americans are well aware of how their position as a minority informs outgroup treatment, even if the treatment is not overtly racist. However, given the small-scale experimental nature of this work, it is unknown if

these findings translate more generally to the larger Asian American population outside of students.

A majority of the studies of racial microaggressions utilize self-reported experiences with microaggressions which makes it difficult to determine what mechanisms lead to negative outcomes (Okazaki 2009). The earliest work in the study of racial microaggressions utilized focus groups, ranging from N=5 (Allen 2010; Henfield 2011; Robinson 2011) to 97 (Torres et al 2010) in a university-based setting. Although this work gleaned important qualitative findings, the university-based setting makes it difficult to generalize these findings to the larger public. Quantitative work on microaggressions focus largely on scale-construction for specific minoritized groups (Nadal 2011; Torres-Harding et al 2012; Sue 2010; Watkins et al 2010). These studies however, focus on self-reported experiences with microaggressions which makes it difficult to determine what mechanisms lead to negative outcomes (Okazaki 2009).

Sue et al's work created an important taxonomy by which to study microaggressions but given that this work is largely situated in counseling and psychology application of the study of racial microaggressions to political science is not as well-known. Kuo, Malholtra, and Mo study the effects of social exclusion (operationalized as a white confederate asking an Asian American individual about their citizenship) and find that this experience leads Asian Americans to be less supportive of the Republican Party, but do not explicitly refer to this as a racial micro aggression (2017).

In this chapter I look at the correlates of Asian American identity and participation using traditional survey measures of discrimination present in the 2008 NAAS and 2012 Pew Survey Data. Then I compare the analysis in those two surveys to the 2016 NAAS which includes a

more specific battery of microaggressions-based questions. Racial microaggressions occupy a gray area in social behavior, but these experiences should serve as reminders of racial group belonging, and therefore have consequences for identity attachment and behavior.

H1: Asian Americans who experience racial microaggressions are more likely to have a stronger Asian American identity.

Following Kuo, Malholtra, and Mo (2017) I also look at Democratic Party attachment among Asian Americans who experience racial discrimination and microaggressions. If exclusion leads Asian Americans to be more likely to prefer the Democratic Party, both racial microaggressions and discrimination should affect Democratic Party attachment.

H2: Asian Americans who experience racial microaggressions and discrimination are more likely to prefer the Democratic Party.

I suspect that repeated exposure to racial microaggressions should heighten racial identity. I look at the correlates of discrimination and racial microaggressions among Asian Americans and control for standard socioeconomic factors such as age, nativity, marital status, income, and education. The goal of this chapter is to examine how traditional survey measures of discrimination affect Asian American identity and behavior.

2008 National Asian American Survey

The 2008 National Asian American Survey (NAAS) is a nationwide telephone survey of Asian Americans. The 2008 NAAS is comprised of 5,159 self-identified Asian Americans in the United States. The survey was administered between August 12th, 2008 and October 29th, 2008 prior to the 2008 election. The total sample comprises of 1,350 Chinese, 1,150 Asian Indians, 719 Vietnamese, 614 Koreans, 603 Filipinos, 541 Japanese respondents, and 182 from other Asian countries. 88.5% of survey respondents reported that they were born outside of the U.S., meaning that foreign born Asian Americans are overrepresented in this survey compared to the national average of about 65% foreign-born Asian Americans (Budiman 2020). The survey was offered in multiple Asian languages as well as English, with 40% of the sample choosing to respond in English. The majority of individuals are college graduates (33.6%), with another 26.3% having advanced degrees, and 15.9% having a high school diploma.

The 2008 NAAS is a political survey and contains questions of closeness to party, likelihood of vote, as well as a number of questions on policy positions. The 2008 NAAS contains a battery of self-reported racial discrimination and hate crime questions. Respondents are asked "We are interested in the way you have been treated in the United States, and whether you have ever been treated unfairly because of your race, ancestry, being an immigrant, or having an accent…"

Table 3.1 – 2008 NAAS Questions

- Have you ever been unfairly denied a job or fired?
- Have you ever been unfairly denied a promotion at work?
- Have you ever been unfairly treated by the police?
- Have you ever been unfairly prevented from renting or buying a house or apartment?
- Have you ever been treated unfairly or badly at restaurants or stores?

Out of the five questions provided, about 35.4% of foreign-born Asian Americans reported experiencing at least one instance of racial discrimination. Among the foreign-born, the most common incident was being treated unfairly or badly at a restaurant or store, with 16.3% of

respondents saying "yes". 12.7% of foreign-born Asian Americans also reported being unfairly denied a promotion at work. Among native-born Asian Americans, 37.8% reported experiencing at least one instance of racial discrimination. Among native-born Asian Americans, the most common incident was being unfairly treated at a restaurant or store, with among 28.7% of native-born Asian Americans reporting that experience. Despite the lower incidence rate of native-born Asian Americans in this sample, they are slightly more likely than foreign-born to report a discriminatory incident. Since native-born Asian Americans only comprise of ~12% of the total sample, these statistics should be taken with a grain of salt.

2008 NAAS MODELS

Model 1 – Common Political Interests

Due to the structure of the discrimination questions, my variable "discrimination" is coded as a dummy variable (0 or 1) with 1 being that an individual reported at least one instance of discrimination out of the five discrimination questions. I also control for the usual socioeconomic factors such as age (calculated by subtracting 2008 from year born), national-origin, male or female, foreign-born versus native-born, percentage of life spent in the United States, respondent's education level, whether or not they are a citizen, marital status, as well as income.

The first dependent variable is "Do Asians share common political interests?". The 2008 NAAS unfortunately does not include a measure of how close respondents feel to other Asian Americans but given that having a sense of shared political interests is one marker of racial identity (see: Lee 2008), I use it as a proxy for racial group attachment.

Table 3.2 – Common Political Interests

	Dependent variable:
	Common Political Interests
discrim	0.04*** (0.01)
chinese	0.07*** (0.02)
age	−0.001** (0.0004)
woman	−0.05*** (0.01)
foreign	0.08*** (0.02)
lifep	−0.001 (0.001)
educ	0.12*** (0.04)
citizen	0.05*** (0.02)
incdum1	0.02 (0.02)
incdum2	0.09*** (0.02)
incdum3	0.04* (0.02)
incdum4	0.04* (0.02)
married	0.04* (0.02)
Constant	0.22*** (0.04)
Observations	4,902
R^2	0.03
Residual Std. Error	0.48 (df = 4888)
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

My model finds that reporting at least one instance of racial discrimination is associated with saying that Asian Americans have common political interests. The relationship is positive and significant even when controlling for other socioeconomic factors. There is an inverse relationship with age and identity, with younger folks being more likely to say Asian Americans have common interests. Somewhat surprisingly, being foreign-born is also associated with having common interests, however this may be due to a quirk in the sample (as more recent studies have found that foreign-born are less likely to be racially attached) or an issue with using common political interests as a proxy for racial identity. Being more highly educated is also associated with increased racial identity. Having an income between $35,000 to $75,000 is also associated with saying that Asian Americans have common political interests, relative to other income brackets. Surprisingly, women were somewhat less likely to say that Asian Americans had common political interests.

Table 3.3 – Partisanship Model

	Dependent variable:	
	Democrat	Republican
	(1)	(2)
discrim	0.05*** (0.01)	−0.03*** (0.01)
chinese	−0.05*** (0.02)	−0.11*** (0.01)
age	−0.0001 (0.0004)	0.002*** (0.0003)
woman	0.02* (0.01)	−0.03*** (0.01)
foreign	−0.11*** (0.02)	0.04** (0.02)
lifep	−0.001** (0.0005)	−0.001** (0.0004)
educ	0.19*** (0.04)	−0.11*** (0.03)
citizen	0.05*** (0.02)	0.08*** (0.01)
incdum1	0.04* (0.02)	0.04** (0.02)
incdum2	0.03* (0.02)	0.04** (0.01)
incdum3	0.05** (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)
incdum4	0.05** (0.02)	0.04** (0.02)
married	−0.04** (0.02)	0.002 (0.01)
Constant	0.27*** (0.04)	0.07** (0.03)
Observations	4,902	4,902
R^2	0.03	0.05
Residual Std. Error (df = 4888)	0.46	0.35
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

I also investigate whether or not partisanship is related to experienced racial discrimination. Following Kuo, Malholtra, and Mo (2017), a sense of racial exclusion is associated with decreased favorability towards Republicans. I find that experiencing racial discrimination is associated with identifying as a Democrat. Chinese Americans are less likely to explicitly identify as Democrat. This finding is unsurprising given that Chinese Americans tend to be on the fence about partisan identification relative to other national-origin groups. Foreign-born Asian Americans were also less likely to identify as Democrat compared to U.S. born Asian Americans. Those who had citizenship were more likely to identify as Democrat, along with those with higher education levels. Having an income greater than $35,000 is also associated with Democratic partisanship.

As expected, there is an inverse relationship with the discrimination variable and identifying as a Republican. Individuals who reported less or no discrimination were more likely

to self-identify as Republican. Being foreign-born and being in the highest income bracket is also associated with being Republican.

Table 3.4 - Linked Fate

	Dependent variable:
	Linked Fate
discrim	0.13*** (0.01)
chinese	0.02 (0.02)
age	−0.002*** (0.0005)
woman	−0.002 (0.01)
foreign	−0.01 (0.02)
lifep	−0.001** (0.001)
educ	0.14*** (0.04)
citizen	0.001 (0.02)
incdum1	0.05** (0.02)
incdum2	0.09*** (0.02)
incdum3	0.09*** (0.02)
incdum4	0.09*** (0.02)
married	0.005 (0.02)
Constant	0.40*** (0.04)
Observations	4,902
R^2	0.04
Residual Std. Error	0.49 (df = 4888)
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Given that linked fate is one of the most widely used covariates in the study of minority identity, I model whether or not experiencing discrimination is associated with a sense of linked fate. In the NAAS, the linked fate question is asked as: "Do you think what happens generally to other Asians in this country affects what happens in your life?". About an equal share of individuals said yes (44.8%) and no (45.4%) with 9.8% as don't know or refused. I combine "no" and "don't know/refused" responses together to create a dichotomous 0 or 1 variable for linked fate. Experiencing discrimination is positively associated with an increased sense of linked fate. Younger individuals were also more likely to express linked fate with other Asian Americans. Those who had more education were also more likely to express a sense of linked fate. All income brackets (relative to those who did not report income) were associated with a sense of linked fate.

Given that prior literature finds discrimination to be mobilizing, I look at whether or not experiences with discrimination are associated with a likelihood of voting in the 2008 election. In the 2008 NAAS, about 62.2% of the sample expressed that they were likely or very likely to vote in the 2008 election. There are several caveats to using likelihood of vote as a variable due to societal pressure to appear civically engaged; individuals are more likely to overestimate their likelihood of voting. In addition, non-citizens cannot vote, which excludes a portion of the sample in this survey.

Table 3.5 – Voting Behavior

	Dependent variable:
	Likelihood of Voting
discrim	−0.0004 (0.01)
chinese	−0.13*** (0.01)
dem	0.07*** (0.01)
age	0.001*** (0.0004)
woman	−0.03*** (0.01)
foreign	−0.14*** (0.02)
lifep	0.0004 (0.0004)
educ	0.25*** (0.03)
citizen	0.59*** (0.01)
incdum1	0.002 (0.02)
incdum2	−0.04** (0.02)
incdum3	−0.01 (0.02)
incdum4	0.01 (0.02)
married	0.004 (0.02)
Constant	0.13*** (0.03)
Observations	4,902
R^2	0.34
Residual Std. Error	0.39 (df = 4887)
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Surprisingly, I find that experiencing discrimination is not associated with voting in the 2008 election. Being an explicitly identified Democrat, being older, male, U.S. born, and having higher education are associated with increased likelihood of voting.

SUMMARY OF 2008 NAAS FINDINGS

Overall, I find that experiencing at least one incidence of racial discrimination leads Asian Americans to believe that they have common political interests, identify with the Democratic Party, and also have a greater sense of linked fate. My findings fall in line with Masuoka (2006) in that having a personal experience with discrimination contributed to greater consciousness and politicization. Contrary to popular understanding in political science, I do not find that experiences with discrimination were mobilizing at the ballot box in the 2008 NAAS. This finding could potentially be due to the fact that the NAAS measures personal discrimination and not perceived discrimination. At least among Asian Americans in 2008, personal experiences with discrimination do not appear to be politically motivating. I find that although experiences with racial discrimination are consciousness raising for Asian Americans but fail to mobilize. This is counter to common understanding of discrimination as mobilizing.

2012 Pew Survey Data

The 2012 Pew Research Center's Asian American survey is a telephone-based survey (landline and cell phone) and consists of a nationally representative sample of 3,511 self-identified Asian Americans. The survey was available in English, Cantonese, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Tagalog and Vietnamese and was conducted between January 3rd to March 27th, 2012. The final national-origin breakdown is as follows: 728 Chinese, 504 Filipinos, 580 Asian Indians, 515 Japanese, 504 Koreans, 504 Vietnamese, and 176 Asians of other backgrounds. The survey has more foreign-born respondents (76.8%) than U.S. born respondents (23.2%). As such, foreign-born are overrepresented in this survey relative to the general population.

The Pew Survey asks three questions on an individual's thoughts on discrimination in the United States.

Table 3.6 – Pew Survey Discrimination Questions

- "In general, do you think discrimination against [national-origin]-Americans is a major problem, minor problem, or not a problem?
    - Major Problem
    - Minor Problem
    - Not a problem
    - Don't know/Refused
- "During the past twelve months, have you personally experienced discrimination or been treated unfairly because you are [national-origin]-American or not?
    - Yes
    - No
    - Don't know/Refused
- "In the past twelve months, have you been called offensive names because you are [national-origin] American or not?
    - Yes, has happened
    - No, has not happened
    - Don't know/Refused

Unfortunately, the Pew study does not ask respondents about their thoughts on discrimination towards Asian Americans writ large, only their thoughts on discrimination towards their own national-origin group. However, the descriptive statistics from the Pew study are illuminating. Roughly 15% of respondents said that discrimination against their national-origin group is a major problem. 46.4% of respondents said that discrimination against their national-origin group is a minor problem. 35% said discrimination against their national-origin group was not a problem at all.

Table 3.7 – Perceptions of Discrimination Against One's National Origin Group

	Not an Issue	Minor Issue	Major Issue
Chinese	24.3%	55.5%	16.3%
Filipino	43.1%	43.3%	11.8%
Indian	38.3%	49.7%	7.6%
Japanese	44.6%	40.9%	8.3%
Korean	23.0%	40.1%	33.9%
Other	42.1%	45.2%	10.2%
Vietnamese	38.3%	45.4%	13.5%

When split into national-origins, some key differences emerge. Korean Americans are the most likely to believe that discrimination against Koreans is a major problem, with 34% of Korean Americans saying that discrimination was a major problem, and 40% believing it was at least a minor problem. Korean Americans stand out on this matter because while most national-origin groups believe that there is at least some degree of discrimination, a full third of Korean Americans believe it to be a major problem (in contrast, the next highest group is Chinese, of which 16% believe discrimination to be a major issue). Such a stark difference amongst Korean Americans may have to do with events such as the Los Angeles Watts Riots, of which black and Korean Americans were the most effected.

Generally speaking, all national-origin groups believed that discrimination against their national-origin was at least a minor problem (from 40% to 55.5%). Many Asian American national-origins also believed that discrimination against them was not an issue. 44.6% of Japanese Americans believe that discrimination against Japanese was not an issue. This may have to do with the degree of acculturation that Japanese Americans have in U.S. society as well as the larger share of U.S. born Japanese Americans. It is surprising however, given that Japanese Americans faced internment and widespread discrimination in the past. Among Filipinos, there

was a fairly even split between those who believed discrimination to be a minor issue (43.3%) and those who believed discrimination was not an issue at all (43.1%). Koreans (23%) and Chinese (24%) were the least likely to think that discrimination against their national-origin was not an issue. Future work into why Chinese Americans and Korean Americans feel differently about the status of their national-origin group would be particularly illuminating.

