

The Intersections of Race, Ethnicity, and Gender: Asian American Attitudes toward Affirmative Action

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the potential differences in attitudes that Asian American ethnic groups, and men and women within those groups, have toward Affirmative Action policies in the United States. My research question was: *How do ethnicity and gender effect Asian American attitudes toward Affirmative Action?* Using the Pilot National Asian American Political Survey (PNAAPS), 2000-2001, as well as conducting semi-structured interviews, I found that there are differences in attitudes toward Affirmative Action between Asian ethnic groups. In comparison to Chinese respondents, Vietnamese respondents were consistently more favorable toward Affirmative Action policies than South Asian and Filipino respondents were. Gender was significant in a few regressions, particularly as a control variable – indicating the importance of considering gender when examining Asian American attitudes toward Affirmative Action. In conducting interviews, respondents suggested that Affirmative Action policies be amended to assist people of lower socioeconomic status as well as recent immigrants to the United States. An implication of this study is the importance of disaggregating Asian Americans by ethnic group. The consistent support for Affirmative Action policies by Vietnamese respondents, in comparison to Chinese respondents, supports this need.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1	Statement of the Problem	1
Chapter 2	Review of the Literature	4
	2.1: Asian American Exclusion in the United States	4
	2.2: Racialized Ethnicity	7
	2.3: Asian Americans as the Model Minority	8
	2.4: Differences among Asian Ethnic Groups: Immigration Paths	10
	2.5: Differences among Asian Ethnic Groups: Income, Education, and Poverty Levels	12
	2.6: Differences among Asian Ethnic Groups: Gender Roles and Relations	14
	2.7: Asian Americans and Affirmative Action	23
Chapter 3	Theoretical Framework	27
	3.1: Attitudes toward Race-based Policies	27
	3.2: Asian Ethnic Group Attitudes toward Affirmative Action	29
	3.3: Predicted Outcomes	34
Chapter 4	Methods	36
	4.1: Participants	36
	4.2: Dependent Variable	37
	4.3: Independent Variables	38
	4.4: Control Variables	40
	4.5: Interviews	41
	4.6: Research Questions	42
	4.7: Analytic Strategy	42
Chapter 5	Results	45
	5.1: Asian Ethnic Group Attitudes toward Affirmative Action	46
	5.2: Ethnicity and Gender	50
	5.3: Experiences with Discrimination	57
	5.4: Immigrant Attitudes	59
	5.5: Attitudes about Discrimination faced by Asians	60
Chapter 6:	Discussion and Conclusion	65
	6.1: Self-Interests Theory	68
	6.2: Racialization and Gender	69
	6.3: Structure of Opportunity	70
	6.4: Immigrant Ideology	70
	6.5: Denial of Discrimination	71
	6.6: Quantitative Analysis Conclusion	72
	6.7: Qualitative Results	73
	6.8: Suggested Changes to Affirmative Action	84

6.9: Implications of Study	87
6.10: Limitations of Study and Suggestions for Further Research	87
6.11: Conclusion	89
References	95
Appendix A Interview Questions	100

List of Figures and Tables

Figures

Figure 5.1	Ethnic Group Distribution	45
Figure 5.2	Ethnic Group by Gender	46
Figure 5.3	Discrimination by Ethnicity	58
Figure 5.4	Experienced Discrimination by Gender and Ethnic Group	59

Tables

Table 2.1	Ethnic Groups – Education, Income, and Poverty Levels	13
Table 2.2	Labor Force Participation Rates	18
Table 4.1	Breakdown by Gender	37
Table 5.1	Ethnic Group Attitudes toward Affirmative Action	49
Table 5.2	South Asian Female – Interactions	51
Table 5.3	Affirmative Action Principle	53
Table 5.4	Special Job Training and Educational Assistance for Asian Americans	55
Table 5.5	Preferences in Hiring and Promotion for Asian Americans	56
Table 5.6	Experiences with Discrimination by Ethnic Group	58
Table 5.7	Experiences with Discrimination by Gender	59
Table 5.8	Asian Ethnic Group Attitudes toward Preferences in Hiring/Promotion (w/ Attitudes toward Discrimination faced by Asians)	61
Table 5.9	Asian Ethnic Group Differences in Preferences in Hiring/Promotion (w/ Attitudes toward Discrimination faced by Asians x Filipino Respondents)	63
Table 6.1	Interviewee Descriptive Statistics	65
Table 6.2	Interviewee Information with Fictitious Names	67

Chapter 1

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to examine Asian American ethnic group attitudes toward Affirmative Action programs in the United States. This study is important because it gives insight into the potential differences between Asian ethnic groups in the U.S., an area of research that is lacking. Additionally, this study also examines gender differences within the ethnic groups being studied – paying heed to the intersections of race, ethnicity, and gender. Another important aspect of this study is the examination of Asian American attitudes toward Affirmative Action, a race-based policy. A majority of research done on attitudes toward Affirmative Action has focused on the attitudes of whites, specifically in relation to Blacks and Affirmative Action (Bobo 2000; Inkelas 2003b). Asian Americans have also been in the center of debate about Affirmative Action, with questions about the rationale for Affirmative Action for Asian Americans in comparison to that for other racial minorities, like Blacks (Inkelas 2003b; Nakanashi 2000). This study examines Asian ethnic group and gender attitudes toward Affirmative Action policies *for* Asian Americans.

I use the Pilot National Asian American Political Survey (PNAAPS) 2000-2001 – a multiethnic study of Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, South Asian (Asian Indian/Pakistani), and Vietnamese families in Los Angeles, New York, Honolulu, San Francisco, and Chicago. This study focuses on Chinese, Filipino, South Asian, and Vietnamese groups with a gender analysis within these groups. I also conduct interviews with individuals from each of these ethnic groups to supplement the quantitative analysis using multiple regressions and cross-tabulations.

Previous research on Asian Americans has stressed the importance of studying Asian ethnic groups separately or in comparison to each other, as opposed to grouping them all as

“Asian American” (Espiritu 2008; Inkelas 2003a, 2003b, Segal 2002). The lumping of all Asian Americans together as one homogenous group is problematic for a number of reasons, one of them being “the dramatic economic polarization between diverse Asian ethnic groups is neglected” (Lien, Conway, and Wong 2004:7). Other problems with lumping all Asian Americans together include ignoring the differing immigrant histories of Asian ethnic groups (Segal 2002), ignoring the differences in educational attainment (CARE 2008; Wise 2005), and ignoring cultural differences that exist between ethnic groups (Min and Kim 2000). Additionally, this homogenization of Asian Americans ignores the differences in gender relations within Asian ethnic groups (Espiritu 2008). Oftentimes, research has focused solely on race *or* gender, without looking at the effects of being of a racialized/ethnic *and* gendered group (Glenn 1998). Asian American women experience their race and ethnicity differently than Asian American men (Espiritu 2008), which may have an effect on their attitudes toward Affirmative Action.