Table 3.8 – Perceptions of Discrimination by Nativity

	No Discrimination	Some Discrimination
Foreign-born	37.8%	62.3%
U.S. born	41.5%	58.5%

Among the Pew sample, a greater percentage of foreign-born Asian Americans (62.2%) believe that there is discrimination against their national-origin group. 17% of the foreign-born population believe discrimination against their national-origin group to be a major issue, and 45.2% believe discrimination to be a minor issue. Among U.S. born Asian Americans, 58.2% believe that there is discrimination against their national-origin group Only 7.8% of U.S. born Asian Americans believe discrimination against their national-origin group to be a major problem.

Table 3.9 – Personal Experiences with Discrimination by National-origin

	Yes	Never
Chinese	19.2%	79.7%
Filipino	18.8%	80.6%
Indian	15.9%	82.8%
Japanese	8.8%	89.9%
Korean	18.8%	80.0%
Other	23.5%	74.1%
Vietnamese	13.1%	85.5%

When asked about individual experiences with national-origin based discrimination, only 16.4% of respondents reporting ever experiencing discrimination due to their national-origin. Chinese-Americans (19.2%) were the most likely to report personally experiencing discrimination due to their national-origin, followed by Koreans (18.8%), and Filipino (18.8%).

Table 3.10 – Personal Experiences with Discrimination by Nativity

	Yes	Never
Foreign-born	16.9%	82.1%
U.S. born	14.8%	83.3%

As shown above, both foreign-born (16.9%) and U.S. born (14.8%) Asian Americans reported roughly the same rates of personally experiencing discrimination.

Table 3.11 – Pew Partisanship Model

	Dependent variable:
	Democratic Affiliation
perception of discrimination	0.04** (0.02)
personal experience with discrimination	−0.001 (0.02)
age	0.001** (0.0005)
usborn	0.11*** (0.02)
married	−0.03* (0.02)
chinese	−0.08*** (0.02)
woman	0.07*** (0.02)
educ	0.03*** (0.01)
income	0.005 (0.004)
Constant	0.09** (0.04)
Observations	3,096
R^2	0.03
Residual Std. Error	0.47 (df = 3086)
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 3.11 shows the correlates associated with identifying as a Democrat. In this OLS model, we can see that viewing discrimination towards your national-origin group is associated with greater likelihood of identifying as Democrat. Unsurprisingly, U.S. born Asian Americans are

also more likely to identify as Democrat compared to those who are foreign-born. Compared to other national-origin groups, Chinese are somewhat less likely to identify as Democrat. Women, and those with higher levels of education are also covariates that are associated with Democratic party identity.

Table 3.12 – Pew Vote Model

	Dependent variable:
	Vote in 2008
perception of discrimination	−0.01 (0.02)
personal experience with discrimination	−0.04 (0.03)
dem	0.11*** (0.02)
age	0.004*** (0.001)
usborn	0.13*** (0.02)
married	0.01 (0.02)
chinese	−0.005 (0.02)
woman	−0.04** (0.02)
educ	0.04*** (0.01)
income	0.02*** (0.004)
Constant	0.14*** (0.05)
Observations	2,305
R^2	0.10
Residual Std. Error	0.44 (df = 2294)
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 3.12 shows the correlates associated with voting in the 2008 Presidential election. There does not seem to be a relationship between viewing discrimination against your national-origin group and voting in the 2008 election. The covariates that are associated with voting are being older, U.S. born, being more educated, and having higher incomes (all of which are typically associated with likelihood of voting in general. For the 2008 election, Asian American Democrats were also more likely to vote than independents and Republicans.

Takeaways from Pew Data

The descriptive statistics and basic OLS models using the 2012 Pew Survey on Asian Americans finds that all Asian Americans to some extent perceive discrimination against their

national-origin group. Analysis from the Pew Survey generally conform with the existing literature on discrimination and politics. Foreign-born Asian Americans are more perceptive to discrimination against their national-origin group than U.S. born Asian Americans. This could be due to U.S. born Asian Americans having either greater ties to the overall racial group or foreign-born having greater awareness of what affects their national-origin group while also not being as attentive Asian Americans who are in other national-origins. Unfortunately, due to the framing of the questions as well as the relatively limited scope of the questions, there are only so many inferences that can be drawn from this data.

Since the Pew survey does not ask about perceived racial discrimination, we cannot tell if there are substantial differences between perceptions of national-origin discrimination and perceptions of racial discrimination. We are also unable to discern if respondents think national-origin discrimination is more endemic than racial discrimination, or vice versa. The lack of racial identity or racial group attachment also makes the Pew Survey not entirely well-suited for the purposes of this dissertation. Since there are no questions about racial identity, linked fate, or any general sense of how Asian Americans view one another, the models shown can only tell us so much. They suggest that perceptions of national-origin discrimination are somewhat related to identifying as a Democrat. Surprisingly, there does not seem to be any relationship between perceiving national-origin discrimination or personal experiences with discrimination and going to the polls in 2008. This is contrary to literature on how discrimination writ large can be mobilizing. Of course, self-reported vote choice tends to be overexaggerated due to social desirability, but at least in the 2012 Pew Data, there is no relationship with voting and discrimination (both perceived and personal). What could potentially be at play here is that perceptions of discrimination on the basis of national-origin could be demobilizing (see: Oskooii

2020; 2018). It could be the case that national-origin specific discrimination may be too personal (unlike racial discrimination which could be attributed to structural issues). However, without additional measures, this is only speculation.

In comparison to the 2008 NAAS, the Pew Survey findings generally conform to the literature. Surprisingly in the 2008 NAAS I do not find that discrimination is mobilizing, but in the Pew Survey, national-origin discrimination is associated with partisan identification. In both surveys I do not find that there is a connection between experiencing racial or national-origin discrimination

Data Set - NAAS 2016

The 2016 National Asian American Survey (NAAS) is a nationally representative post-election survey consisting of 3,780 Asian Americans. It consists of a post-election survey (N=4393) that was fielded from November 2016 to February 2017. Although there are two surveys, this analysis will focus on the post-election survey as that battery contains items on experiences with discrimination and microaggressions. The NAAS is a landline and cellphone-based survey, and respondents were contacted using registered voter rolls and vendor samples. The final breakdown is 475 Chinese, 504 Asian Indian, 505 Filipino, 499 Korean, 501 Vietnamese, 517 Japanese, 320 Pakistani, 320 Bangladeshi, 351 Hmong, and 401 Cambodian. All major Asian American national-origins are represented in this survey: Chinese (~10%), Japanese (~11%), Filipino (~11%), Korean (~10%), Vietnamese (~10%), Indian/Pakistani (17%), Cambodians (~10%) and other. Asian Americans in the survey consider racial discrimination to be the third most important issue facing the country and themselves (Ramakrishnan et al 2016).

Experiences with Racial Microaggressions

The 2016 NAAS The dependent variable of interest is a battery of questions on experiences with racial microaggressions. Participants were asked nine questions regarding mistreatment in their day-to-day lives. These questions are based on prior work by Williams' measurement of perceived discrimination among African Americans (Williams et al 1997; Williams et al 2008). These measures are purported to be more reliable than single-item measures (Krieger et al 2005). In addition to the Williams' (2008) questions, there are also four Asian American specific items such as "People act as if you don't speak English, People mispronounce your name, People assume you are good at math and science, and People assume you are not a creative thinker).

In an average month, do any of the following things happen to you?

- You receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores (18.8%)
- People act as if you don't speak English (25.7%)
- People act as if they are afraid of you (8.4%)
- People act as if they think you are dishonest (6.9%)
- You are called names or insulted (14.6%)
- You are threatened or harassed. (9.6%)
- People mispronounce your name (6.3%)
- People assume you are good at math and science (57.7%)
- People assume you are not a creative thinker. (13.5%)

Of the nine microaggressions shown, respondents were the most likely to encounter the microaggression where he or she was assumed to be good at math or science. This coincides with the model minority stereotype that Asian Americans are presumed to be academically gifted. The second more common occurrence was people assuming they did not speak English. This also coincides with the forever foreigner stereotype, wherein Asian Americans are automatically assumed to be foreign, and therefore have poor English skills.

Foreign-born Asian Americans were more likely (15.5%) than U.S. born Asian Americans (10.5%) to say that they had never encountered a racial microaggression. On average however, both foreign-born and U.S. born Asian Americans recalled at least one experience with a microaggression in an average month. Experiences with microaggressions was also common across all national-origins, with South Asians being the most likely to report experiences with microaggressions. This may stem from the higher likelihood of South Asians to take on employment that is seen as stereotypical such as medicine and/or tech. South Asians are also more likely to come to the United States on the basis of an employment visa, which may also speak to why this group encounters more racial microaggressions. Of the national-origin groups represented in the 2016 NAAS, Chinese Americans were the most likely to say they had never encountered a racial microaggression before, with 24.1% of Chinese Americans reported they never encounter one in a given month. Due to the newer measures, I conduct factor analysis to see if these nine items can be scaled together. The combined scale has good internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha of 0.73.

Independent Variables

Experiences with Racial Discrimination

The NAAS also asks a variety of discrimination related questions based on an individual's personal recollection of discriminatory or exclusionary experiences.

- Have you ever been unfairly denied a promotion? (13.8%)
- Have you ever been unfairly fired from a job? (9.4%)
- For unfair reasons, do you think you have ever not been hired for a job? (15.7%)
- Have you ever been unfairly stopped, searched, questioned, physically threatened or abused by the police? (11.1%)
- Do you think you have ever been unfairly prevented from moving into a neighborhood because the landlord or realtor refused to sell or rent you a house or apartment? (5.6%)
- Have you ever moved into a neighborhood where neighbors made life difficult for you or your family? (9.7%)

Out of the discrimination-related variables, respondents in the 2016 NAAS were most likely to say that they had been unfairly not hired for a job. The second most likely occurrence was being unfairly denied a promotion, with 13.8% of respondents believing that they had personally been denied a promotion on the basis of their race. Employment based discrimination, particularly in promotion, is a particular issue for Asian Americans who are the least likely to be promoted to management (Gee and Peck 2018). This "bamboo ceiling" pertains to Asian Americans in fields such as education, finance, medical, legal, and tech, all professions where Asian Americans make up a significant presence but are extremely underrepresented in upper

management. About two thirds of the sample (65.6%) reported never having experienced any of the six events, 17.3% reported experiencing one, and 17% report experiencing at least two of these events in their lifetime.

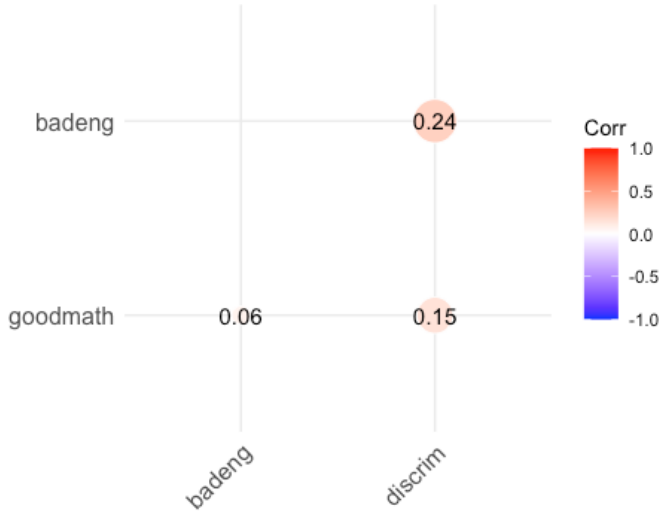
Control Variables

I also include control variables for general socioeconomic traits that can affect racial identity attachment and behavior. I control for nativity as a dummy variable, with U.S. born as a 1 and foreign-born as 0. The foreign-born category includes individuals who are naturalized citizens but born abroad. I also control for gender, marital status, age, education, and household income.

IDENTITY MODELS

Due to the structure of my dependent variables as binary 0's or 1's, I utilize logistic regression models. I run a series of models with both experiences with racial microaggressions and experiences with discrimination as explanatory variables. The racial microaggression variable is comprised of a scale created by summing the nine racial microaggressions questions. Respondents could either have reported zero racial microaggressions up to nine racial microaggressions. The discrimination scale is also coded the same way, by summing up the racial discrimination questions into one variable. I include both of these variables in the models in order to see if there is any differentiation between the two variables. In order to make sure there wouldn't be issues with collinearity, I first created a correlation matrix between the top two racial microaggressions (bad at English and good at math) and experiences with discrimination.

Figure 3.1 – 2016 NAAS Correlation Matrix



Experiences with discrimination is correlated with the "good at math" racial microaggression at the 0.15 level. The "bad at English" racial microaggression and racial discrimination is correlated at the 0.24 level. Although somewhat related, these measures at not collinear with one another.

Table 3.13 – 2016 NAAS Model

	Dependent variable:			
	linked fate	common_poli	dem	asnid_important
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
micro_scale	0.201*** (0.023)	0.076*** (0.021)	0.027 (0.021)	−0.025 (0.027)
discrim_scale	0.041 (0.040)	−0.009 (0.038)	−0.038 (0.038)	−0.015 (0.050)
usborn	0.451*** (0.093)	−0.256*** (0.091)	0.563*** (0.090)	−0.182 (0.113)
filipino	−0.379*** (0.135)	−0.069 (0.133)	0.791*** (0.137)	0.010 (0.153)
southasian	−0.347*** (0.116)	0.121 (0.114)	1.058*** (0.120)	0.444*** (0.140)
jpn	−0.458*** (0.143)	−0.443*** (0.145)	0.823*** (0.144)	0.407** (0.168)
korean	0.336** (0.137)	0.007 (0.132)	1.019*** (0.136)	0.246 (0.160)
viet	−0.154 (0.132)	−0.661*** (0.137)	0.235* (0.139)	0.919*** (0.189)
pac_island	−0.093 (0.248)	−0.087 (0.239)	0.744*** (0.241)	
dem	0.241*** (0.070)	0.396*** (0.070)		−0.246*** (0.093)
woman	0.099 (0.070)	−0.217*** (0.070)	0.398*** (0.070)	−0.337*** (0.092)
marry	−0.155** (0.077)	−0.185** (0.077)	−0.079 (0.077)	0.088 (0.100)
less50k	0.122 (0.101)	0.217** (0.102)	0.455*** (0.103)	−0.134 (0.132)
less100k	0.117 (0.107)	0.050 (0.108)	0.453*** (0.108)	0.076 (0.143)
less200k	0.195* (0.115)	−0.014 (0.116)	0.450*** (0.115)	0.154 (0.155)
greater200k	0.612*** (0.170)	−0.047 (0.166)	0.349** (0.164)	0.059 (0.224)
Constant	−0.287** (0.140)	−0.414*** (0.139)	−1.465*** (0.147)	1.687*** (0.176)
Observations	3,780	3,780	3,780	3,780
Log Likelihood	−2,465.578	−2,476.565	−2,483.299	−1,627.121
Akaike Inf. Crit.	4,965.156	4,987.129	4,998.599	3,286.243
Note:				*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

The first dependent variable I look at is linked fate. Linked fate in the 2016 NAAS is asked as "Do you think what happens generally to other Asian Americans affects what happens in your life?". Respondents could answer either yes, no, don't know, or refuse to answer. Figure 12.1 looks at the relationship between the racial microaggressions scale and a sense of linked fate while controlling for sociodemographic variables using a logit regression (as the outcome variable is dichotomous). As shown in the model, increased experiences with racial microaggressions is associated with having a higher sense of linked fate. Experiences with discrimination however, are **not** associated with linked fate. Unsurprisingly, being a U.S. born Asian Americans is positively associated with a sense of linked fate. When controlling for national-origin, compared to Chinese Americans (the omitted category), Filipinos, South Asians, and Japanese Americans are less likely to have a sense of linked fate. Korean Americans are more likely to have a sense of linked fate compared to other national-origin groups. Not being

married and having an income between $100,000 and $200,000 is also positively associated with having a sense of linked fate. Being a Democrat is also associated with having a sense of linked fate with other Asian Americans.

Another way to measure racial identity attachment in surveys is by asking respondents whether or not "Asian Americans have common political interest". Again, since the outcome variable is dichotomous, I use a logit regression to assess the relationship between the racial microaggressions scale and the outcome. Table 12.2 shows that again, experiences with racial microaggression are associated with the perception that Asian Americans have common political interests. Surprisingly however, being U.S. born is negatively associated with believing that Asian Americans have common political interests. Women are also less likely than men to believe that Asian Americans have common political interests. Individuals making less than $50,000 a month were more likely than other income categories to believe Asian Americans have common political identity. Finally, once more, being a Democrat is positively associated with believing that Asian Americans have common political interests.

When disaggregating the model into the top two racial microaggressions, both racial microaggressions are associated with having a sense of common political interests. Unlike the disaggregated linked fate model, experiences with discrimination is still not related to a belief that Asian Americans have common political interests.

Table 3.14 – 2016 NAAS Partisanship

	Dependent variable:
	voted
micro_scale	0.056** (0.026)
discrim_scale	0.095* (0.049)
lf	0.183** (0.083)
filipino	0.443*** (0.151)
southasian	0.539*** (0.130)
jpn	0.557*** (0.155)
korean	0.084 (0.145)
viet	0.701*** (0.149)
pac_island	0.124 (0.263)
dem	0.616*** (0.085)
woman	−0.194** (0.083)
marry	0.163* (0.086)
less50k	−0.303*** (0.114)
less100k	0.206 (0.127)
less200k	0.405*** (0.142)
greater200k	0.972*** (0.256)
Constant	0.253 (0.157)
Observations	3,780
Log Likelihood	-1,897.798
Akaike Inf. Crit.	3,829.596
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Thinking back to how Asian Americans are the least likely to explicitly identify with a party, I look again at the correlates of Democratic identification using the 2016 NAAS. Surprisingly, I find that neither experiences with microaggressions or discrimination are associated with Democratic partisan identification. Instead, socioeconomic factors such as being U.S. born, being female, South Asian, Japanese, and/or Pacific Islander (relative to Chinese) are associated with Democratic identity. The NAAS also asks respondents whether or not being Asian American was important to them. In this model, neither experiences with racial microaggressions or discrimination is associated with believing that Asian American identity was important.

Looking at the relationship between racial microaggressions, discrimination, and behavior, I look at the behavioral outcome: voting in the 2016 election. Around 79.7% of registered Asian Americans in the NAAS reported voting in 2016. I find that both experiences with racial microaggressions and racial discrimination are positively and significantly associated

with having voted in the 2016 election. However, the added input of these two variables is rather small compared to party registration and high income. Being a partisan and having higher income is one of the strongest determinants of likelihood of going to the polls, so this is unsurprising.

2016 NAAS Discussion

Overall, the 2016 NAAS data shows that racial microaggressions (both aggregated and disaggregated) are a relatively normal occurrence for Asian Americans. Despite differences in generation, over half of Asian Americans encounter the racial microaggression of being told that they were good at math/science. I also find that racial microaggressions are associated with a sense of linked fate with other Asian Americans. The more racial microaggressions a person encountered, the more likely they were to also believe that what happens to other Asian Americans affects their life. Experiences with racial microaggressions are also associated with thinking that Asian Americans have common political interests, which is another measurement of racial identity attachment. I also find that experiences with racial microaggressions and discrimination are also associated with having voted in the 2016 election.
However, there is no relationship between experiences with microaggressions and being a registered Democrat or believing that being Asian American was important.

I find that increased experiences with microaggressions is positively associated with an increased sense of linked fate. Increased exposure to microaggressions is also positively related to believing that Asian Americans as a whole share common political interests despite coming from different national-origins (see table 3.13).

CHAPTER CONCLUSION

The three datasets presented: the 2008 National Asian American Survey, the 2012 Pew Survey on Asian Americans, and the 2016 National Asian American Survey are all nationwide surveys on Asian Americans with relatively representative samples of each Asian American national-origin group. Due to the differing content between the NAAS and the Pew Survey, it is a little difficult to paint an overall cohesive picture on Asian Americans' thoughts on racial microaggressions and discrimination (perceived and experienced). Overall, I find that Asian Americans who experience racial microaggressions are more likely to express linked fate with other Asian Americans and also express common political interests with other Asian Americans. Experiences with discrimination however, are not associated with linked fate and political commonality in the 2016 NAAS. In the 2008 NAAS, a personal experience with discrimination is associated with a sense of linked fate, however personal experiences with discrimination are not associated with voting in the 2008 election. There was also no relationship between perceptions of national-origin discrimination or personal experiences with discrimination and likelihood of voting in the 2008 election in the 2012 Pew Survey.

Contrary to H2, I do not find that experiences with racial microaggressions or discrimination are associated with Democratic party affiliation in the 2016 NAAS. Perceptions of *national-origin* discrimination are associated with Democratic party affiliation in the 2012 Pew Data. Personal experiences with discrimination are also somewhat associated with Democratic party affiliation in the 2008 NAAS.

The results suggest that in order to have a more nuanced understanding of Asian American's racial experiences and its impacts on politics, there needs to be more expansive measures that capture both (1) personal experiences with discrimination, (2) an individual's perception of discrimination against their racial group, and (3) questions regarding experiences with racial microaggressions. I find that microaggressions affect Asian American identity and behavior differently from "standard" measures of discrimination. Experiences with microaggressions are not associated with likelihood to vote but experiences with explicit discrimination are associated with propensity to vote. My finding with explicit racial discrimination is in line with prior research (see: Barreto and Woods 2005; Cho, Gimpel, and Wu 2006) that suggests a positive relationship between experiencing racial discrimination and likelihood of participation. However, racial microaggressions or "interpersonal discrimination" are not associated with behavior. This finding is aligned with Oskooii's (2016) study on how peer to peer bias can be demobilizing.

What my analyses suggest is that there needs to be a distinction between personal experience, perceptions of group discrimination, and racial microaggressions on surveys. I find that U.S. born Asian Americans are much more likely to vote despite experiences with microaggressions and discrimination. There may be an interaction effect between racial microaggressions and discrimination for native-born Asian Americans. U.S. born Asian Americans may be more sensitive to microaggressions compared to foreign-born due to differences in context (Vorauer and Kumhyr 2001). Throughout the three surveys analyzed, nativity remains an important cleavage in the study of Asian American identity and behavior. Foreign-born Asian Americans who naturalize still report less likelihood of voting compared to U.S. born Asian Americans.

Overall, I find that discrimination plays an important role in determining behavior, however future surveys need to have a more nuanced multi-faceted measure of both interpersonal experiences (such as microaggressions), experiences with structural discrimination, as well as perception of discrimination against the group.

Chapter 4 – Pilot Data

INTRODUCTION

While discrimination has been found to increase political attachments, generally, Americans feel as if racism and discrimination have decreased (with some viewing racism as a thing of the past) (Tesler 2016), yet as shown in previous analysis, experiences with discrimination are still an important factor in the lives of Asian Americans. Rather than focusing on discrimination alone as a covariate, it may be useful to zoom out and look at other forces that impact the lives of minorities. Although discrimination is clearly an important variable that needs to be continually studied, there are other ways in which Asian American racialization occurs. One such avenue of racialization is via stereotyping. Stereotyping is less overtly negative than experiences with discrimination, but they are borne from the same negative beliefs about an individual based on their group membership.

How do Asian Americans perceive stereotypes about their racial and ethnic group? Racism continues to be play a dominant role in the lives and experiences of minoritized populations, yet many Americans believe racism to be a thing of the past (Thompson and Neville 1999; Experiences with discrimination have been found to lead individuals to identify more strongly with their racial group (Schildkraut 2011; Schildkraut 2005; DeSipio 1996) contributing to increased collective action on behalf of said racial group (Lee 2008; McClain et al 2009; Miller et al 1981). While previous studies in political science have shown a link between discrimination and group behavior, the application of these studies to Asian Americans is complicated. This is due to a multitude factors: (1) the measurement of "discrimination" varies from study to study, and (2) survey questions regarding discrimination typically only focus on

explicit recognizable instances of discrimination. Discrimination has been measured as a general sense of threat against the group (Barreto and Woods 2005), and responses to survey items (Oskooii 2020; 2018). Survey measurements of discrimination also often fail to account for perception of discrimination against ones racial and ethnic group versus self-reported personal experiences with discrimination, both of which may affect one's sense of identity differently (Oskooii 2020).

Whereas my previous analysis was using pre-existing observational data, it does not capture the dynamic ways in which individuals can experience stereotypes and bias. I am interested in a more holistic view of how Asian Americans perceive stereotypes of their own group. The goal of my pilot survey is to assess what types of racial stereotypes and microaggressions that Asian Americans typically encounter, how Asian Americans themselves understand discrimination, and assess the relationship between racial microaggressions, experiences of discrimination, and political outcomes.

In this chapter I more fully delve into racial stereotypes and microaggressions that frame the Asian American experience: the model minority and the forever foreigner. I discuss the historical origins of these beliefs, along with scholarly findings on the implications of these stereotypes for mental health, educational outcomes, and politics. Drawing from a review of the literature, I then discuss the results from a pilot survey in order to get a fuller sense of how Asian Americans understand and experience racial stereotyping, microaggressions, and discrimination. This pilot data, which contains both text responses and more typical survey items, allows me to paint a more holistic picture of the racialized lives of Asian Americans. Following Chapter 3, which finds that there is a relationship between experiencing microaggressions and identity, I conduct this analysis again using my pilot data. I find that experiences with racial

microaggressions are common across all Asian American national-origins. Those who have had experiences with racial microaggressions were more likely to express commonality with other Asian Americans.

RACIAL STEREOTYPING

Asian Americans are commonly thought of as a homogeneous monolith (see: Sue et al 2007; Ong et al 2013) even though Asian Americans comprise of many different national-origin groups, cultures, languages, and histories. However, upon arrival to the United States, Asian Americans are homogenized in similar ways. This homogenization means that regardless of nationality or background, a person of Asian descent is subjected to a similar racialization process. Experiences with common stereotypes about Asian Americans then, should be fairly common regardless of national-origin.

Model Minority

The model minority is a normatively 'positive' stereotype that portrays Asian Americans as being successful—overcoming hardship to achieve high socioeconomic attainment (Sue et al 1995; Ho and Jackson 2001). The notion that Asian Americans are well-off, educated, and hardworking is a relatively new concept compared to how Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese immigrants were treated prior to the 1940's. William Petersen, a sociologist writing for the New York Times Magazine, first coined the term in 1966 when writing about Japanese Americans. Petersen claimed that having a tight knit family structure and a "cultural" emphasis on hard work enabled Japanese Americans to "overcome" discrimination (Chow 2017). The news media latched onto Petersen's idea, pointing to other Asian American groups as being successful due to

"Confucian values" and genetic ability. This emphasis on the supposedly cultural superiority of Asian Americans is reified today over and over again. More recently, a lawsuit alleged that Harvard was discriminating against Asian American applicants. Students for Fair Admissions, the plaintiff, claimed that there should be more Asian American students admitted to Harvard due to superior academic skills (Biskupic 2021; Poon et al 2019).

The model minority of course, is a myth. It stems from hyper-selectivity of Asian immigrants post-1965 after the U.S. finally struck down immigration restrictions. Highly educated and wealthier Asian immigrants, particularly from India and China, were able to immigrate for school and employment reasons, leading to a sharp increase in the overall socioeconomic status of Asian Americans (Lee and Zhou 2015). These immigrants are often much more highly educated and wealthier relative to the median and are seen as attractive to American companies who sponsor their H1-B visas. The perception of Asian Americans as the model minority monolith means that out-groups are unaware of the inequality that exists within Asian America (Suzuki 1977; Takaki 1989). On the surface, Asian Americans have high median incomes and higher educational attainment than Blacks and Latinos. However, these statistics are skewed for Asian Americans due to the fact that Asian Americans tend to live in multi-generational households, creating a bloated household income statistic. Non-Asian Americans also vastly overestimate Asian-white wealth and downplay economic inequality within Asian American community inequality (Kuo, Kraus, and Richeson 2019).

Asian American success as the model minority, is simultaneously glorified and envied (Kim 2007). Fear of Asian American educational attainment is especially seen in education, where fear of an "Asian horde" that ruins grading curves and raises test scores have contributed to a new form of "white flight" (Hwang 2005). The usage of educational attainment and income

as markers of having "made it" also obscures the truth that compared to white Americans, Asian Americans are disproportionately underrepresented in politics (Leung 2021; Wong et al 2011). It also makes it difficult for Asian American students to apply for financial aid. Data from the U.S. Department of Education finds that the lowest income Asian American students had significantly higher average unmet financial aid need compared to other students in the same income bracket. Across the board, Asian American students had the greatest unmet financial aid need compared to others within the same income quartile (Kim and Park 2008; U.S. Census Bureau 2003).

Forever Foreigner

Although Asian Americans are 'prized' for their ability to achieve success, Asian Americans are also seen as perpetual or forever foreigners. To other Americans, Asian Americans appear to be "Asian" first and "American" second. The perpetual foreigner stereotype includes beliefs that Asian Americans are unwilling to assimilate and shed cultural ties (Kim 1999; Okihiro 2014; Tuan 1998). This manifests into question about English speaking capability, and questions about an individual's birthplace. Claire Kim's racial triangulation theory puts Asian Americans as being "triangulated" between whites and Blacks, simultaneously valorized and also ostracized (1999). For native-born Asian Americans, the perpetual foreigner stereotype also deprives Asian Americans of their identity as Americans and signals that outgroups do not believe they are sufficiently "American" enough. Asian Americans are seen as socially awkward, cold, and uncreative (Fiske 2002; Zhang 2010). Although Asian Americans are the model minority, they are not seen as leadership material, contributing to a lack of Asian Americans in upper-management (Chin 2016; Lee and Zhou 2020).

The forever foreigner stereotype stems from the ages old specter of Asians as the 'yellow peril. This image was first used in the 19th century to prop up orientalist beliefs of Western societies as being more 'civilized' compared to Eastern civilizations, which were 'exotic and timeless' but ultimately inferior (Said 1978). Therefore, immigrants from so-called Oriental countries are dishonest, diseased, and inferior (Del Visco 2019)[3]. This stereotype can be seen especially in moments of crisis, such as the 1980's when Japan's rising economy was seen as a threat to American economic supremacy (Tuan 1998). During that same time period, two white autoworkers murdered Chinese American Vincent Chin under the belief that he was Japanese, again speaking to fears of Asians as being competitors and outsiders (Kim 1999). The rise of China and souring relations between the U.S. and China has led to fears of jobs leaving the U.S. (Chin 2010; Weiner 2012). In fact, the federal government as also disproportionately charged Chinese scientists with espionage, often without proof (Kim 2018). Both the government and populace's quick leap of Asian Americans as potential enemies is yet another present-day manifestation of the "forever foreigner" trope. Being perceived as a foreigner is associated with negative psychological outcomes among Latinos and Asian Americans (Cheryan and Monin 2011; Huynh, Devoz and Smalarz 2011; Kim et al 2011). These negative outcomes include lower self-esteem (Armenta and Hunt 2009), increased stress (Pascoe and Smart Richman 2009), and depression (Lee 2005; Ojeda 2011).