One of the most prominent stereotypes that Asian Americans face is the “model minority” myth. The model minority myth portrays Asian Americans as the “successful” minority in the United States – through accommodation, patience, and hard work they are largely perceived as having achieved the American dream, placing themselves more in line with the white middle class than with other people of color (CARE 2008; Kibria 2002; Wise 2005). However, it is also oftentimes viewed as a “good” stereotype for Asian Americans, one that some Asian Americans are proud of and openly embrace (Kibria 2002; Lee 1999). Two key reasons the model minority myth portrays Asian Americans as the minority group that has “made it” are (a) the high levels of educational attainment of Asian Americans, as a group and (b) the average total family income for specific Asian American groups, which are higher than that of

whites (Zhou 2004). The belief that Asian Americans have “made it” is related to why people think Affirmative Action is not necessary for them. Unfortunately, the model minority myth assumes that Asian Americans are a homogenous group – ignoring the sometimes stark differences in experiences, educational attainment, and socioeconomic statuses of each ethnic group. There are specific ethnic groups amongst Asian Americans such as Chinese, Korean, Japanese and South Asians, who more frequently achieve the aforementioned successes and others, such as Southeast Asians, who achieve socioeconomic success less frequently and have high rates of poverty in the United States (Zhou 2004). These differences are strongly linked to these Asian ethnic groups’ immigration paths to the U.S. (Wise 2005).

This study, therefore, acknowledges the diversity present amongst Asian Americans and examines the potential differences in attitudes that may result from that diversity. Specifically, this study examines the attitudes Asian ethnic groups have about Affirmative Action – a policy considered to be unnecessary for Asian Americans due to their high representation in higher education and the workforce (Cho 2002). This study not only examines differences amongst Asian ethnic groups, but also gender differences within those ethnic groups – acknowledging the effects that multiple intersecting inequalities have on Asian Americans (Espiritu 2008).

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

The history of Asian Americans in the United States varies between ethnic groups. Some ethnic groups, like Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans, have been established in the U.S. for much longer than newer immigrant groups like Vietnamese Americans and Cambodian Americans (Espiritu 2008; Segal 2002). Additionally, the diverse histories of these ethnic groups highlight the difficulty Asian Americans have faced in becoming recognized as American citizens, constantly battling the presumption that they are “foreigners” or outsiders (CARE 2008; Chow 1994; Lee and Zhou 2004). With the emphasis on the apparent “success” of Asian Americans as a group, it is important to understand these distinct histories. Asian ethnic groups have different immigration paths to the U.S., with some groups having a longer history in the U.S. than others. These differences in reasons for immigrating and the time period of immigration are important in understanding the current experiences of different Asian ethnic groups. Some ethnic groups immigrated as professionals to the U.S. under the clauses of the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act, whereas others have come as refugees or evacuees from countries immersed in violent conflict (Espiritu 2008). These differing reasons for immigrating to the U.S. are correlated with the current educational and socioeconomic success of Asian ethnic groups.

2.1 Asian American Exclusion in the United States

One of the first attempts to prevent Asian ethnic groups from obtaining United States citizenship was the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 which “turned Chinese Americans into the first ‘illegal aliens,’ barring them from ever becoming naturalized Americans and stripping citizenship from those who had already become American citizens” (CARE 2008:1). This was

followed by the 1924 Immigration Act, which prevented many Asians from immigrating to the United States, placing restrictions on the number of immigrants, each year, from different countries (Chow 1994). In the 1930s there was an influx of Filipino laborers to the mainland United States. Filipinos could enter the U.S. legally because the Philippines were a U.S. territory and Filipinos were considered U.S. nationals, so they were not subject to the quotas of the 1924 Exclusion Act. However, racism overrode the Philippines' status as a U.S. territory and in 1934, the Tydings-McDuffie Act was passed, subjecting Filipinos to these same quotas (Hing 1993).

Continuing with this trend of racism and discrimination against Asian Americans, during World War II, Japanese Americans suspected to be enemies of the United States were imprisoned in internment camps. People in America had already lumped Asians together as one group (Espiritu 1992), so this act highlighted *all* Asian Americans as enemies and outsiders, even if they were born in the U.S. or had become American citizens (CARE 2008). It was not until the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act reversed the 1924 Immigration Act, allowing more Asians to immigrate into the U.S. This Act “permitted entry based primarily on family reunification or occupational characteristics” (Espiritu 1995), considerably increasing the number of Asians immigrating to America.

The term “Asian American” did not arise until the 1960s, when Asian ethnic groups mobilized to combat social inequalities during the Civil Rights Movement (Chou & Feagin 2008; Espiritu 1992; Inkelas 2006; Omi & Winant 1994). In her book *Asian American Panethnicity*, Yen Le Espiritu (1992) wrote:

“It was not until the late 1960s, with the advent of the Asian American movement, that a pan-Asian consciousness and constituency were first formed. To build political unity, college students of Asian ancestry heralded their common fate—the similarity of experiences and treatment that Asian groups endured in the United States” (20).

Espiritu (1992) pointed out that whites had generally *already* grouped Asian ethnic groups together. These activists, then, chose to utilize this imposed grouping to build political solidarity. Prior to this point, Asian ethnic groups had worked hard to assert their particular ethnicity, so as not to be confused for other Asian ethnicities. The reasoning behind the attempts of some Asian ethnic groups to dissociate themselves from others was related to a fear of being blamed for the “offenses” of one ethnic group. An example of this dissociation would be during World War II when Japanese Americans were placed in internment camps following the attack on Pearl Harbor. Aware of the harm that could come to them if they were mistaken for Japanese Americans, some members of other Asian ethnic groups in the U.S. at the time wore buttons or carried cards stating “I am Chinese,” “I am Korean,” or “I am Filipino” (Espiritu 1992).

The purpose of this discussion is to understand that heterogeneity among Asian Americans exists, even with the widespread acceptance of the term “Asian American.” The categorization of Asian Americans as a homogenous and monolithic group was pushed upon Asians by non-Asians. In the 1960s, the term “Asian American” was embraced by Asians in the U.S. (Espiritu 1992). The term is a very appropriate and useful identification for political rallying. In fact, Chou & Feagin (2008) point out that “these relatively new developments in Asian American group unity and coalition building are very important and seem necessary to the long-term survival of these groups as well as to the further growth of a democratic multiracial society in this still-racist nation” (xi). However, the grouping of all Asians together can also negatively affect the ethnic groups who have not typically achieved the success that is associated with Asian Americans. In fact, Inkelas (2006) points out that, at the time of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, Asian Americans mainly consisted of Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino Americans. She states that the pan-ethnic concept is now challenged due to the increase in other

Asian ethnic groups immigrating to the U.S., including Southeast Asians, Koreans, and those from the Indian sub-continent.

The abovementioned examples of the many attempts to exclude Asians from entering or becoming citizens of the United States are meant to highlight the difficult path Asian Americans have taken to get where they are today. Due to the often emphasized success of Asian Americans in the United States, some people may assume that their life experiences have been easy, particularly in comparison to other racial minorities. Sylvia Yanagisako asserted that there is an “erroneous but prevalent assumption that all Asian Americans arrived at these shores with slide rules in hand and surplus capital to invest in business enterprises” (Yanagisako 2002). The disregarding of discrimination faced by Asian Americans over the last century and a half is very detrimental, particularly because it seems to correlate with the continued disregarding of discrimination faced by Asian Americans today.

2.2 Racialized Ethnicity

Nazli Kibria (2002) discusses different Asian immigrant group experiences with their ethnicity and “becoming” American. European immigrant experiences follow the *ethnic American model*, which allows them to identify with their ethnicity while easily becoming American. For Asian Americans, Kibria’s (2002) *racial minority model* is more applicable to their experiences – their status as a racial minority is emphasized and serves, perhaps, as a hindrance to “becoming” American. Kibria (2002) suggests a merging of these models into *racialized ethnicity* to describe the experiences of Asian Americans. They are both racial minorities and ethnic Americans – and this status effects their integration into U.S. society. As a consequence of being ethnic Americans, who are also racial minorities, Asian Americans

experience particular difficulties in bridging the divide between their ethnic cultures and mainstream American culture.

This problem with bridging cultures (or perceived problem) relates to one of the prominent stereotypes faced by Asian Americans – the “perpetual” or “forever foreigner” stereotype (Lee 1999; Lien 2004). This stereotype goes beyond just having difficulty bridging cultures; it assumes that Asians in America are incapable of assimilation. No matter their generational status – recent immigrant or fourth generation – others assume that they are not American (Lee 1999). Lee and Zhou (2004) refer to the “immigrant shadow” that is cast over Asian Americans – basically, the assumption that all Asians are recent immigrants. A common practice of this stereotype is questioning Asian Americans about where they are from (assuming that they will respond with an Asian country and not a U.S. location) or commenting on how well they speak English. This stereotype of the forever foreigner, while prominent, is not as well-known or utilized as the model minority myth.

2.3 Asian Americans as the Model Minority

Asian Americans are considered to be the “model minority” in the United States. This stereotype is connected to the presupposed success of Asian Americans – stereotyping Asian Americans as quiet, diligent, hardworking people who are successful in school and at work. The term was coined during the Civil Rights Movement, not as a compliment to Asian Americans, but as a way to castigate other racial minorities, particularly Blacks, for their lack of success relative to Asian Americans (CARE 2008; Chou & Feagin 2008; Wise 2005). This has contributed to tension between Asian Americans and other racial minorities. The role of this

stereotype in creating these tensions is just one of the many problems or “myths” associated with the model minority.

Other problems relating to the model minority myth are the misrepresentation of Asian Americans as a homogenous group, placing the burden of high performance and success on Asian Americans, and contributing to a feeling of failure if that success is not met (Chou & Feagin 2008; Kibria 2002). This homogeneous representation places Asian Americans in the middle to upper-middle class; not only are their differing ethnicities ignored, but their differing socioeconomic statuses and educational attainment are also not addressed by this myth. It is assumed that Asian Americans all have the same strong work ethic that has assisted them in getting into or remaining in the middle-to-upper classes (Lien et al. 2004). By focusing on individual traits, like a strong work ethic, the myth not only fails to recognize the racism faced by Asian Americans who *have* succeeded, it also ignores those who are impoverished and uneducated (Ishimaru 2005).

Zhou (2004) lists the average total family income of Asian Americans at \$55,525, but points out that the average masks “the heterogeneity among the Asian ethnic groups. Although highly skilled and professional Asians boast high median household incomes, Southeast Asians, especially Lao, Hmong, and Cambodians trail far behind” (37). Additionally, the high average total family income for Asian American families can be attributed to the fact that most members of the family work, in comparison to white families where one or two people work (Espiritu 2008). Another difference among these Asian ethnic groups is the different immigration paths they have taken to the United States.

2.4 Differences among Asian Ethnic Groups: Immigration Paths

Asian ethnic groups in the United States have differing histories based upon the time at which they immigrated to the U.S. and their reasons for immigration. Some Asian ethnic groups also have different current experiences in the U.S., particularly in relation to educational attainment and socioeconomic status. It is important to have an understanding of the histories and contemporary experiences of these ethnic groups. For the purposes of this study, I will be focusing on Chinese, South Asian, Filipino, and Vietnamese Americans.

Chinese Americans

Chinese Americans have the longest immigration history among Asian ethnic groups in the United States (Mangiafico 1988). They began immigrating in larger numbers to the U.S. in the 1850s (Tong 2000). With the passing of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, their immigration was halted. This act “barred the entry of Chinese laborers for ten years and prohibited the naturalization of Chinese immigrants as U.S. citizens” (Mangiafico 1988:116). Between that time and World War II, most Chinese immigrants remained in service sector jobs – it was not until World War II that Chinese people were able to enter into industry jobs due to the shortage of labor (Mangiafico 1988; Tong 2000). After passage of the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act, Chinese immigration to the U.S. increased substantially (Mangiafico 1988; Tong 2000; Zhou 2009). There was also an increase in the amount of Chinese professionals at this time, as the amendments to the Act focused on family reunification and occupational needs (Espiritu 1995; Tong 2000). This is not to say that all Chinese immigrants were in professional occupations; in fact, this increase in immigration also increased the heterogeneity of Chinese immigrants (Mangiafico 1988), with some current Chinese Americans having “not even undergone cultural assimilation [...] let alone structural assimilation” (Tong 2000:99).

South Asian Americans

South Asian immigration to the United States can be split into two time periods. The first period spanned the late 1800s until the early 1900s, when male farm laborers immigrated to rural California, prior to passage of the Immigration Acts of 1917 and 1924. By 1905, some 5,000 Asian Indian men were in the U.S. (Purkayastha 2005). The second period was after the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act which reversed discriminatory laws, allowing immigrants (both Asian Indian and Pakistani) into the U.S. based upon occupational characteristics and family reunification (Leonard 1997). This marked a move out of rural California and into many different U.S. regions. However, due to the occupational characteristics of many South Asian immigrants (scientist, engineering, health fields), they are more centralized in metropolitan areas.

Vietnamese Americans

The immigrant trajectory of Vietnamese Americans differs greatly from other Asian ethnic groups discussed in this paper. It is largely influenced by the Vietnam War, which ended with the fall of Saigon to the North Vietnamese and the withdrawal of American troops from South Vietnam. This caused thousands of Vietnamese to flee the country for the United States (Montero 1979). After April 1975, approximately 130,000 Vietnamese were flown to the U.S. By 1985, almost 500,000 Vietnamese had settled in the U.S. (Kibria 1993). Due to their less voluntary or self-selected immigration to the U.S., Vietnamese Americans were not characterized by high educational and occupational success, as was typical of Asian immigrants under the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act. They were considered to be “political refugees” as opposed to immigrants (Kibria 1993). Vietnamese Americans entrance into the U.S. was met with hostility. Kibria (1993) points out that this was due, in part, to them being a reminder of a painful and lost war. But it was also partially due to their eligibility for government assistance

due to their refugee status. The 1970s and 1980s were also a time of conservative backlash to gains minorities had made earlier (Kibria 1993); consequently, the Vietnamese American entrance into the U.S. during that timeframe was not very welcome.