The model minority and forever foreigner racialization of Asian Americans exists simultaneously, with different aspects highlighted at any given time. The COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to a resurgence of xenophobic fears against Asian Americans, fears that were not

[3] Some scholars have also noted that the model minority is simply another facet of Orientalism (Chou 2008), given the model minority's stereotype that Asian American success comes from seemingly "immutable" factors such as a cultural predisposition for the maths and sciences, which could be understood as yet another form of orientalist cultural essentialism.

new but rather underlying (Chan, Kim, and Leung 2020). Therefore, seemingly innocuous statements such as "Where are you from?" contribute and reinforce beliefs that Asian Americans are alien. This perception of foreigner is then a slippery slope into other xenophobic beliefs about Asian Americans.

Taken together, the model minority stereotype and the forever foreigner stereotype are the two more commonly acknowledged stereotypes that Asian Americans face (see: Kim 1999; Junn 2007; Zou and Cheryan 2017). From these two tropes, we can trace throughout history the dimensions in which Asian Americans have been treated in American society: first as the economically threatening and diseased foreigner and then to the well-to-do but politically unthreatening model minority. As the COVID-19 pandemic has shown however, American society is quick to return to negative perceptions of Asian Americans as the foreigner which illustrates how despite occasional valorization, Asian Americans remain outsiders. However, we have limited theorization on how these tropes affect Asian Americans' political leanings, what Asian Americans think about these tropes, and the degree to which they may or may not internalize them.

RACIAL MICROAGGRESSIONS

Stereotypes, at their core, are a psychological heuristic that is not inherently harmful. Stereotypes become harmful to others when they are applied wholesale to individuals. The threat of stereotyping alone is enough to negatively impact mental and physical health, academic performance, sports performance, and self-esteem (Steele 1997; Steele and Aronson 1995; Stoet 2012). One avenue in which stereotypes become harmful is in the form of racial microaggressions. Although race impacts every aspect of people of color's lives, the public and

media tends to gravitate towards examples of more extreme racially biased/discriminatory events. These more extreme examples of racial bias overlook the lived reality of many people of color, who are more likely to face racism from well-intentioned outgroup members (Banaji 2001; DeVos and Banaji 2005). Racial stereotypes are at the heart of discrimination and bias, and microaggressions are one avenue in which these beliefs are expressed in interpersonal settings. Microaggressions are defined as "brief and commonplace daily verbal and nonverbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults towards members of oppressed groups" (Sue 2010). Contrary to experiences with overt discrimination, perpetrators may believe that their comments, interactions, or gestures are non-discriminatory, well-intentioned, or even flattering (Sue et al 2009). Whereas previous discussions of discrimination are overwhelmingly based on negative and clearly recognizable experiences, less is known regarding the effects of racial microaggressions, which may appear either as negative, neutral, or even positively-valenced. These cumulative racial events are damaging due to their frequency (Chester 1969, Chester 1974).

There is growing evidence to suggest that racial microaggressions are linked to both physical and mental stress, and also may be traumatizing (see: Anderson and Finch 2017). Although Sue et al's (2007) taxonomy of microaggressions includes three, I focus here on microinvalidations which verbal or nonverbal messages are, usually subtle, that are demeaning towards a person of color. Examples of microinvalidations include asking if a Black student received an athletic scholarship (therefore invalidating their intelligence) or assuming that Latinas or Black women are custodial staff rather than colleagues (Williams et al 2015). These commonplace interactions seem innocuous but are actually quite harmful because of the

cognitive burden of having to process whether or not the interaction was due to their race or not (Schacht 2008; Thomas 2008). Although these interactions have minimally negative physical outcomes, microaggressions invoke emotional pain on an individual due to their belonging in a minority racial group (Sue et al 2007).

Microaggressions are not always about negative treatment but rather *differential* treatment, a signal of non-belonging. Individuals who are targeted by microaggressions also face the issue of whether or not they should point out the racial bias of a microaggression, especially if the perpetrator is unaware of the underlying bias. The target may be seen as overreacting, and thus 'calling out' a microaggression could be seen as social faux pas (Sue et al 2007). Microaggression can also be attritionally ambiguous, wherein a target can either attribute the behavior to the perpetrator's internal racism or to their own personal failures and shortcomings (see: Major, Kaiser, and McCoy 2003; Schmitt and Branscombe 2002). In contrast, discriminatory events where being able to attribute the negative treatment as due to racial prejudice has protective benefits for people of color (Crocker et al 1991; Major et al 2003). The attritional ambiguity of racial microaggressions is more cognitively intensive.

The ambiguous nature of racial microaggressions makes it difficult for individuals to respond (Sue et al 2009; Nadal 2011; Wong et al 2013). Whereas discrimination has clear outcomes, the ambiguity of microaggressions makes it difficult to respond to race-based situations (Crocker and Blanton 1999). Being able to attribute the difference in treatment as because of one's race can make a receiving a microaggression more painful (see: Branscombe, Schmitt, and Harvey 199; Schmitt et al 2002) as it is a reminder of one's lower status in the racial hierarchy. Over time, the stress from racial microaggressions compounds and contributes to health deficits (Balsam et al 2011; Berjot, Girault-Lidvan, and Gillet 2012; Herek, Gillis and

Cogan 2009). Encounters with racial microaggressions have been found to lower Asian Americans' sense of self-esteem (Sue 2010). Casual 'on the street' denigration has also been found to contribute to depressed political outcomes among Muslim Americans (Oskooii 2017).

Microaggressions are especially relevant for Asian Americans (Sue et al 2007) because of the model minority stereotype. Asian Americans are racialized differently from Blacks and Latinos (who face more overwhelmingly negative tropes and microaggressions). This means that due to Asian Americans' positionality in the racial hierarchy, they may receive seemingly "positive" microaggressions. The "positive" valence of the model minority stereotype means that there is a greater likelihood Asian Americans will encounter seemingly neutral or even complementary microaggressions due to the group's supposed strong work ethic and success (Lee 1994). Asian Americans who were 'complimented' on their English-speaking ability (a typical example of the forever foreigner stereotype) reported more negative affect towards whites (Tran and Lee 2014).

In addition, Asian Americans who were questioned about their citizenship status (another manifestation of the forever foreigner stereotype) also reported greater negativity towards the Republican Party (Kuo, Malholtra, and Mo 2017). Asian Americans also frequently encounter these backhanded seemingly "positive" comments (Cheryan and Monin 2005; Armenta et al 2013). In general, microaggressions and other forms of subtle exclusion contribute to negative mental health outcomes for Asian Americans (Cheryan and Bodenhausen 2000; Shih, Pittinsky, and Ambady 1999). In an experimental study, Siy and Cheryan (2013) find that Asian Americans negatively view those who engage in positive stereotyping about Asian American math ability. Asian Americans also interpret exceptionalizing comments such as "Your English is so good" as derogatory and rooted in the forever foreigner stereotype (Tran and Lee 2014).

Taken together, racial stereotypes and racial microaggressions have been found to have negative physical and psychological outcomes (Nadal et al 2007). The image of Asian Americans as the model minority means that outgroups believe Asian Americans do not experience racism, unlike Blacks and Latinos (Wong and Halgin 2006). The expression of racism has shifted from blatant discrimination to more subtle behaviors (Dovidio and Gaertner 2004). Yet to date, there have been limited studies as to how subtle behaviors such as racial microaggressions (especially positively valenced microaggressions) affect an individual's racial attachment and politics.

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

This chapter focuses on how everyday experiences with racial microaggressions impacts a person's feelings towards their racial group and likelihood of participation. While discrimination has clear and visible outcomes that can lead individuals to think of their race and engage in group based collective action, racial microaggressions occupy a gray area in social behavior. Racial microaggressions can appear as negative, neutral, or even seemingly complementary. Although Asian Americans come from diverse backgrounds and histories, American society seems to homogenize all Asian Americans in similar ways. the same way. If that is true, then this homogenization can serve as a point of shared commonality, which may contribute to political identity. This homogenization should mean that regardless of national-origin, every Asian American person encounters the model minority and forever foreigner stereotype. These experiences with racial microaggressions based on the model minority and forever foreigner should reinforce Asian American identity by creating a point of commonality among group members as a shared common experience that reaches across national-origin

divides. However, due to the ambiguity of racial microaggressions, it is unknown if these comments will have as strong of an impact as discriminatory events might.

H1: Asian Americans who experience racial microaggressions are more likely to have a strong Asian American identity.

Repeated exposure to these stereotypes and racial microaggressions should heighten one's racial identity even after controlling for standard sociodemographic factors such as age, marital status, gender, income, and nativity).

I also expect that Asian Americans who experience microaggressions are more likely to feel excluded and prefer the Democratic Party. This should be due to racial microaggressions as being a subtle signal of exclusion, which Kuo, Malholtra, and Mo (2017) find in their lab experiment when a white moderator questioned an Asian American's citizenship status.

H2: Asian Americans who experience racial microaggressions are more likely to prefer the Democratic Party.

Finally, given that racial microaggressions are a form of subtle exclusion and stem from the same stereotypical sources as discrimination, experiencing racial microaggressions should therefore contribute to increased political behavior such as registering to vote and/or voting in elections.

H3: Experiencing racial microaggressions is associated with increased political behavior.

DATA AND METHODS

The data from this chapter comes from a pilot survey (N=359) fielded online using the Lucid Platform during December 2018. Participants were recruited from the Lucid panels to take the survey on Qualtrics and were compensated a small amount upon verified completion. The requirements for entering the survey are that the respondent is over the age of eighteen and self-verifies that they are a person of Asian descent living in the United States. The demographic breakdown of pilot respondents is as follows: 17.5% Chinese and Taiwanese, 18.7% Indian, 7.2% Korean, 40.7% Filipino, 4.7% Vietnamese, and 10.9% Japanese. The survey is broadly about experiences with racial microaggressions, stereotypes, and political behavior. 67.3% of respondents were native born Asian Americans, which is greater than the national average of about 33% native born. The survey consists of 66.7% female respondents and 33.3% male respondents. 65% of survey respondents had attended college, with 14.9% having an advanced degree. The survey was only administered in English.

I included some general policy questions to better assess the political leanings of my sample. When asked whether or not they favored or opposed affirmative action programs, 82.2% of the sample were in favor of affirmative action. This is a much higher rate of support compared to other surveys such as the 2016 National Asian American Survey and the 2016 Collaborative Multi-racial Postelection Survey. 92% of the sample was in favor of paid leave for new parents. When asked about raising taxes on the wealthy to fund social programs such as Medicare or Medicaid, 74.5% of the sample was in favor of taxing the wealthy. A similar proportion of the sample (79.6%) were also in favor of having a universal healthcare policy such as Medicare For All put into place. Overall, this sample is fairly highly educated and overwhelmingly native-born with more progressive policy leanings than the median Asian American, so the findings in this

survey should be taken with the sample demographics in mind. What's missing from political surveys is a more holistic view of how Asian Americans experience racialization outside of standard measures of discrimination. We know very little about how experiences with stereotyping and microaggressions may influence political outcomes, and also very little about the degree to which experiences with racial microaggressions may be similar or different from experiences with racial discrimination. This pilot survey is designed to assess these issues, and provide guidance moving forward.

Distinguishing between Experiences with Discrimination and Racial Stereotypes

First, I look at the dimensions in which my sample is different from that of nationally representative surveys. A higher number of respondents in my survey (30%) reported ever experiencing discrimination. This number is much higher than the 2016 Collaborative Multi-racial Survey and the 2016 National Asian American Survey which finds that roughly 15% of Asian Americans reported experiencing discrimination. The higher number of native-born present in my sample could explain the higher rates of self-reported discrimination.

Given that previous quantitative surveys did not ask Asian Americans about intergroup similarities and differences, I included questions that looked at degree of similarity. About 41% of the sample agreed with the statement that Asian Americans are thought of as "the same" and therefore face similar forms of discrimination and treatment from outgroups. In a free-response text box provided, respondents were asked "What assumptions and/or generalizations do other Americans make about Asians and Asian Americans?". The responses predominantly centered around Asian Americans being thought of as wealthy, educated, and smart. One respondent wrote:

> "Any skills I have are attached to being Asian, not hard work or talent. It's also generally assumed that I have some sort of preferential… In some cases, I'm considered exotic, even though I've been raised by my very American mother." – Chinese American woman, age 37.

Although a few responses noted that other Americans thought of Asian Americans as foreigners, the bulk of responses to the free response question were rooted in the model minority. Many individuals brought up that outgroups viewed them as "hard-working" and "we're all good at math". A portion of responses also noted physical characteristics such as being thought of as having "slanted and small eyes" or being "smelly". Another common thread throughout the responses was that many Indian, Pakistani, and other South Asians reported being mistaken as Muslim and therefore terrorists who were responsible for 9/11.

When asked "Have you heard anything about the so-called "model minority" stereotype?" only 40.3% of the sample said yes. Respondents were much more likely to have heard of the stereotype that Asian Americans were foreigners, with 65.9% of the sample reporting that they had heard of the forever foreigner stereotype before. 41% of the sample said that they thought Asian Americans faced "similar forms of stereotypes and discrimination from other Americans". I included a free response box asking respondents to detail what forms of stereotypes come into mind when thinking about Asian Americans. A common thread among all responses regardless of national-origin was that all Asian Americans are thought of as the same. One respondent noted that: "Other people think that we are all Chinese or Japanese.". Another

respondent mentioned that, “Other Americans think that Asians all look alike, work in I.T., and are rich.”.

I also asked respondents whether or not they had heard about the “forever foreigner” stereotype, and what they thought this stereotype entailed. One respondent wrote that “Asians will always be thought of as from another country, always an immigrant, and never from the U.S.”. Many responses brought up that outgroups, especially whites, view Asian Americans as not belonging to the U.S. and therefore unwelcome and second-class.

When asked about national-origin specific stereotypes, a common thread among Indian Americans was that Indian Americans are “nerdy” and “smelly”. A number of Chinese respondents mentioned that others thought of Chinese people as “stingy” and “eating weird food”. Filipino respondents mentioned nursing and karaoke as common stereotypes. Korean respondents mentioned “kimchi” as well as “Which Korea are you from?” as a commonly occurring question that they faced.

Next, I provided respondents with a series of eleven statements and questions based on stereotypes about Asian Americans.

Table 4.1 – Microaggressions and Stereotypes Scale

- You must be really good at math and/or science (75%)
- All Asians look alike (73.2%)
- Do you speak English? (72.4%)
- Where are you from? Where are you really from? (69.4%)
- Wow your English is so good (64.8%)
- Your parents must have wanted you to be a doctor or a lawyer. (64.8%)
- Asian Americans are quiet and keep to themselves (56.7%)
- Asian Americans are bad at driving (56.7%)
- Asian Americans are stingy and cheap (47.5%)
- Asian Americans are all rich (43.5%)
- Asian Americans are good at following directions but are not creative. (33.7%)

82% of pilot survey respondents reported being told by a non-Asian person that they must be good at math (a derivation of the model minority stereotype). 79% have had an experience where someone questioned their English competency (a derivation of the forever foreigner). I also included other stereotypes such the notion that Asian Americans are quiet (57%), not creative (33.7%), bad at driving (57%), expected to be lawyers and doctors (58%), wealthy (43.5%), look alike (73.1%), and stingy (47.7%). Out of the eleven statements presented, on average a respondent encountered at least six of the eleven statements.

Table 4.2 – Microaggressions and Nativity

	Never Experienced Microaggression	Experienced at Least One Microaggression
Foreign Born	3.3%	96.6%
U.S. Born	3.2%	97%

As shown in table 4.2, there is no discernable difference between the experiences of foreign-born Asian Americans and U.S. born Asian Americans in this sample.

Table 4.3 – Experiences with Racial Microaggressions by National-origin

	Never Experienced	Experienced at Least Once
Chinese	0%	100%
Filipino	3.9%	96%
Japanese	0%	100%
Korean	4%	96%
Other	7%	93%
South Asian	5%	95%
Vietnamese	0%	100%

When divided by national-origin, there is also no discernable differences between the experiences of each national-origin group.