Filipino Americans

The first wave of Filipino immigration to the United States began in 1906. Although there had been Filipinos in America prior, this marked the first substantial wave (Mangiafico 1988). Cheap labor was needed in Hawaii and California, so Filipinos were recruited to the U.S. It seems that too many immigrants came, however, and in 1934, the Tydings-McDuffie Act was passed, limiting immigration to 50 Filipinos a year. With the Philippines being granted independence in 1946, this number increased to 100, which did not make much of a difference (Mangiafico 1988). As with Chinese and South Asian Americans, the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization act allowed for a marked increase in the number of Filipinos immigrating to the U.S. (Espiritu 1995; Mangiafico 1988). An interesting difference between Filipinos and other ethnic groups in this study is that the Philippines were a former U.S. colony; as such, Filipinos immigrating to the U.S. were more likely to speak English than other Asian immigrant groups (Torres Stone, Purkayastha, and Berdahl 2006).

2.5 Differences among Asian Ethnic Groups: Income, Education, and Poverty Levels

The following table depicts educational attainment rates, the median total family income, and the poverty rates for the Asian ethnic groups examined in this study. I have separated Asian Indian Americans and Pakistani Americans in order to illustrate the differences between those groups, despite their collectively being categorized as “South Asians” in the PNAAPS dataset. Unfortunately, I was unable to disaggregate this group for my analysis of the data.

Table 2.1: Ethnic Groups – Education, Income, Poverty Levels

Ethnic Group	Bachelor's Degree Attainment*	Less than High School Diploma**	Median Total Family Income***	Living Below Poverty Level****
Chinese Americans	48.1%	23.0%	\$67,893	13.5%
South Asian – Asian Indian Americans	63.9%	13.3%	\$86,915	9.8%
South Asian – Pakistani Americans	54.3%	18.0%	\$59,218	16.5%
Vietnamese Americans	19.4%	38.1%	\$55,746	16.6%
Filipino Americans	43.8%	12.7%	\$78,918	6.3%

* In comparison to the U.S. average of 24.4% and the total Asian American average of 44.1% (CARE 2008)
** In comparison to the U.S. average of 19.6% and the total Asian American average of 19.6% (CARE 2008)
*** In comparison to the U.S. median family income average of \$69,047 for all Asians, \$55,229 for whites and \$52,175 for the total population (Census – American Community Survey 2008)
**** In comparison to the U.S. average of 12.4% and the total Asian American average of 12.6% (CARE 2008)

Table 2.1 illustrates the differences between and within Asian ethnic groups. Chinese Americans have a Bachelor's Degree attainment rate, and total median income, that is above the U.S. averages; however, they also have a high rate for having less than a high school diploma and a higher poverty rate than the U.S. and Asian American averages. Asian Indian Americans and Pakistani Americans have notable differences in their socioeconomic statuses, educational attainment, and poverty levels. Asian Indian Americans have a higher total median income and Bachelor's Degree attainment rate than Pakistani Americans. It is important to note that Pakistani Americans also have a 16.5% poverty rate, which is higher than the U.S. and Asian American averages. The statistics presented for Vietnamese Americans show that they are not as socioeconomically successful as the other Asian ethnic groups and earn fewer Bachelor's degrees. The rate for having less than a high school diploma among Vietnamese Americans is 38.1%, which is more than twice the U.S. and Asian American averages. Their poverty rate is

also very high at 16.6%. Finally, Filipino Americans' Bachelor's Degree attainment is in line with the total Asian American average, but still well-above the U.S. average. Their median family income is also very high at over \$26,000 more than the overall median total family income in the U.S. Filipino Americans also have the lowest poverty rate at just 6.3%. Data for all these groups assume homogeneity within the racial ethnic groups. However, there are gender differences within each Asian ethnic group, as I discuss below.

2.6 Differences among Asian Ethnic Groups: Gender Roles and Relations

The Asian ethnic groups in this study have many overlapping themes in their experiences with gender roles and relations. Within these overlapping themes, however, are variations between Chinese, Filipino, South Asian, and Vietnamese Americans. I will discuss the themes raised in the literature about gender relations within these ethnic groups and provide examples of the similarities and/or differences among the groups. The four themes I identified from previous studies about gender and Chinese, Filipino, South Asian, and Vietnamese American groups are: (1) Patriarchy; (2) The Impact of Migration on Gender Relations; (3) Employment, and (4) Gendered Division of Labor and Cultural Transmission.

Patriarchy

Patriarchy is an overarching theme in women's lives globally; however, "it is likely to differ across regions and cultures" (Ahmed et al 2004:262). Yen Le Espiritu (2008) states that patriarchal systems

“produce power differentials between Asian American women and men. But [...] patriarchy is constitutive of more than just gender difference. That is, gender differentiation and oppression is not a universal experience but is structured differently, depending on how it intersects with other inequalities such as race and class” (4).

In reviewing literature on gender roles and these four ethnic groups, I found that women in Chinese, South Asian, and Vietnamese American groups have similar strategies for dealing with patriarchy (Ahmed et al 2004; Dasgupta 1998; Kibria 1990; Shih & Pyke 2010). Of the groups in this study, Filipino Americans seem to be the Asian ethnic group that demonstrates the most gender egalitarianism. Due to the higher status of women in the Philippines, it seems that Filipina Americans do not have to deal with patriarchy in the same ways the other ethnic groups in this study do. Yen Le Espiritu (1995) states:

“In contrast to the patriarchal, patrilineal, and patrilocal nature of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean societies, the gender structure in the Philippines is more egalitarian, and kinship is bilateral. In employment as well as in participation in economic, political, and social activities, women in the Philippines had and continue to have more or less equal status with men” (29).

Espiritu references the patriarchal structure of East Asian societies, which includes Chinese societies. The gender structure for Chinese societies is related to traditional Chinese cultural norms. In discussing the role of Chinese Confucianism, Shih & Pyke (2010) state that the influence of Confucianism includes “hierarchies of males over females and elders over the young, and children’s devotion to parents, including the provision of filial care” (335). A traditional practice for Chinese families is for a woman to move in with her husband’s family. A mother-in-law, then, trains the daughter-in-law about her role, one that is subordinate to both her male husband and older mother-in-law. In discussing feminist scholarship on this practice, Shih and Pyke (2010) point out that Chinese mothers-in-law may be striking “a ‘patriarchal bargain’ as a strategy for maximizing their interests and power within the existing social and structural constraints” (336).

Kibria (2000) discusses this “patriarchal bargain” in her article on the Vietnamese immigrant community. The patriarchal bargain was defined by Kandiyoti (1988) as “the ways in

which women and men negotiate and adapt to the set of rules that guide and constrain gender relations... suggest[ing] that both men and women possess resources with which they negotiate to maximize power and options within a patriarchal structure” (Kibria 2000:431). Vietnamese American female immigrants’ ability to bargain with patriarchy is demonstrated after their migration to the United States – the changing social structures for Vietnamese families in the U.S. afforded women more power in their relations with men. This is not to say that women were no longer affected by patriarchy; rather, women were able to negotiate more power than they would have had in Vietnam. This theme of migration influencing gender roles and relations is found for other Asian ethnic groups, as well.