Gender Specific Stereotypes

Although I do not delve too deeply into gendered and racialized experiences (see: Mukkamala and Suyemoto 2018), I was curious as to the different experiences that Asian men and women encountered. Roughly 53% of respondents believed that Asian American women have an easier time dating than Asian American men. Asian American female respondents reported that a common belief was that Asian women are "promiscuous, submissive, servile, and petite" which is reminiscent of "Dragon Lady" and "Lotus" stereotypes about Asian women. Another common stereotype was that Asian women only dated outside their race (i.e. only dated white men). A large number of Asian American women in my sample (85%) reported an instance of being exoticized. 55.3% of women had an experience where someone remarked that they must be "submissive" due to their being Asian. 47.7% of women reported coming across comments about only dating white men. Another common stereotype that Asian American female respondents mentioned was that Asian American women were considered "gold diggers" who come to the U.S. on spousal visas attached to wealthy older white men. By and large, Asian American women reported living in an environment that cast them as hypersexual and exotic. In comparison, Asian American men reported being thought of as "asexual, nerdy, and unmanly". A common occurrence for Asian American men was being seen as unattractive, feminine, and undesirable.

Internalization of the Model Minority

Following racial, national-origin, and gender stereotypes, I was interested in the political and psychological lives of my respondents. First, I adapted a series of questions from Yoo et al (2010; 2005)'s internalization of the model minority scale (IM-4). Given that the model minority is a positively valenced stereotype, it may be more difficult for an individual to parse out that this

stereotype is actually negative. Internalizing beliefs about Asian Americans as the model minority contributes to negative psychological outcomes (Chun 1995; Wu 2002; Wong and Halgin 2006). This is because the model minority myth is based on a false notion of "merit": that any individual or group can be successful due to the existence of equal opportunity for any individual or group. The model minority myth further implies that failure to be successful is thus due to personal failure, not structural issues (Lee 1996; Wu 2002). However, as there are no empirical studies of internalization of the model minority plus political identity and behavior items, I include a truncated version of Yoo et al's (2010; 2005) scale to see if these measures are associated with identity and behavior. The questions I draw from are: "Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? In comparison to other racial minorities (African American, Latino, Native American, etc.…"

- Asian Americans have a stronger work ethic.
- Asian Americans are more likely to be treated as equals to white Americans.
- Asian Americans are more likely to achieve academic and economic success.
- It is easier for Asian Americans to climb the corporate ladder.

Respondents were able to select "strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree" for each of the following statements. The results from the internalization questions are revealing. About 81.2% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that in comparison to other minority groups, Asian Americans had a stronger work ethic. Despite this belief in an Asian American work ethic however, only half of respondents (51.7%) agreed or strongly agreed that Asian Americans were more likely to be treated as equals to white Americans. A bulk (82.3%) of respondents also agreed or strongly agreed that Asian Americans were more likely to achieve

academic and economic success. However only about half (53.9%) believed that it was easier for Asian Americans to climb the corporate ladder.

Discrimination

I also included the standard discrimination question modeled after the Collaborative Multi-racial Survey and the American National Elections Survey: "Have you ever been treated unfairly or discriminated against due to your race, being an immigrant, or having an accent?". 58.9% of respondents stated that yes, they had personally experienced a discriminatory event. U.S. born Asian Americans were much more likely to say they had experienced discrimination (63.2%) compared to foreign-born Asian Americans (47.9%).

Table 4.4 - Nativity and Discrimination

	Never Experienced	Experienced Discrimination
Foreign Born	52.1%	47.9%
U.S. Born	36.7%	63.3%

Table 4.1 shows the differences between foreign-born and U.S. born Asian Americans when it comes to experiences with discrimination. A larger percentage of U.S. born Asian Americans (63.3%) stated that they had experienced discrimination compared to only 47.9% of foreign-born.

Inclusion of Asian Americans in U.S. Society

I included a series of questions designed to tap into the extent to which respondents felt Asian Americans were accepted into U.S. society. The questions are as follows: "Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?"

- Asian Americans are honorary whites

- Other groups view Asian Americans as outsiders
- Asian Americans will never be thought of as American
- Political parties do not care about Asian American interests
- Asian Americans will never be accepted in mainstream society and culture

Only 35.9% of Asian Americans viewed Asian Americans as honorary whites. Roughly equal shares of U.S. born (36.2%) and foreign-born (35.2%) agreed that Asian Americans were honorary whites. A large share of the sample (71.5%) agreed that Asian Americans were viewed as outsiders by other groups. There was no substantial difference between U.S. born (70.1%) and foreign-born (74.8%) on this question. When asked about whether or not Asian Americans would ever be considered as "American", 59.2% of the sample agreed with the statement that Asian Americans would never be considered American. Two-thirds of the sample (65.1%) thought that political parties did not care about the interests of the Asian American community (with U.S. born being slightly more likely to believe this at 67.1% and foreign-born at 62.6%). About 50.1% of the sample believed that Asian Americans would never become accepted into mainstream society and culture.

The truncated internalization of model minority questions based on Yoo et al (2005; 2010) yielded some interesting responses. It appears that even among Asian American individuals who have experienced discrimination, a large proportion of the sample buys into the idea that Asian Americans have a stronger work ethic than other minority groups and are also more likely to achieve academic success. When it comes to societal inclusion however, only half of the sample believes Asian Americans are treated as equal to white and can climb the corporate ladder. Of course, it is difficult just from these questions to parse whether or not an individual

actually internalizes these beliefs; for instance, the statement "Asian Americans are more likely to achieve academic and economic success" could be read as a factual statement because due to immigration patterns, in the aggregate, Asian Americans are more likely than other minority groups to achieve success. However due to the nature of surveys, this is merely conjecture.

My pilot data shows that despite believing that Asian Americans may be able to get ahead in educational attainment and socioeconomic status, most Asian Americans do not actually believe that they will ever be fully accepted into U.S. society. These statistics paint a sobering view of the alienation that Asian Americans feel, both culturally and politically. Across generations, Asian Americans think of themselves as outsiders to American society, both culturally (as measured by acceptance as Americans) and politically (believing that neither political party cared for their community). Given that my sample is largely U.S. born, this sense of alienation from U.S. society could be potentially depressing for political outcomes (Ocampo 2018; Aberbach 1969). Perhaps most stark was that almost two-thirds of the sample believed that political parties did not care about the community's interests, which could be a sign of a lack of political efficacy. This alienation may partially explain why Asian Americans do not participate as much in politics relative to what their socioeconomic standing might suggest.

MODELS

My first dependent variable is strength of group identity, which is measured from the question: "How strongly do you think of yourself as Asian American?". The strength of identity variable is measured using a four-point scale: very strongly, somewhat strongly, not very strongly, and not at all. Following previous studies on political behavior and discrimination, I create a measure for discrimination from the question: "Have you ever been treated unfairly or

personally experienced discrimination because of your race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, being an immigrant, religious heritage, or having an accent?" to which 41.2% of respondents reported experiencing this. My racial microaggressions variable was created by scaling the eleven microaggression questions into one variable.

Since I am testing a new measure using racial microaggressions, I first conduct a correlation test between the racial microaggressions measure and discrimination. The two are moderately correlated at 0.38. Following the literature, individuals who are more racially aware should be more likely to recognize discriminate and racial microaggressions when they occur. This is supported in the pilot data: 16.4% of respondents who stated that they had experienced discrimination before also reported experiencing all eleven of the racial microaggressions. In contrast, only 5.4% of respondents who stated "no" to the discrimination question reported experiencing all eleven of the racial microaggressions. Among individuals who reported being discriminated against, the average individual reported encountering seven microaggressions. Individuals who reported never having experienced discrimination reported on average only experiencing three of the eleven racial microaggressions listed in the battery. There is some variation when broken down by national-origin, although given the smaller N in this study no definitive conclusions should be drawn among national-origin breakdowns. Chinese American respondents in my sample reported experiencing an average eight out of the eleven racial microaggressions. Filipino Americans reported an average of seven out of the eleven racial microaggressions. Japanese Americans respondent reported an average eight racial microaggressions. South Asian Americans reported slightly more, at an average of nine of eleven racial microaggressions.

Table 4.5– Identity Outcomes

	Dependent variable:	
	strong.asnam	democrat
	(1)	(2)
combo	0.031*** (0.009)	0.022** (0.010)
std.discrim	−0.115** (0.053)	0.019 (0.056)
filipino	−0.130** (0.051)	−0.037 (0.054)
less.60k	−0.130** (0.066)	0.017 (0.070)
less90k	−0.023 (0.077)	0.160* (0.082)
above90k	−0.072 (0.079)	0.035 (0.084)
native.born	0.021 (0.052)	0.086 (0.056)
college	0.023 (0.064)	0.007 (0.068)
graduate.deg	−0.012 (0.089)	0.104 (0.095)
woman	−0.064 (0.052)	0.128** (0.055)
own	0.105* (0.054)	0.031 (0.056)
married	−0.023 (0.052)	−0.165*** (0.055)
Constant	0.672*** (0.093)	0.112 (0.099)
Observations	337	346
R^2	0.089	0.086
Adjusted R^2	0.056	0.053
Residual Std. Error	0.438 (df = 324)	0.471 (df = 333)
F Statistic	2.648*** (df = 12; 324)	2.602*** (df = 12; 333)
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 4.5 shows the effects of experiencing racial microaggressions on strength of Asian American identity. Experiences with racial microaggressions are positively and significantly associated with having increased racial identity attachment. Strangely enough, experiences with racial discrimination were negatively associated with strength of Asian American identity. Even when the racial microaggressions variable is taken out, the discrimination variable remains in the negative direction (although it is no longer significant). Filipinos (relative to non-Filipinos in the

sample) were less likely to feel a strong Asian American identity. Given the unique history of Spanish and American colonialism in the Philippines, Filipinos share more similar characteristics to that of Latinos such as last names and religion (see: Anthony Ocampo's *The Latinos of Asia* (2014)). This could explain the complicated relationship between Filipino Americans and Asian American identity. Interacting the racial microaggressions variable with the discrimination variable had no effect on an individual's strength of Asian American identity, suggesting that these two measures are distinct.

Similar to chapter 3, I am also interested in whether or not there is an association between partisan choice and experiencing discrimination and/or microaggressions. In my sample, 39.2% of respondents identified themselves as Democrats, 41.8% as Independents, and 18.9% as Republican. Table 4.6 looks at how experiences with racial microaggressions motivate partisanship. My model finds that as an individual experience more racial microaggressions, they are more likely to identify as Democrat. Women and individuals who made between $60,000 to $90,000 were also more likely to be registered Democrats.

Table 4.6 – Behavioral Outcomes

	Dependent variable:	
	vote18	voter.reg
	(1)	(2)
combo	0.006 (0.010)	0.015* (0.009)
std.discrim	0.165*** (0.056)	0.123** (0.051)
strong.asnam	0.133** (0.059)	0.118** (0.054)
filipino	0.073 (0.055)	0.074 (0.050)
less.60k	0.201*** (0.070)	0.199*** (0.064)
less90k	0.142* (0.081)	0.152** (0.074)
above90k	0.173** (0.084)	0.194** (0.076)
native.born	0.206*** (0.055)	0.303*** (0.050)
college	0.003 (0.068)	−0.020 (0.062)
graduate.deg	0.001 (0.094)	−0.068 (0.086)
woman	−0.041 (0.055)	−0.007 (0.050)
own	0.208*** (0.057)	0.167*** (0.052)
married	−0.010 (0.054)	−0.107** (0.050)
Constant	−0.065 (0.106)	0.076 (0.098)
Observations	336	336
R^2	0.186	0.242
Adjusted R^2	0.153	0.212
Residual Std. Error (df = 322)	0.461	0.421
F Statistic (df = 13; 322)	5.665***	7.924***
Note:		*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Table 4.6 looks at the relationship between racial microaggressions and the outcome variable: voting in the 2018 midterm. Respondents were asked whether or not they had voted in the 2018 midterm. I do not find an association between experiencing racial microaggressions and voting in the 2018 midterm election. Experiencing discrimination however, is positively and significantly associated with having voted in the 2018 election. Having a strong Asian American identity, being U.S. born, and owning your own ho99me are also associated with having voted in the 2018 election.

Table 4.7 looks at the relationship between registering to vote and racial microaggressions. Individuals who experience racial microaggressions are more likely to also register to vote. Other correlates associated with registering to vote include having a strong Asian American identity and having personally experienced discrimination.

Overall, I find support for my first hypothesis that Asian Americans who experience racial microaggressions are more likely to have stronger racial identity. I also find support for my second hypothesis that experiencing racial microaggressions is associated with Democratic partisanship. Lastly, I find mixed support for my third hypothesis between racial microaggressions and behavior. My model finds that experiencing racial microaggressions is associated with registering to vote but is not associated with actually having voted in the 2018 election.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Despite the heterogeneity in the Asian American community, both positive and negative stereotypes, racial microaggressions, and a similar racialization process are a shared reality for Asian Americans in the United States. My pilot study also finds that regardless of generational status, national-origin, and other socioeconomic factors, Asian Americans are largely quite aware of stereotypes about the group. I also find that experiences with racial microaggressions are much more common than personal experiences with discrimination. This lends credence to my overall theory that these more common day-to-day experiences are racializing and contribute to an individual's awareness and sense of the racial hierarchy. For Asian Americans, these experiences also form a point of commonality among the different national-origin groups. Despite within-group differences, outgroups largely treat Asian Americans of all national-origins as largely similar.

My pilot data finds that experiences with racial microaggressions is associated with having increased strength of racial identity. Surprisingly, a personal experience with discrimination is negatively associated with having a strong Asian American identity. This is

contrary to other findings in the literature wherein experiences with discrimination should motivate and reinforce identity. In other models for Democratic partisanship, likelihood of voting, and likelihood of registering to vote, the discrimination variable functions as expected: it is positively and significantly associated with those outcome measures. What could be at play here is that the question I used for racial identity attachment may not be the best measure as the discrimination variable pans out accordingly for other outcome variables. In future iterations, I will run mediation analyses to further tease out the relationship between microaggressions and discrimination. What could be at play here is that individuals who report being discriminated against are more keyed in and therefore likely to identify racial microaggressions as they happen. An experience with discrimination may heighten a person's awareness of racialization (or vice versa). In contrast, there may be a middle segment of Asian Americans who do not report being discriminated against but are aware of racial microaggressions. There is also a third category of individuals who do not recognize discrimination and also do not recognize racial microaggressions; these folks may be wholly depoliticized and ignorant of race. Overall, I find support for my hypotheses that experiences with racial microaggressions are a separate and distinct variable from that of experiences with discrimination. Experiences with racial microaggressions also affects an individual's sense of identity, whether that is racial (Asian American) identity attachment or partisanship. Racial microaggressions however do not seem to have an impact on political behavior (i.e. likelihood of voting in the 2018 midterm elections).

Based on my models, experiences with racial microaggressions seem to have the greatest association with identity. A stronger sense of identity (whether racial or partisan), coupled with experiences with discrimination, seem to lead to increased political behavior among Asian Americans. My findings show that experiencing racial microaggressions lead to more political

identity outcomes, however experiences with discrimination are negatively associated with Asian American identity. This may be due to the discrepancy between personal experiences with discrimination compared to perceptions of discrimination against the group (Oskooii 2017; Schildkraut 2005), or a quirk of the sample as my sample is limited. Experiences with racial microaggressions might motivate individuals to more strongly identify with the group and with the Democratic Party.

An avenue for future consideration is the extent to which prototypicality affects one's perceptions of identity and commonality. Given that East Asians (Chinese, Japanese, and Korean) are seen as the "prototypical" Asian American, how does this affect South and Southeast Asians' views of outgroup treatment? To what extent is it harder for non-prototypical Asian Americans to adopt the group identity due to their more 'periphery' status (see: Park 2008)? Although my data is drawn from a nationally representative sample pool, the smaller respondent size means I am not able to completely disaggregate by national-origin. Although my respondents indicated a fair number of national-origin specific stereotypes such as "Which Korea are you from?" and "Chinese people eat dogs", there were not enough in each pool to really see how national-origin specific experiences may help or hinder identity uptake and behavior.

Overall, I find that racial microaggressions are one avenue in which Asian Americans find commonality with one other despite national-origin differences. While experiences with racial microaggressions do not directly translate into political action, I find some evidence that shows racial microaggressions strengthen racial identity attachment, which in turn translates to increased voting behavior. This is especially significant for Asian Americans, a group which does not necessarily identify very strongly with one another, and also a group that is less likely to explicitly identify with a political party. The changing nature of racial discourse in the United

States, followed by the fact that overt displays of exclusion are no longer socially acceptable, means that discrimination may be more difficult to recognize for non-Black minorities. In addition, thanks to the model minority stereotype, Asian Americans are thought of as not experiencing discrimination (see: Kim 1999). Due to these factors and given that discrimination has been found to be a key variable in predicting political identity and behavior outcomes, it is important to consider other ways in which individuals can experience exclusion.

Due to changing norms, expressions of prejudice may manifest in ways that traditional measures of discrimination cannot capture. This chapter advances our understanding how more casual and subtle forms of exclusion in the form of microaggressions can shape identity and behavior. Whereas prior scholarly work has found a link between experiencing discrimination and behavior, it is not clear if racial microaggressions have the same effect due to the ambiguous outcomes these interactions have. It could be the case that microaggressions act as a moderating or mediating force through which political identity is expressed. My pilot data and previous chapters have found that racial microaggressions seem to be a part of the racial and political socialization that Asian Americans go through. This process leads them to find commonality with one another and also associate more with the Democratic Party. Since experiences with racial microaggressions may trigger feelings of confusion or stress, future work may look into the emotions that are conjured up. There is also a need for future work to consider perceptions of group discrimination as a variable separate from personal experiences with discrimination (such as Oskooii 2017). A future iteration of this pilot study should also consider a more formalized set of racial microaggressions questions that draws from the findings of the pilot survey. A more formalized racial microaggressions battery might draw two questions from the model minority and two questions from the forever foreigner stereotype to avoid overlap in the questions asked.

Chapter 5 – Experiment

INTRODUCTION

What I have shown in previous chapters is that racial microaggressions are a commonplace occurrence in the lives of Asian Americans. In statistical models, experiences with racial microaggressions as a variable operates differently from experiences with discrimination. Furthermore, racial microaggressions tend to fall into two camps: those based on the model minority stereotype and those based on the forever foreigner stereotype. What previous chapters have shown is that there is a need to further disentangle experiences with racial microaggressions. Given that racial microaggressions can be positively valenced (i.e. seemingly complementary) or negatively valenced (i.e. closer to an insult), it is important to address how

and when 'positive' microaggressions and 'negative' microaggressions matter. In this chapter, I conduct a true test of my theory using a survey experiment. Here I test whether or not a positively valenced microaggression based on the model minority and a negatively valenced microaggression based on the forever foreigner affect an individual's sense of racial identity and behavior.

Racial microaggressions can be more pernicious than outright and over racism because individuals can act in racially insensitive ways while remaining ignorant of their biases. Racial microaggressions transmit beliefs about perceived differences and are exclusionary on the basis of racial group membership. This othering experience then leads individuals to feel more strongly connected to their racial group due outgroup reminders of difference. I test this assumption using a survey experiment. The survey experiment mimics a scenario where an individual may come across a microaggression in media as a cue for social difference. I expose respondents to one of three conditions. T

I find support for my theory and hypothesis using an original dataset and survey experiment (N=1,515) (Leung et al 2020), I find that experiences with racial microaggressions are widespread among the Asian American community and these experiences are associated with a stronger identity attachment. Due to the nature of microaggressions, I test the two most common microaggressions in a survey experiment. The first condition primes the model minority stereotype in a seemingly positive light where Asian Americans are sought after by employers on the basis of their "hard work and academic performance". The second condition primes the perpetual foreigner stereotype in a negative light. The forever foreigner vignette claims that employers prefer not to hire Asian Americans due to perceptions of their limited English-speaking capability.

Overall, I find that the valence of the microaggressions matter. My experiment finds that microaggressions that are "positive" or "complementary" affect linked fate among Asian Americans, but negatively framed microaggressions contribute to political closeness. The model minority vignette affects an individual's sense of linked fate with other Asian Americans while the perpetual foreigner (a negatively valenced stereotype) contributed to an increase in an individual's sense of Asian Americans having common political interest. These findings contribute to literature on the political effects of discrimination and bias, and also serve to illustrate a potential pathway by which Asian Americans become politicized.

The paper is structured as follows. I first review literature on racial microaggressions and experiments with racial microaggressions. Drawing from the literature, I lay out my theoretical expectations and hypotheses. Next, I discuss the results of the survey experiment. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of the findings and go into the implications of my results.

LITERATURE

It is well known that having a shared identity can lead individuals to feel more connected and act on behalf of their group (Verba and Nie 1978; Chong and Rogers 2005; Sanchez 2006). As previously discussed, Asian American panethnic identity is complicated by disparate histories, differing cultural practices, differing languages, religions, and phenotype (Budiman 2020). Empirical studies of Asian American political identity (broadly defined) find that it having an Asian American identity can feed into group attachment and behavior (Okamoto 2003; Masuoka 2006). Compared to other racial groups, scholarship on Asian Americans is mostly relegated to how Asian Americans behave politically (Wong et al 2011; Lien et al 2001; Lien

2001) rather than how Asian Americans identify politically. As Asian Americans continue to grow in size and relevance, this gap must be further explored.

The simultaneous positioning of Asian Americans as both the valorized model minority and denigrated forever foreigner (Junn 2007; Kim 1999) prevents Asian Americans from participating in politics (Kim 2007; 2000) In experimental settings, feelings of exclusion by outgroups has been found to lead Asian Americans away from the Republican Party and towards the Democratic Party. In a lab setting, research assistants delivered a treatment to Asian American subjects: "I'm sorry; I forgot that this study is only for U.S. citizens. Are you a U.S. citizen? I cannot tell." Subjects then proceeded with an online survey where they were asked their attitude towards the two parties, as well as affect towards other racial groups. Subjects who received the treatment were 18% less likely to think that the Republican Party represented their interests and overall had more negative views towards Republicans than those in the control group. Kuo, Malholtra, and Mo (2017) theorize that this is due to the microaggression tapping into feelings of Asian Americans as foreigners. Subjects then, re-asserted their identity and also attributed these exclusionary statements to Republicans.

Tran and Lee (2014) experimentally test an "exceptionalizing" microaggression. Asian American subjects were paired with a confederate who then delivered a treatment: "Nice talking to you. You speak English well" (a "low racial loading" statement) and "Nice talking to you. You speak English well for an Asian." (a "high racial loading" statement). These statements are designed to tap into the belief that Asian Americans, as perpetual foreigners, must not speak English very well. Therefore, when they do speak English well, this is a moment that needs to be highlighted. Tran and Lee find that subjects in the high racial loading condition (where the treatment expressly linked English ability to being Asian) rated their partners less warmly.

Despite the complementary frame that the statement expressed, exceptionalizing stereotypes lead Asian Americans to view instigators as being less accepting and were less likely to want to continue having a conversation with the instigator after. Surprisingly, individuals in the low racial loading did not have any discernable differences from the control group. Tran and Lee remark that this may be due to the more ambiguous nature of the low racial loading condition. They conclude that even seemingly complementary microaggressions can be damaging on an interpersonal level (2014).

Overall, there is limited experimental research into how Asian Americans view racial microaggressions, especially on nativity dimensions. Given that U.S. born Asian Americans are more likely to see racial microaggressions as negative compared to foreign-born Asian Americans (Armenta et al 2013; Siy and Cheryan 2013), further research into how foreign-born Asian Americans view racial microaggressions is needed. There is also limited work that takes into account both forever foreigner and model minority stereotypes, given that Asian Americans experience these tropes on a continuum. Both Tran and Lee (2014) and Kuo, Malholtra, and Mo (2017) focus on English ability and citizenship, both of which are more indicative of Asians as foreigners beliefs, but not Asians as the model minority.

Theory and Hypotheses

This study examines how microaggressions influence an individuals' attachment towards their identity group. I argue that both discrimination and racial microaggressions stem from the same prejudiced beliefs, however, due to the ambiguity of microaggressions, they may not explicitly lead to collective action. However, they should serve as reminders of racial group belonging and create a sense of shared commonality among group members. The racial position

of Asian Americans is important for this study. Drawing from Claire Kim's theory of racial triangulation (1999), Asian Americans are simultaneously valorized as the model minority and denigrated as the perpetual foreigner. This puts Asian Americans as somewhere in the middle of the American racial hierarchy and is consequential because Asian Americans come across mixed messages about their racial group. As the coronavirus has shown, beliefs about Asian Americans as the model minority faded quickly into xenophobia (Ellerbeck 2020, Jeung and Nham 2020). Drawing from the literature, I arrive at the following hypotheses:

H1: Experiences with model minority and perpetual foreigner-based stereotypes contribute to increased racial group attachment among Asian Americans.

Although Asian Americans are a very diverse community with little to no cross-cutting similarities such as culture, phenotype, or religion, experiences with the model minority and perpetual foreigner should be common regardless of ones' national-origin. This common experience and treatment by outgroups thus provide a basis for shared racial identity. This everyday bias reminds Asian Americans of their racial group.

H2: Individuals who are exposed to a microaggression based on the perpetual foreigner stereotype should display more group attachment than individuals who are exposed to a microaggression based on the model minority.

It is important here to distinguish between stereotypes and the valence of said stereotypes. Whereas discrimination is almost always rooted in negative prejudices, microaggressions can be

couched in 'positive' traits such as the model minority. The model minority is superficially positive and claims Asian Americans are hardworking and intelligent (Chou and Feagin 2008). The model minority, given its affectively positive nature, should not immediately elicit a defensive reaction *except* among individuals who are already aware of its racist nature such as U.S. born Asian Americans. Work in psychology has also shown that individuals who internalize beliefs about the model minority are also less likely to view situations as racist and less likely to perceive racism in workplaces (Yoo, Burrola, and Steger 2010). In contrast, the perpetual foreigner is couched in negative beliefs about Asian Americans and is more closely associated with more "standard" experiences of exclusion and bias. Negative prejudice has been found to contribute to increased group attachment as a way to bolster self-esteem (Branscombe, Schimitt, and Harvey 1999). Thus, encounters with perpetual foreigner microaggressions should elicit an immediate defensive reaction in the face of perceived exclusion and othering.

Experimental Data and Design

Drawing from the findings in previous chapters, I then moved to design a survey experiment in order to better assess my claims. The experimental data comes from the collaborative 2020 Asian American Omnibus Survey with the market research firm Bovitz (Leung et al 2020). The survey was conducted in early March of 2020 and wrapped up before Super Tuesday. There is a total of 1,515 Asian American respondents, all recruited from Bovitz's online panel, and was administered only in English on the Qualtrics platform. The survey was roughly 10 to 15 minutes long and contained questions regarding discrimination, affirmative action, sexual harassment, and others. Of the 1,515 respondents, about 54.9% were U.S. born and 45% foreign-born. The national-origin breakdown is as follows: 30.7% Chinese/Taiwanese,

17.6% South Asian (defined as Bangladeshi, Indian, and/or Pakistani), 14.1% Japanese, 12.8% Filipino, 7.3% Korean, and 6.4% Vietnamese.

The survey design is as follows. After respondents answered initial demographic questions, they were randomly assigned to view one of three conditions. This randomization is to ensure that pre-treatment sociodemographic factors are the same across each group[4]. All of the conditions are of a simulated news article-like vignette that features the same image, but the text varies depending on condition. These hypothetical vignettes are designed to imitate a popular news media article such as the New York Times or the Wall Street Journal, reminiscent of how the first instance of Asians as the model minority appeared (Peterson 1966). The experimental conditions include: (1) the model minority treatment which states that Asian Americans have a strong work ethic and academic ability, (2) the perpetual foreigner treatment states that Asian Americans have poor English-speaking abilities, and (3) the control condition which is absent of any racial content and merely comments on how hiring is at an all-time high. The goal of these treatments is to see whether or not there is a difference in outcomes depending on a 'positive' microaggression versus a 'negative' microaggression frame.

These treatments were designed following observational studies via the 2016 NAAS and a pilot survey (N=363) which found that these two types of microaggressions were the most common among Asian Americans. The model minority treatment emphasizes that Asian Americans possess great academic ability and work ethic and are thus preferred by companies. The perpetual foreigner treatment is modeled after previous work by Kuo, Malholtra, and Mo (2017) as well as other experiments (Tran and Lee 2014). The perpetual foreigner treatment

[4] I ran balance tests on a variety of demographic variables such as: age, gender, and marital status and find that there is balance across the three conditions on those demographic factors.

states that Asian Americans speak English poorly and are thus not preferred by companies. I used hiring across all three scenarios as opposed to education because views on education may be greatly skewed by views on affirmative action, hence the emphasis on hiring instead. The control condition is purposefully absent of racial content and merely states that hiring is at an all-time high. The control condition is used to offer a baseline with no primes. I do not include any mentions of other racial groups or other socially important categories as to not cloud the treatment. I also include a series of attention/manipulation checks as well as an open-answer section where respondents were asked their thoughts on the vignettes. In accordance with IRB, respondents were debriefed and informed that the vignettes were fictitious at the end of the survey.

Figure 5.1- Model Minority Treatment

Companies prefer hiring Asian Americans because of their strong work ethic and math ability.

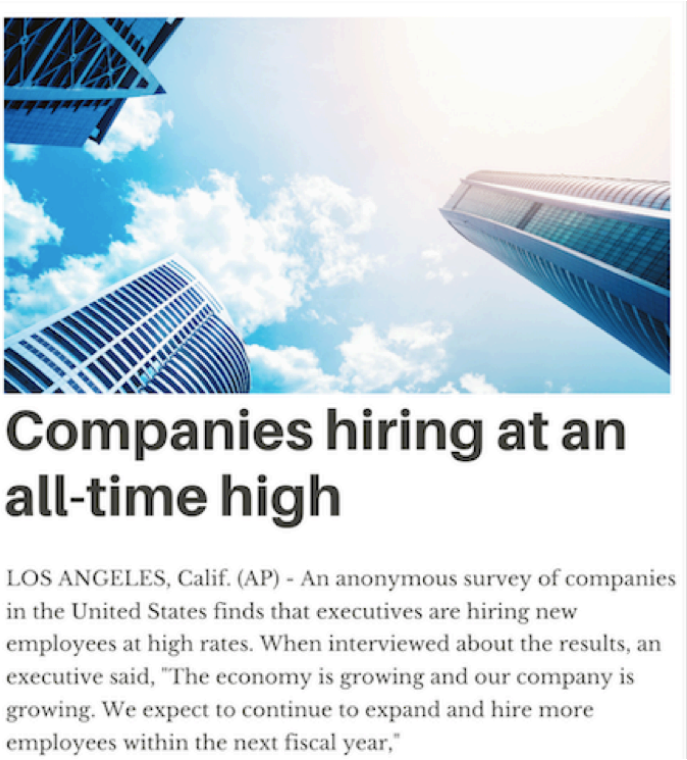
LOS ANGELES, Calif. (AP) - An anonymous survey of companies in the United States finds that executives prefer to hire Asian Americans because of their strong work ethic and math skills. When interviewed about the results, an executive said, "My best employees have been Asian Americans. They are the ideal workers because their performance shows just how strong their academic skills are and how much effort they put into their jobs,".

Figure 5.2 - Perpetual Foreigner Treatment

Companies prefer not to hire Asian Americans because they do not speak English well.