The Impact of Migration on Gender Relations

After the migration from Vietnam to the United States in 1975, gender roles for Vietnamese immigrants shifted. While many Vietnamese American men were of the middle class in Vietnam, they became lower class and foreign in the U.S. Women’s status, though, improved some within the family due to the need for them to work; therefore, they gained more control over economic resources and decision making (Lien et al 2004). Kibria (2000) found that this greater power was influenced both by women’s work and contribution to economic resources of the family, and also women’s membership in a women’s group. This allowed for the establishment of networks that provided valuable information, like the best stores to shop at and available jobs in the area. However, despite this increase in women’s power and resources, they still upheld traditional gender roles. Kibria (2000) found the reason for this was women’s fear of men deserting the family. While women did work in the U.S., they were still in a precarious economic situation that rendered the family central to survival. Therefore, while

Vietnamese women were able to take advantage of the economic resources and networks, they still did so while working within and upholding patriarchy.

Migration also had a significant effect on Asian Indian American women's lives. Kurien (2003) found that migration to the United States can, interestingly, lead to greater gender equality *and* a more restrictive model of Indian womanhood. South Asian women were not able to immigrate to the U.S. until after the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act. Many Asian Indian women were highly educated in India; however, they had to wait to enter the U.S. under family reunification clauses (Torres Stone et al. 2006). Kurien (2003) found that, although many women in her study had a Bachelor's degree (or more) at the time of marriage, they would likely not have worked if they stayed in India. Upon migration to the U.S., Asian Indian women were able to work due to a redefinition of male and female honor. It was much more acceptable for women to work in the U.S., which led to a "sense of achievement and self-fulfillment" (161) for the women in Kurien's study. Therefore, migration to the U.S. allowed Asian Indian women to use their education for occupational attainment, something they may not have been able to do in India.

Kurien's (2003) study was conducted in California and her respondents were from three Hindu Indian religio-cultural organizations. Many had been in the U.S. for 20 to 30 years, with interviews conducted between 1994 and 1996. Another study on Asian Indian families found differing results – Asian Indian women actually experienced a decrease in employment upon immigration to the United States (Mehrotra and Calasanti 2010). These interviews were conducted between 2002 and 2003, with respondents arriving after 1980, but a majority arriving in the states in 2000. Mehrotra and Calasanti (2010) state, "For some women, however, it meant

forgoing careers *entirely* and becoming economically and legally dependent on their husbands” (798).

Employment

The theme of employment also affects the gender roles and relations of Asian ethnic groups in the United States. As stated previously, migration to the U.S. led to an increased employment of Vietnamese (Kibria 1993, 2000) and Asian Indian (Kurien 2003) women, in comparison to their employment opportunities in their respective countries of origin. Again, it is important to note that Mehrotra and Calasanti (2010) found differing results for Asian Indian women. In their study, Asian Indian women had to forgo their careers. Many followed their husbands to the U.S. and, under the restrictions of H-4 visas, were not able to work.

Under the guidelines of the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act, Filipinas were able to immigrate to the U.S. as professionals – mainly, as nurses (Espiritu 1995). Unlike some of their Asian female counterparts, they did not have to wait to immigrate under the family reunification policy (Espiritu 2008). On a percentage basis, more Filipina Americans work than any other Asian ethnic group of women in the U.S. (Torres Stone et al. 2006). Drawn from Reeves & Bennett (2004), table 2.2 illustrates Asian women’s labor force participation rate in the United States in 2000.

Table 2.2: Labor Force Participation Rates

Ethnic Group	Female Labor Force Participation Rate*	Male Labor Force Participation Rate
Chinese Americans	57%	69%
Filipino Americans	65%	71%
Asian Indian Americans	54%	79%
Pakistani Americans	37%	77%
Vietnamese Americans	56%	68%

* In comparison to a 57% overall rate for Asian American women and the 57.5% rate for all women (Reeves & Bennett 2004)

The figures in this table show that, in 2000, approximately 57% of Asian women were in the labor force in the U.S. Of these women, Filipinas had the highest labor force participation at 65%. Filipinos also showed the lowest gender disparity amongst the Asian ethnic groups in this study, as Filipino men had a 71% labor force participation. This relatively small gender gap is likely attributable to Filipina women's representation in the health care field in the U.S. (Espiritu 2008; Torres Stone et al. 2006). Chinese women's labor force participation rates (57%) are similar to the overall Asian American women's labor force participation rate as well. However, this is still lower than the 69% labor force participation rate of Chinese men in the U.S. Asian Indian women had a 54% labor force participation rate which is much lower than the 79% participation rate for Asian Indian men. Pakistani women have the lowest labor force participation amongst all Asian women in the U.S., at only 37%. It is also significantly lower than the almost 77% labor force participation rate of Pakistani men in the U.S. (Reeves and Bennett 2004). The differences in average labor force participation between Asian Indian women and Pakistani women in the U.S. again demonstrate the problems with lumping Asian ethnic groups into one category of Asian Americans. Further, collapsing these two groups into the "South Asian" subcategory is also problematic. As already illustrated the educational attainment and total family incomes of these groups vary, and now we see differences in the labor force participation rates of women within the South Asian category. Unfortunately, I must use this category, since I cannot disaggregate the two groups in my dataset. Finally, Vietnamese women have a labor force participation rate of 56% - on par with the overall rate of 57%, but still much lower than the 68% labor force participation rate of Vietnamese men.

Gendered Division of Labor & Cultural Transmission

This increase in women's employment in some of these ethnic groups does not mean domestic work will be shared equally between men and women, however. Prior studies have found that women are expected to be the cultural transmitters or gatekeepers for their families and communities (Espiritu 2001; Glenn 1998; Kurien 2003; Mehrotra and Calasanti 2010; Shih & Pyke 2010). The importance placed on women's roles as the cultural transmitters is correlated with the upholding of traditional gender norms and roles. Tong (2000) discusses the gender roles of contemporary Chinese American families. He states that professional Chinese American families are more gender egalitarian than working-class families. However, like Chinese American women of working-class families, women in middle-class, professional families still perform a majority of domestic work. Tong (2000) also suggests that young Chinese American women "probably encounter more pressure [compared to their male peers] in their attempt to negotiate between the boundaries of family life and selfhood" (181). He relates this to the pressure Chinese American women feel to conform to Chinese traditional cultural norms and their desire to be acculturated to U.S. society. Min Zhou (2009) discusses the continuation of traditional Chinese cultural norms for contemporary Chinese women. They are still expected to place their family first, before themselves. Expectations that are placed on Chinese women include "to help their families adjust to the new environment, to sponsor other family members to immigrate, or to make regular remittances to their families in their countries of origin" (Zhou 2009:177). This requires them to work for money in addition to performing a bulk of the domestic work at home.

South Asian women in the United States must also navigate traditional cultural values in relation to their gender roles. Like Chinese Americans, there is the "family before self" value

(Venkataramani-Kothari 2007). Women's actions are closely monitored by male and female family and community members as well. South Asian women experience gender inequality as men's work is valued over women's (Hunjan and Towson 2007).