LOS ANGELES, Calif. (AP) - An anonymous survey of companies in the United States finds that executives prefer not to hire Asian Americans because of English competency issues. When interviewed about the results, an executive said, "My worst employees are Asian Americans. Sometimes we just can't understand their English. Since our company operates in English speaking countries, it is critical that all our employees are able to communicate clearly and effortlessly in English."

Figure 5.3 - Control Condition



Companies hiring at an all-time high

LOS ANGELES, Calif. (AP) - An anonymous survey of companies in the United States finds that executives are hiring new employees at high rates. When interviewed about the results, an executive said, "The economy is growing and our company is growing. We expect to continue to expand and hire more employees within the next fiscal year,"

In order to get the best measure of identity, I use two different questions. The first outcome question is: “Do you think what happens generally to Asian Americans in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life?”. The responses to that question range from “No, not at all” to “Yes, a lot”, a four-point scale. The second is “The fact that I am Asian American is important to my identity. Responses to this question range from “Strongly disagree” to “Strongly agree”, a seven-point scale. As a manipulation check, individuals were asked if they would describe the actions of the companies as discriminatory or not. In order to check randomization, I check that the means in each category are relatively the same along unrelated demographic factors such as age and gender. When randomization works, the means across the three conditions should be the same for unrelated factors such as age, gender, marital status, etc.

Since there is balance across unrelated covariates, I can assume that the randomization worked and that I do not have to control for these factors in analysis.

In order to assess treatment effects, I subtract the mean of Model Minority treatment one from the mean of the control condition. I then do the same for the Forever Foreigner treatment, subtracting the mean from the mean of the control condition.

Figure 5.4 – Effect of Primes on Identity Importance

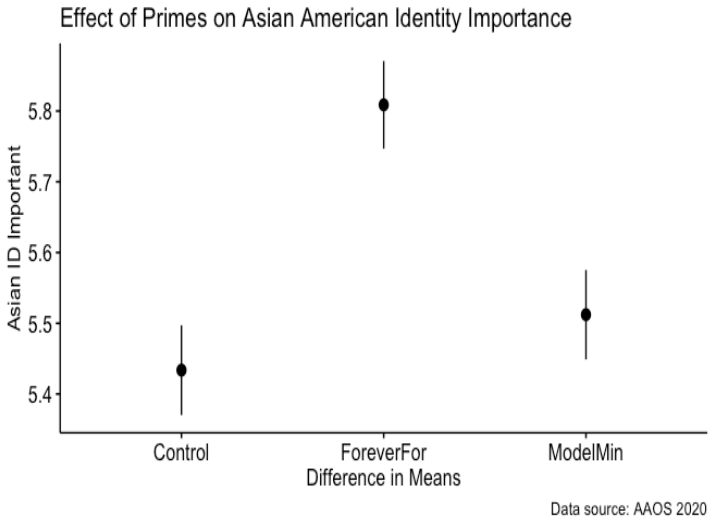


Figure 5.4 shows the results for the linked fate and importance of Asian American identity. Surprisingly, I find that individuals who received the model minority treatment expressed greater linked fate compared to individuals in the control, with a 0.2 difference in means from the model minority condition compared to the control. In contrast, the perpetual foreigner prime was not significant on linked fate expression.

Figure 5.5 – Effect of Primes on Linked Fate

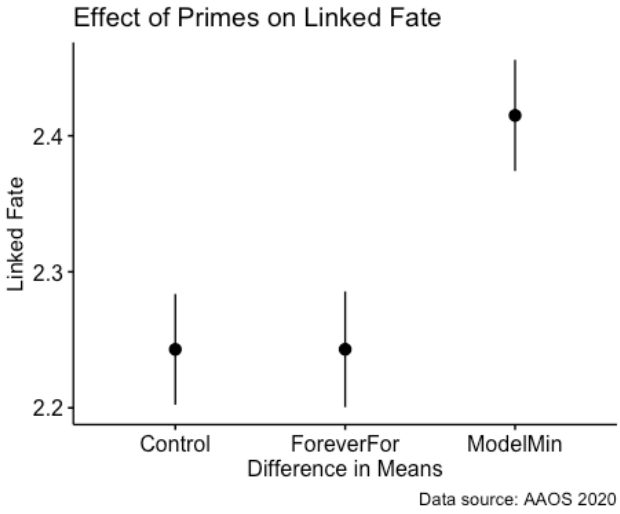


Figure 5.5 shows the results of the treatments on the importance of being Asian American. When asked about the importance of being Asian American, individuals in the perpetual foreigner treatment has a 0.38 higher mean compared to the control category. However, the model minority treatment did not have a significant effect on Asian American identity importance[5].

National-Origin Analysis

Due to the differing national-origins that comprise of Asian America, I run my analysis again after subsetting by region. Since my dataset is more limited, rather than delineating by each national-origin group (which would result in smaller than ideal sample sizes). Instead, I subsetted by region: East Asian, South Asian, and Southeast Asian. There is scholarly evidence that East Asians are seen as the prototypical Asian American, whereas South and Southeast Asians are seen as "periphery" members (Park 2008). I do not have any strong priors about

differences by region, but given the existence of this internal hierarchy, subsetting by region is an appropriate choice.

Figure 5.6 – Effect of Primes for East Asians on Linked Fate

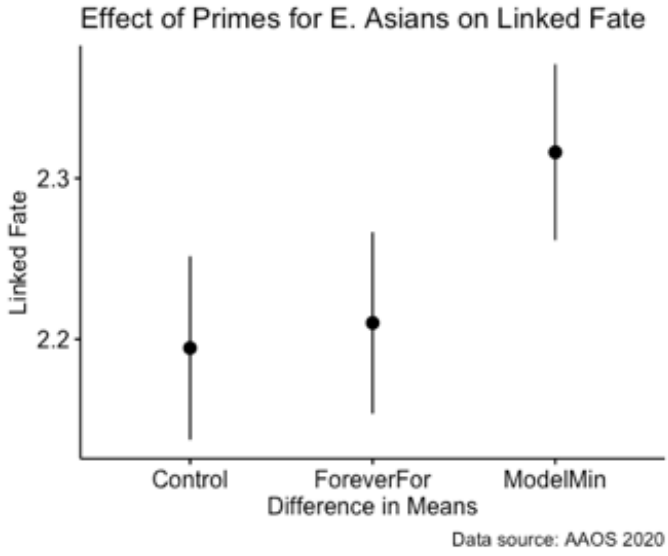
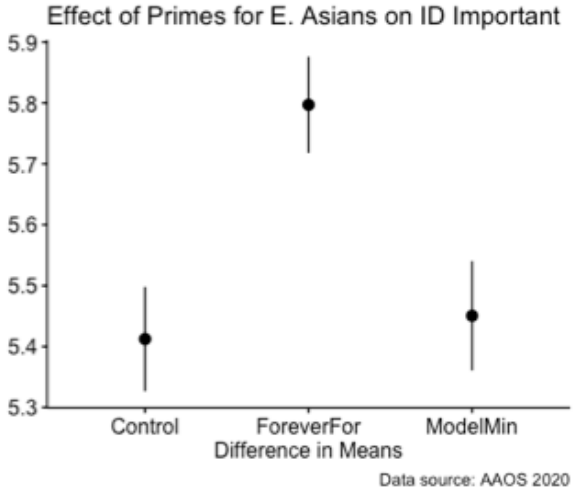


Figure 5.7 – Effect of Primes for East Asians on Identity Importance



When subsetting by East Asians, I find that there is no significant effect of either the model minority prime or the forever foreigner prime on East Asian respondent's sense of linked fate (see Figure 5.6 and Figure 5.7). Although the model minority prime has no significant effect on a person's sense of linked fate, it is trending in the same direction as in the aggregate sample.

The forever foreigner prime has a significant effect on increasing an East Asian respondent's sense of Asian American identity, with a 0.4 difference in means in the forever foreigner condition relative to the control condition. The model minority prime however, does not have a significant impact on East Asians' sense of racial identity importance.

Figure 5.8 – Effect of Primes for South Asians on Linked Fate

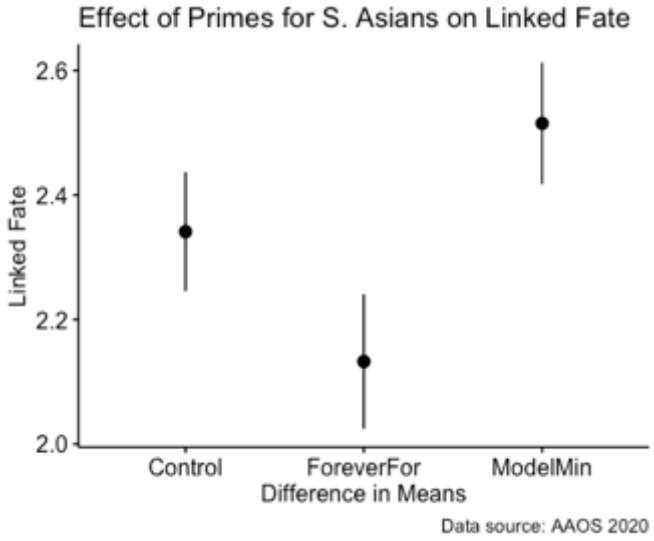
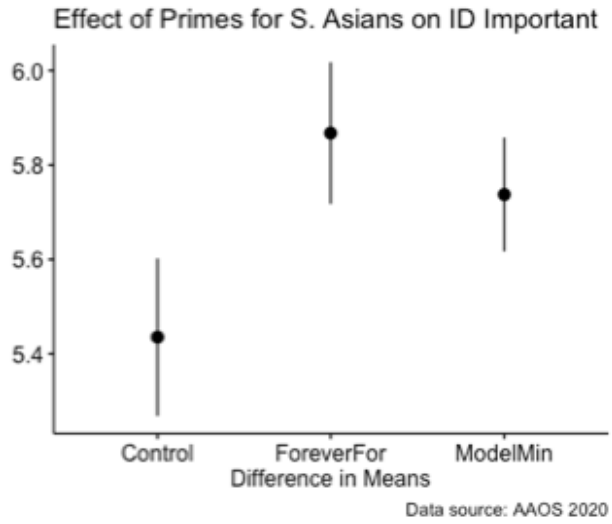


Figure 5.9 – Effect of Primes for South Asians on Identity Importance



Among South Asians (see Figures 5.8 and 5.9), neither of the primes had a significant effect on an individual's sense of linked fate or identity importance. Although not significant, the

forever foreigner prime has a negative trend on linked fate—actually decreasing a South Asian individual's sense of linked fate. However, given the smaller sample size which is then further subdivided into three, I do not find any significant effects of the two primes for South Asians.

Figure 5.10 – Effect of Primes for Southeast Asians on Linked Fate

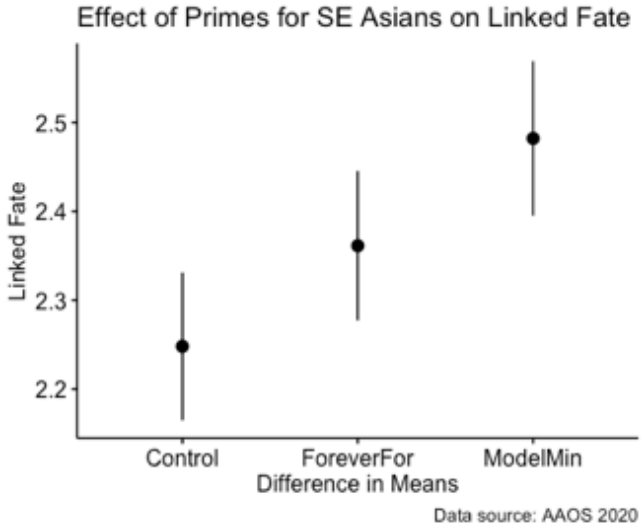
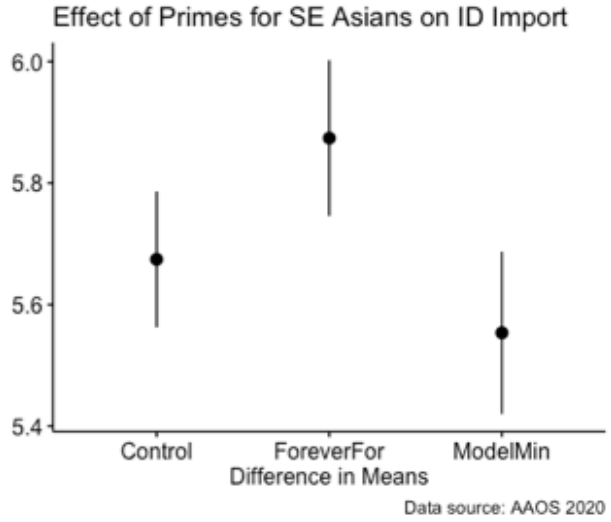


Figure 5.11 – Effect of Primes for Southeast Asians on Identity Importance



Among Southeast Asians (see Figures 5.10 and 5.11), there is also no significant effect of either the model minority prime on linked fate and identity importance. The forever foreigner

prime also does not have any significant effect on linked fate and identity importance. This again may be a factor of sample size.

Generational Analysis

Figure 5.12 – Effect of Primes on U.S. Born Linked Fate

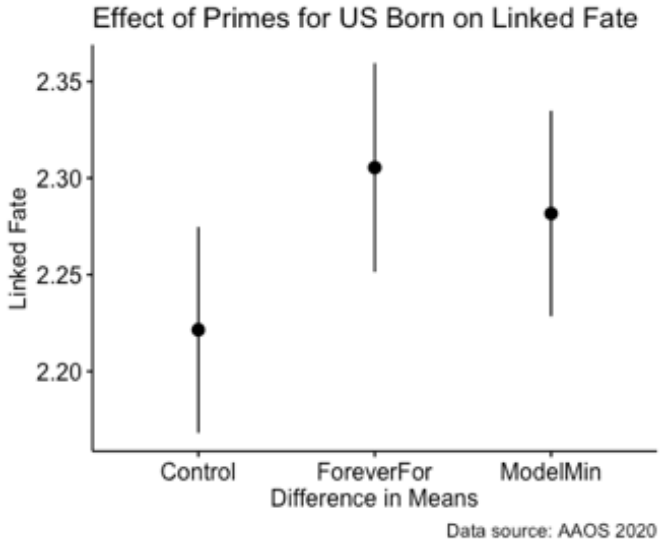
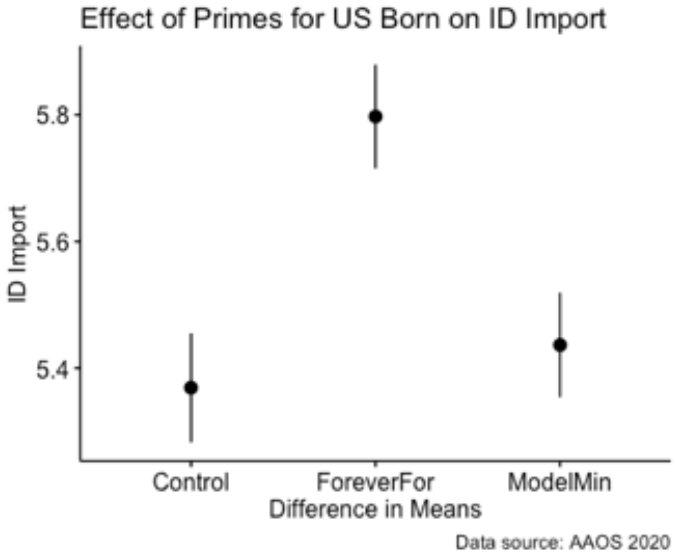


Figure 5.13 – Effect of Primes on U.S. Born Identity Importance



Since generational status is an important cleavage in Asian American politics, I subset my sample into foreign-born Asian Americans and U.S. born Asian Americans. I find that the model minority prime does not have any significant effect on U.S. born respondent's sense of linked fate or identity importance (see Figures 5.12 and 5.13). The forever foreigner prime however, does impact U.S. born Asian Americans' sense of identity importance. Those who received the forever foreigner prime had a 0.4 higher difference in mean rating of identity importance versus those in the control category. This may be due to the forever foreigner prime reminding Asian Americans of their subordinate racial status.

Figure 5.14 – Effect of Primes for Foreign-born on Linked Fate

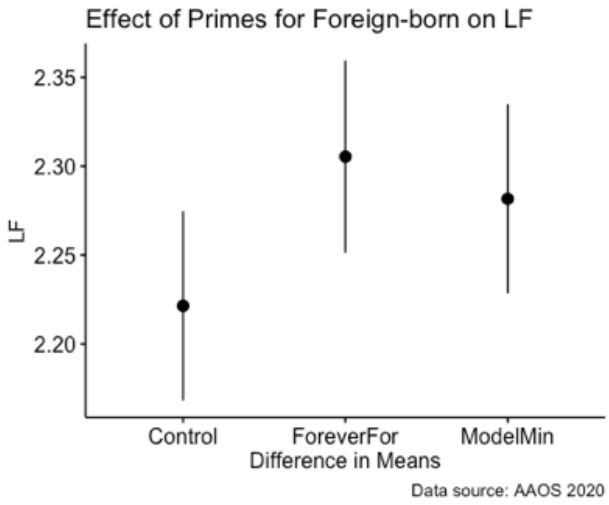
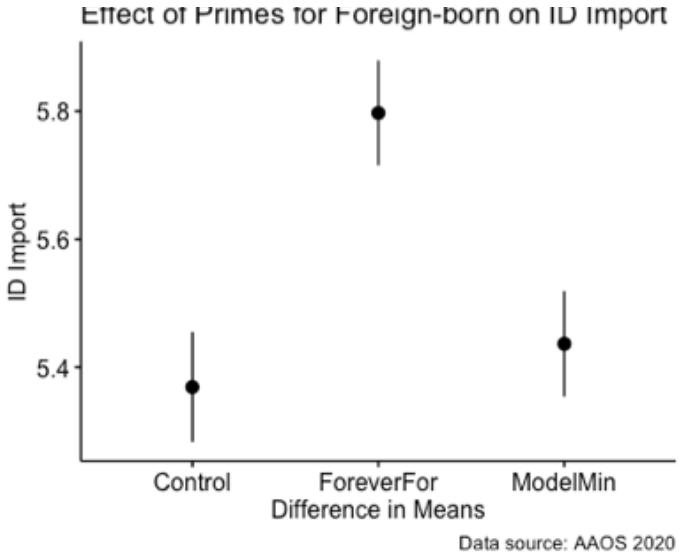


Figure 5.15 – Effect of Primes for Foreign-born on Identity Importance



There is no effect of either the model minority prime or the forever foreigner prime on foreign-born individual's sense of linked fate with other Asian Americans (see Figures 5.14 and 5.15). There is also no significant effect of the model minority prime on a foreign-born individual's sense of identity importance as well. However, I do find that there is a positive and significant effect of the forever foreigner prime on identity attachment. Foreign-born respondents who received the forever foreigner treatment had a 0.41 higher mean than individuals in the control category.

Discussion and Conclusion

Overall, I find support for my first hypotheses, that microaggressions matter for Asian American identity. Asian Americans across national-origins encounter racial microaggressions in their day to day lives. These racial microaggressions can be categorized into the model minority and the perpetual foreigner. In accordance with expectations, there is also a generational split among respondents. Native-born Asian Americans are more likely to report

racial microaggressions than US born Asian Americans. In my analyses, I find an association with experiences of microaggressions and having a stronger linked fate with other Asian Americans. Experience with microaggressions is also associated with a greater belief that Asian Americans have common political interests. In contrast, experiences with discrimination were not associated with having stronger political identity.

My experimental data finds mixed support for my second hypothesis. I originally expected that exposure to the forever foreigner (as a negative frame) would have greater effects on identity whereas the model minority (a positive frame) would not. Instead, I found that exposure to frames of Asian Americans as the model minority impacted an individual's sense of linked fate relative to those in the control condition. Conversely, the forever foreigner prime did not have a significant effect on an individual's sense of linked fate. This stands out because established work on African American linked fate and consciousness (Dawson 1995) points to continued negative treatment as a predictor for increasing an individual's sense of linked fate. While I cannot test this specifically using the data I have on hand, it may be rational for Asian Americans to identify more with the group when the group is framed in a positive light because in doing so, an individual could reap the benefits of a positive stereotype (which was potential employment in my treatment). On the other hand, when faced with negativity surrounding the group, Asian Americans may shy away from the group and default towards a different identity such as national-origin. How the linked fate question is interpreted by Asian Americans will fruitful area of future research.

I also find that exposure to frames of Asian Americans as the forever foreigner is associated with increasing the importance of Asian American racial identity for individuals. This finding supports H2 where the perpetual foreigner microaggression has greater political

implications compared to the model minority microaggression. The perpetual foreigner treatment leads an increase in rating the importance of Asian American identity compared to the control. However, the forever foreigner prime did not increase an individual's sense of linked fate. Across both datasets, I find support for my hypotheses that experiences with racial microaggressions lead Asian Americans to more strongly identify with the racial group identity, and these experiences are a common thread regardless of nativity and national-origin.

Although I do not find any significant differences when subsetting my region (East, Southeast, and South Asian), I instead find that the forever foreigner prime increases both U.S. born and foreign-born Asian Americans' sense of identity importance. For U.S. born individuals, this may be due to the prime serving as a reminder of their status as secondary citizens. For foreign-born Asian Americans, this finding was somewhat surprising. I speculate that the forever foreigner prime also serves as a reminder to foreign-born Asian Americans of their continued status as outsiders. This could also be a function of the forever foreigner treatment, which is quite close to a description of actual job discrimination. The potential threat of actual discrimination from the vignette could have been responsible for eliciting greater feelings of racial attachment.

What's curious is that forever foreigner vignette did not have an effect on linked fate. I suspect that this has to do with how Asian Americans are interpreting the linked fate question, as the concept of linked fate was originally put forth by Michael Dawson (1995). Given that Asian Americans do not have the same 'qualifiers' for linked fate due to disparate histories in the United States, perhaps Asian Americans only feel greater linked fate when they think it will be mutually beneficial to align oneself with other Asian Americans.

This survey experiment is one of the first to empirically test how two different racial frames may affect Asian American political attachments. I find somewhat surprising results where the positive model minority frame increased a sense of linked fate, but the forever foreigner prime did not. Future work may consider presenting the model minority frame in a positive condition and a negative condition (in addition to control) or a positive foreigner versus a negative foreigner condition. This will help to determine which aspect of these stereotypes affects identity the most. In addition, I cannot account for strength of attachment to respondent's national-origin which may serve as an alternative identity that individuals can retreat to when their Asian American identity is threatened. A laboratory and focus group setting may be useful for future work in order to better interrogate the psychological ramifications of microaggressive treatments. In-person lab studies may also be beneficial to better assess what respondents are thinking when it comes to receiving a microaggression. Qualitative work will serve to better flesh out the story.

Racial microaggressions play an important part in the everyday lives of Asian Americans. These experiences are part of a racialization process that affects all Asian Americans regardless of national-origin and other differences. Due to changing norms, expressions of bias and prejudice may manifest in ways that traditional measures of exclusion and discrimination cannot capture. This study advances our understanding of how experiences with casual bias can shape identity. I also advance the idea that the content of the microaggression matters when it comes to political identity. In this project I advance the need for a more nuanced understanding and measurement of racialization and discrimination among non-Black minorities and its consequences for identity. I also show that the valence of racial stereotypes matter for identity;

both the model minority and forever foreigner stereotypes activate different aspects of group identity.

Although Asian Americans do not share many commonalities with one another, the treatment of this group by outgroups has created a shared commonality and avenue for politicization. Other avenues of research should include the applicability of this framework to Blacks, Latina/os, and other socio-politically significant groups. It may also be useful to see how COVID-19 has impacted Asian Americans' views of themselves, as the intense anti-Asian bias due to COVID-19 may be politicizing.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

The goal of this dissertation is to examine how discrimination, racial stereotyping, and microaggressions affect Asian American identity and behavior. While political scientists have generally acknowledged that discrimination is an important motivator for collective action (see: Barreto and Woods 2005; Ramakrishnan 2005; Oskooii 2020), a closer analysis finds that this linkage is complicated for Asian Americans. A key element missing in studies of discrimination is that by and large, many individuals do not report ever personally experiencing discrimination. Instead, individuals are much more likely to report experiencing more subtle forms of bias such as racial microaggressions. To address this shortcoming, I provide a framework for how microaggressions and stereotypes, especially positively-valenced ones, may affect an individual's sense of racial identity and behavior. I focus my dissertation on Asian Americans as their position in the racial hierarchy means that they receive mixed messages about their group. Asian Americans are more likely to encounter "positive" comments or questions based on the model minority, which paints Asian Americans as hardworking and academically gifted. I theorize that since Asian Americans lack more traditional qualifiers of racial identity, experiences with overarching stereotypes such as the model minority and the forever foreigner can be a point of commonality. The valence of the stereotype or microaggression encountered should lead to different identity and behavioral outcomes.

Another factor when studying discrimination that needs to be taken into account is a question for whether or not an individual personally experienced discrimination in addition to a question on the extent to which the individual perceives discrimination against his or her racial group. This is an important factor to take into consideration because most studies on discrimination and political behavior actually measure *perceptions* of discrimination (i.e. a

legislative bill) and not an individual's actual experience with discrimination. As Oskooii (2020; 2016) finds, this delineation is important because individual experience with discrimination may actually be depressive for politics. In my observational analyses, I do not find strong support that discrimination leads to increased political behavior outcomes.

In chapter 2, I discuss preexisting literature and offer my framework for how and why microaggressions, particularly positive ones, may matter for politics. I highlight how existing scholarly work on identity, discrimination, and stereotyping may not be as relevant for Asian Americans, particularly because the bulk of work on stereotyping focuses on negative experiences. Asian Americans, as both the model minority and forever foreigner, may actually encounter mostly "positive" comments, and may be less likely to experience outright discrimination or hostility. In addition, work in racial identity is largely focused on the Black experience in the United States; these lessons learned do not map on entirely for Asian Americans, who have much more disparate histories, and face very different forms of racialization from that of Blacks. I argue that despite the internal heterogeneity of the Asian American community, similar treatment by outgroups (along the lines of the model minority and forever foreigner stereotypes) can be a point of commonality for Asian Americans, especially second-generation Asian Americans.

Chapter 3 is an analysis of large-scale Asian American political surveys. Given that Asian Americans are a relatively understudied group, especially when it comes to discrimination, the goal of the chapter is to understand general trends in surveys. I pay particular attention to how Asian Americans respond to generic discrimination items. For instance, U.S. born Asian Americans are somewhat likely than foreign-born Asian Americans to report having ever personally experienced discrimination. Due to the lack of consistency in discrimination measures

across surveys, it is difficult to make any firm conclusions regarding how discrimination affects Asian Americans' sense of racial identity and behavior. I find that in the 2008 National Asian American Survey, personally experiencing discrimination is associated with an increased sense of linked fate, but not with voting in 2008. The 2012 Pew Survey only contains questions about national-origin specific discrimination, but there is still no relationship between national-origin discrimination and likelihood of voting in 2008. The 2016 NAAS contains both a set of discrimination and racial microaggressions-like questions. I find that Asian Americans who experienced racial microaggressions expressed greater linked fate and a sense of common political interests with other Asian Americans. Experiencing discrimination however, was not associated with either of those outcomes in the 2016 NAAS. Future surveys of Asian American politics need to take into consideration the difference between personal experience, perceptions of group discrimination, and experiences with racial microaggressions, as my analysis shows they all influence different identity and behavioral outcomes. The findings in this chapter also suggest that the link between discrimination and political behavior are understudied, and future work needs to be more careful in delineating the forms of discrimination.

Drawing from the takeaways in the previous chapter, Chapter 4 is a more holistic view of Asian American politics and racialization. Here, I draw on a pilot survey that asks Asian Americans about their experiences with common racial tropes, discrimination, and behavior. I find support for part of my theoretical framework in that across different generations, socioeconomic status, and national-origins, many Asian Americans have experienced similar stereotypical comments. The most common comments are those centered on the model minority (i.e. "You must be good at math!") and the forever foreigner (i.e. "Where are you from? Where are you really from?"). Individuals who experienced these racial microaggressions were more

likely to have stronger racial identity and be Democratic. I also find that Asian Americans, despite having higher incomes, do not actually believe that they will ever be fully accepted into U.S. society and that there is a great sense of political alienation and lack of efficacy among Asian Americans.

In Chapter 5, I offer a stronger test of my theory using an embedded survey experiment. Respondents were randomly selected into one of three conditions. The first is a vignette that paints Asian Americans as a successful model minority that is highly sought after by employers. The second is a vignette that paints Asian Americans as foreigners who are believed to not speak English well, and thus are not preferred by employers. The final condition is a control condition that merely says hiring is at an all-time high. I find that the model minority condition actually increased respondent's sense of linked fate relative to the control condition. The model minority prime however, does not have any significant effect on an individual's sense of racial identity attachment. The inverse is true for the forever foreigner condition. The forever foreigner prime increased individual's sense of racial identity attachment but did not have any significant effects on linked fate. This finding is surprising, especially given how Dawson theorizes that linked fate is the result of a long history and continued discrimination amongst Black Americans. Here, I find that a negative, practically discriminatory prime does not motivate linked fate for Asian Americans. Instead, painting the group in a positive light made Asian Americans feel a sense of linked fate. The findings in this chapter illustrate how there is a need to fine tune how non-Black minorities interpret linked fate and how non-Black minorities experience racialization in different ways.

Overall, I present my case for why political scientists need to more carefully study not just discrimination, but racial microaggressions, especially in today's climate. Since overt

discrimination is no longer socially acceptable, bias is instead perpetuated through subtler, possibly even complementary forms. Due to their position in the racial hierarchy, Asian Americans are more likely to receive positive or neutral comments. How do these seemingly positive comments factor into Asian American identity and politics? What I have shown is that social exclusion and bias can be perpetuated in seemingly positive yet still pejorative ways.

While I find a link between experiencing racial microaggressions and identity outcomes, it is important for future work to consider how positive tropes such as the model minority can be painted in a negative light, or how negative tropes such as the forever foreigner may have 'positive' comments. Due to time limitations, I was only able to look at the model minority in a 'positive' frame and the forever foreigner as a 'negative' frame. Future work may want to look solely at one trope in an experimental setting. There is also relatively little qualitative understanding of how Asian Americans conceptualize popular identity outcomes such as "linked fate" or "racial attachment". I have demonstrated that the traditional correlates of linked fate do not necessary map on to the Asian American experience, and future work should look into just what Asian Americans are thinking about when they think of "linked fate".

The outbreak of COVID-19 in the United States has also contributed to a resurgence of anti-Asian bias, mostly along frames of Asian Americans as diseased outsiders. This pandemic may be a moment of racialization for many Asian Americans, and it is important to take that into consideration moving forward. This political climate, especially during President Trump's administration, may have heightened Asian Americans' sense of racial group identity.

This project makes an important contribution to the political science literature by establishing a link between racial microaggressions and political identity outcomes. I find evidence that experiencing racial microaggressions is a common occurrence among many Asian

Americans, transcending national-origin and generational status. These experiences are also associated with an increased sense of racial identity. Furthermore, seemingly 'positive' racial microaggressions still have racializing effects, albeit not as strongly as more 'negative' racial microaggressions. My dissertation makes an argument for taking into consideration other forms in which individuals may experience racialization—not just looking at overt discrimination.

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