Dasgupta (1998) discusses the concern that many South Asian immigrants have upon immigrating to the United States – that their culture will be lost to Americanization of the younger generations. She states,

“the maintenance of traditions and identity have historically been placed on South Asian women's shoulders. As the keepers of South Asian culture and heritage in the U.S., the roles of second-generation daughters are therefore monitored more strictly than those of sons” (957).

This leads to a generational difference between South Asian women's experiences with their gender roles in the U.S. While many first generation women may feel empowered by their move to the U.S. due to increased employment, second generation women may feel restricted by the expectation to uphold South Asian values while growing up within American culture. Kurien (2003) points out that women's' roles as cultural and religious producers allow them “to reinterpret gender images and constructs [...] emphasize[ing] more egalitarian gender ideologies and relationships” (164). This connects to the “patriarchal bargain” – women may renegotiate their gender roles, but they still do so within the boundaries of patriarchy.

As seen in Chinese and South Asian American families, traditional family systems have been upheld in the United States. Kibria (2000) found that Vietnamese women still upheld traditional family and gender norms, despite their increased economic and network resources. She connected this to Vietnamese women's concern that men may leave the family if traditions are not upheld. Correlated with this concern, and despite their increased work outside of the home, they are still expected to perform a bulk of the domestic chores (Kibria 1993).

Vietnamese women's upholding of traditional culture also allows them to maintain authority

over the younger generation of Vietnamese Americans (Kibria 2000). This connects to the Chinese practice of mothers-in-law teaching their daughter-in-laws their gender roles. In order to gain some power of their own, older Chinese women sometimes assist in the oppression of younger women (Shih and Pyke 2010).

Despite the greater gender egalitarianism found amongst Filipino Americans (Espiritu 1995), Filipina women are still expected to uphold Filipino values in the United States (Espiritu 2001). In her study on family, culture, and gender in Filipina American lives, Espiritu (2001) found that “the elevation of Filipina chastity (particularly that of young women) has the effect of reinforcing masculinist and patriarchal power in the name of a greater idea of national/ethnic self respect” (416). This “elevation” of chastity was a strategy Filipino Americans used to assert their superiority over the dominant (white) culture. Young Filipina Americans “face numerous restrictions on their autonomy, mobility, and personal decision making” (417). Espiritu (2001) also found that parenting amongst some Filipino immigrants is gendered. She connects this to the expectation that women will uphold the cultural line.

All the Asian ethnic groups in this study are affected by patriarchal ideologies and structures, some more noticeably so than others. This discussion demonstrates the existence of gender differences within each group, returning to the need to discuss the intersections of gender, race and class in people’s lives (Espiritu 2008; Glenn 1998). Prior research indicates that Filipino society is relatively more gender egalitarian; however, patriarchal practices are still evident within Filipino culture, reinforced through women’s roles as “culture gatekeepers.” The studies discussed above indicate that other groups in this study – Chinese, South Asian, and Vietnamese Americans – are more negatively affected by patriarchy but have been able to engage in bargaining to gain power for themselves.

2.7 Asian Americans and Affirmative Action

The previous discussions on problems with the model minority myth and differences between Asian ethnic groups in the United States relate to the need to study Asian Americans and Affirmative Action. Additionally, it is important to understand the history of Affirmative Action policies as they relate to Asian Americans. Don T. Nakanishi's (2000) "A Quota on Excellence? The Asian American Admissions Debate" addresses this history. In the early 1980s, the national press began discussing the increase in the Asian American population in colleges. This discussion was initially related to Asian Americans proving themselves to be the model minority. However, by the late 1980s, allegations of elite colleges limiting the admission of students of Asian descent began (Nakanishi 2000). With a large increase in Asian American student enrollment, particularly during the 1980s, researchers were surprised when these rates stayed static or decreased. Brown University and the University of California at Berkeley apologized to students of Asian descent for using "flawed" admission practices that may have limited these student's admission into those colleges (Inkelas 2003b). Conservatives used this Asian American admissions debate in their arguments against Affirmative Action policies. Conservatives argued that Affirmative Action not only negatively affected whites, but Asian Americans were portrayed to be victims of the policies, as well (Kibria 2002). Cho (2002) critiques conservatives for making Asian Americans the "racial mascot" of their arguments; however, she also critiques the liberal approach to Affirmative Action policies. By focusing on Affirmative Action as a means to correct for under-represented minorities, they ignore the historical and current discrimination faced by Asian Americans, an "over-represented" minority.

Additionally, Cho (2002) discusses the importance of recognizing the heterogeneity of Asian Americans when considering their "over-representation" as it relates to Affirmative Action

policies. Asian Americans, particularly in higher education, are considered to be overrepresented; therefore, not in need of benefiting from these policies (Cho 2002; Segal 2002). However, this focus on overrepresentation does not account for differences in ethnicity, class, and gender. Cho (2002) states that Asian Americans need to be disaggregated when considering the need for Affirmative Action. This way “*relatively* successful East and South Asian Americans will not skew policy to the detriment of Pacific Islanders and more newly arrived Southeast Asians” (Cho 2002:176). Specific to higher education employment, Cho (2002) points out that most faculty are South and East Asian Americans. She suggests that, even in disciplines where Asian Americans are considered overrepresented, different ethnic groups, such as “Vietnamese, Cambodian, Filipino, and other Pacific Islander and Southeast Asians” (176) need to be considered for employment as they are not the Asian Americans being represented. This overrepresentation, then, is specific to certain Asian ethnic groups.

In relation to gender, Cho (2002) states, “In academic employment, APAs [Asian Pacific Americans] are the only racial or ethnic group where men outnumber women in the proportion of 78 percent to 22 percent” (176). This is not the only racial group with a gender gap in academic employment; however, it is the only group with that large of a gap in employment. This highlights the importance of also breaking race down by gender to understand how men and women within a racial group are faring in an employment or higher education setting. The National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium points out that the tenure rate of Asian American male faculty has improved some, but that of Asian American women has not (NAPALC 2008). In the private sector, amongst senior executives in the United States, less than 0.3% of them were of Asian descent. Another study points out that, of the 806 public Fortune companies, Asian American men only make up 0.2% of the board of directors with Asian

American women only making up 0.01% (NAPALC2008). Even though Asian Americans may be represented in employment numbers, they are not being represented in leadership and management positions. Cho's work and the aforementioned statistics highlight the need to recognize ethnic and gender differences amongst Asian Americans in relation to Affirmative Action practice. Cho's argument also suggests the possibility that different Asian ethnic groups, and Asian American men and women, may view Affirmative Action policies differently because they have different opportunities and experiences.

A majority of the research that has been done on Asian American attitudes about Affirmative Action has grouped all Asian ethnic groups together as "Asian American" and has focused primarily on attitudes about Affirmative Action in higher education (Chang and Kiang 2002; Gurin 2004; Inkelas 2003a; Inkelas 2003b; Inkelas 2006). This research also primarily relates to how people feel about Affirmative Action in general, and not specifically for Asian Americans. In relation to Affirmative Action and higher education, research has suggested that the Asian American students' internalization of racial stereotypes about Asian Americans, like the model minority myth, may affect their views on Affirmative Action (Inkelas 2003a; Inkelas 2003b).

In Inkelas' (2003a) qualitative study on Asian American attitudes towards Affirmative Action she interviewed 13 undergraduate Asian American students. Inkelas found that,

"APA students may perceive other minority student applicants as inferior to APA applicants, feel threatened by both majority and minority groups in the college admissions process, and tend to self marginalize the APA experience in American race relations" (625).

This finding is supported by Inkelas' quantitative study (2003b) on Asian American attitudes toward Affirmative Action. She found that, in comparison to other racial/ethnic groups, "APA [Asian Pacific American] students swing the most sharply between support for Affirmative

Action principles and opposition to Affirmative Action practices” (615). Inkelas considered this to reflect a difference in support for the principle of Affirmative Action versus the actual practice of Affirmative Action. Although Inkelas’ (2003b) quantitative study included Chinese, Korean, South Asian, and Taiwanese respondents, she notes that one limitation of her study is that the sample sizes for each of these ethnic groups was too small for multivariate data analysis. Thus she could not examine the effect of ethnic background on attitudes towards Affirmative Action.

Amongst Asian Americans, female respondents have typically had more favorable attitudes towards Affirmative Action (Inkelas 2003b, 2006). In discussing background characteristics that predict Asian American students’ racial attitudes, Inkelas (2006) states “the finding that APA [Asian Pacific American] females are more likely to perceive discrimination or inequality is confirmed by prior literature which finds that women are generally more racially tolerant and responsive than men” (85). This racial tolerance may be related to women’s experience as an oppressed group in the United States – through experiencing gender stratification; they may be more likely to believe that racial stratification exists. With some of the aforementioned variations in gender equality amongst Asian ethnic groups, specifically the differences between Filipina Americans and the other ethnic groups, I examine whether women remain more favorable towards Affirmative Action across each ethnic group, despite some differences in gender roles and relations between ethnic groups.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework

There are many noteworthy theories surrounding attitudes toward race-based policies (Bobo 2000; Hughes & Tuch 2000). Unfortunately, these theories generally apply to white attitudes toward these policies, specifically as the policies apply to Blacks (Bobo 2000). I will discuss the theories surrounding attitudes toward race-based policies, like Affirmative Action – even if they are not testable with the variables in the Pilot National Asian American Political Survey (PNAAPS), 2000-2001. I will follow this general discussion of theories with the specific theoretical framework I will be using for this study.

3.1 Attitudes toward Race-based Policies

Bobo & Kluegel (1993) identify three of the main theories surrounding attitudes toward race-based policies. These theories are: (1) self-interests theory; (2) stratification beliefs; and (3) racial attitudes. Self-interest can be split into individual self-interest and group identification; however, the two are typically connected. Individual self-interest is related to the gains or losses to an individual or their immediate family. Characteristics like an individual's income are connected to attitudes toward policies. Group identification is related to “a sense of shared fate” (Bobo & Kluegel 1993:445), and is particularly relevant to race-based policies, as racial divisions affect attitudes toward these policies (i.e. Black and white differences in attitudes toward Affirmative Action).

Stratification beliefs are connected to beliefs about the causes of inequality, which influence attitudes on race-targeted policies. If an individual does not believe in structural causes for inequality or if they believe that individual characteristics cause inequality, they “may support (or not oppose) opportunity enhancing policies because such policies do not challenge a

system perceived to be working fairly” (Bobo & Kluegel 1993:446). Bobo & Kluegel (1993) point out that previous research has shown that the American public is more supportive of opportunity-enhancing programs, like job-training programs; rather than equal outcome programs, that are viewed as promoting “quotas.”

Finally, racial attitudes also influence attitudes toward race-targeted policies like Affirmative Action. This argument discusses “traditional” and “modern/symbolic” racism. Traditional racism is “the overt belief in the innate inferiority of blacks and avowed support for segregation and denial of rights to blacks” (Bobo & Kluegel 1993:446). “Modern” or “symbolic” racism is more covert, with racial hostility being demonstrated indirectly. The source of symbolic racism “is presumably not the belief that blacks pose an economic, social, or political threat to whites [rather, it] represents the belief by whites that blacks violate traditional U.S. values and thus do not deserve any special help” (Hughes 1997:45). This concept was developed in opposition to the self-interests theory. Self-interests theory focuses on the “threat” that other groups (and policies geared towards them) pose to individual or group interests. Symbolic racism, then, is more of “a moral orientation, rather than a self-or group interested orientation” (Hughes 1997:47).

Hughes & Tuch (2000) discuss additional explanations beyond the ones provided by Bobo & Kluegel (1993). These include: (1) Minority Opportunity - relating to the belief that opportunities for minorities are plentiful, therefore, race-targeted policies are unnecessary; (2) Minority Individualism – relating to symbolic racism, where “racial individualism is a form of racial prejudice in which the ideology of individualism is used as a moral yardstick to judge racial minorities, but not others” (Hughes & Tuch 2000:170); (3) Denial of Discrimination – the belief that racism and discrimination are not problems, and (4) Conservative Opposition –

attitudes are not related to racial beliefs or prejudice, but rather to the belief in the proper role of government.

Finally, Blumer's group position theory is another theory used to explain attitudes toward race-targeted programs. Inkelas (2003a) utilized this theory for her qualitative study of Asian American students. She highlights the four elements within Blumer's (1958) theory as:

“(1) sense of group position is related to the belief of in-group superiority or in-group preference; (2) in-group members view members of out-groups as ‘alien’ and ‘different’; (3) sense of group position involves assumptions of proper or proprietary claim over certain rights, resources, statuses, and privileges; and (4) out group members are perceived to desire a greater share of such rights, resources, statuses, and privileges” (628).

This theory encompasses a few of the arguments of aforementioned theories like self-interest theory and the racial attitudes argument. Unfortunately, the variables available in the PNAAPS, 2000-2001 dataset do not allow for the testing of all these theories. However, four theories can be examined using available data, as I discuss below.

3.2 Asian Ethnic Group Attitudes toward Affirmative Action

I structure my study around Karen Kurotsuchi Inkelas' theoretical framework in her article “Diversity's Missing Minority: Asian Pacific American Undergraduates' Attitudes Toward Affirmative Action” (2003b). The theories I test, that are outlined in Inkelas' (2003b) article are: (1) self-interests theory; (2) stratification beliefs, and (3) “immigrant” ideologies. Additionally, I explore the “denial of discrimination” argument discussed above (Hughes & Tuchs 2000).

I also use a feminist theoretical perspective – integrating gender into my theoretical analysis. The incorporation of gender into my framework is based on demonstrations that race and ethnic relations influence men and women differently; thus, I align my work with those who

argue for the continuing need to acknowledge the effects that the intersections of race, ethnicity, and gender have on people's lives (Andersen & Collins 2007; Espiritu 2008; Glenn 1998).

Evelyn Nakano Glenn (1998) discusses the need for an integrative framework for gender and race. Glenn (1998) argues that "social constructionism provides a useful 'mid-level' framework, a common vocabulary and set of concepts for looking at how gender is racialized and race is gendered" (4). This argument is very important, particularly when examining the potential gender differences in attitudes over Affirmative Action. As demonstrated by scholars using this framework, and in the studies on gender and immigration that I cited above, Asian American women do not experience race and gender separately from one another. Glenn highlights the need to discuss gender in specific historical and social contexts. She discusses the importance of studying heterogeneity, and she uses Asian Americans as an example of an ethnically heterogeneous group that should not be lumped together in research, pointing out that more recent immigrants differ from those in the United States prior to 1965. Drawing on her argument, then, in my study, I examine gender attitudes within ethnic groups, thereby exploring the effect that race/ethnicity has in shaping women's and men's attitudes.

While the theories I use are relevant to exploring attitudes based on race and ethnicity, they do not address the ways that gender intersects with these inequalities, potentially leading to attitudinal differences between men and women within racial and ethnic groups. In order to incorporate gender into my theoretical framework, I will draw upon Yen Le Espiritu's (2008) *Asian American Women and Men*, in which Espiritu analyzes gender roles and relations amongst Asian Americans in the United States. In the United States, Asian American men and women have both been subject to racialized gender stereotypes, which have affected their experiences in and access to opportunities in education and the workplace (Espiritu 2008; Lowe 1996;

Purkayastha 2005). Ultimately, then, I will incorporate these realities into the theories discussed below.

The self-interests theory “posits that individuals tend to support or oppose policies like Affirmative Action based on how such policies affect their access to scarce resources or material interests” (Inkelas 2003b:605). This theory has been applied to different situations involving policies that directly or indirectly deal with race, like busing practices (Bobo 1983; McConahay 1982). In relation to policies like Affirmative Action, the scarce resource would be college admissions, job opportunities, or business and contracting opportunities. As stated before, this theory puts forth the idea that those who do not stand to gain from this policy will oppose it, or not support it. As some Asian ethnic groups are more socioeconomically successful, on average, than others, they may feel less favorable toward Affirmative Action programs because they do not need them or do not benefit from them.

This socioeconomic success for some Asian Americans affects the gender roles and relations of Asian Americans. Espiritu (2008) analyzes the gender relations of Asian American salaried professionals and finds that there is more gender egalitarianism amongst this group than among those of the working class. However, in the workplace, both Asian American men and women receive less economic return for their educational attainment and they encounter a glass ceiling (Chou and Feagin 2008; Espiritu 2008; Segal 2002). Further, women’s experiences in the workplace may also include sexual harassment (Cho 1997; Espiritu 2008) or other forms of gender discrimination. Asian American women, then, even in higher occupational settings, will experience discrimination in similar and different ways from men. Their additional negative experiences may encourage more favorable attitudes toward Affirmative Action policies amongst Asian American women.

The second theory about stratification beliefs relate to opposing perspectives of the structure of opportunity in American society relates to whether or not someone subscribes to the dominant ideology or to an ideology of racial stratification. The dominant ideology “asserts that opportunity and success should be obtained through hard work and merit, and not through redistributive social interventions like Affirmative Action” (Inkelas 2003b:605). By contrast, someone who views American society as racially stratified will be more likely to support programs like Affirmative Action. Inkelas (2003b) points to African Americans as a group likely to view American society as racially stratified because they are typically not afforded the same opportunities as whites. As Asian ethnic groups do not easily fit into a “black” or “white” category (Okihiro 1994), their stance on Affirmative Action policies may vary. This theory, though, does not take into account those who might view American society as gender stratified or those who are affected by that stratification. As mentioned previously, Asian American women are racialized, in addition to being subject to gender oppression (Chow 1994; Espiritu 2008). As Affirmative Action is meant to benefit both women and minorities, Asian American women may have differing attitudes towards the policy than men. Their experiences, particularly in the workplace, may lead to a more positive outlook about Affirmative Action policies.

The third theory on “immigrant” ideology connects to the aforementioned dominant ideology. This theory posits that immigrants view America as a land of opportunity, especially if these immigrants left their countries in search of better educational and economic opportunities in the United States. Inkelas (2003b) points out that prior research has stated that Asian Americans subscribe to this dominant ideology. Inkelas derived this theory from work done by Cheng and Espiritu (1989) on Mexican, Korean, and African Americans in Los Angeles. In their

study, Cheng and Espiritu (1989) note that some immigrants who leave their home countries due to economic and political conflict may also view America as a land of opportunity. In this way, their subscription to the dominant ideology may connect to a belief in individualism and hard work for the attainment of resources like education or jobs. As a result, they may not have favorable attitudes towards Affirmative Action programs.

As with the previous perspectives, this theory assumes immigrants either have no gender or do not differ along these lines. However, not only are there gender differences among immigrants in their home countries, but for many Asian immigrants, these gender roles and relations shift upon arrival to the U.S. For example, Espiritu (2008) notes that contemporary immigration from Asia to the U.S. has been largely composed of women. For some of these families who immigrate, gender roles change. Though women still perform a bulk of the domestic labor, it is those domestic labor skills that are more transferable to the workforce than men's skills, specifically for lower class wage laborers (Espiritu 2008). This increase in women's labor participation created a level of economic dependence of men on their wives. It also contributed to women's increase in economic control and influence on decision making. Southeast Asian refugees are most affected by this shift in access to resources (Espiritu 2008). Kibria's (1993) work on Vietnamese Americans and gender roles supports Espiritu's (2008) discussion about the shift in gender roles for Southeast Asian refugees. Overall, then, it appears that men and women are affected in similar but also different ways by ethnicity and immigration paths.

At the same time, amongst wage laborers, women are exploited – especially in the clothing industry (Espiritu 2008). Additionally, women whose families are self-employed entrepreneurs are also exploited, with their free labor allowing for businesses to be open longer

without having to hire staff (Espiritu 2008). Asian women's experiences with exploitation and discrimination in the workforce, at all levels, may influence their attitudes toward Affirmative Action; in this case, women may have more favorable attitudes to a policy that is supposed to assist women and minorities in institutions like education and the workplace.

To test the opposing views on the structure of society, I analyze the effect that experiencing discrimination has on Asian ethnic group attitudes towards Affirmative Action. Here, I hypothesize that respondents who have been discriminated against will be more likely to have a positive perception of Affirmative Action, as they may be less inclined to believe in the dominant ideology about the structure of society; rather, they will subscribe to the racial (or gender) stratification perspective of society. To test the immigrant ideology theory, I test how immigrant status affects attitudes toward Affirmative Action for each ethnic group.

Finally, I also utilize the "denial of discrimination" argument. This theory argues that, if people believe discrimination does not exist, they will oppose (or not support) race-targeted programs like Affirmative Action (Hughes & Tuch 2000). This is further discussed in my methodology section.

3.3 Predicted Outcomes

My central research question is: *How do ethnicity and gender affect Asian American attitudes toward Affirmative Action?* The literature review and theories I use in this study would predict the following:

- H1 (self-interests theory): Asian ethnic groups who demonstrate more socioeconomic success, and who have immigrated for educational or occupational reasons, like South Asian and Filipino Americans, will show less support for Affirmative Action policies.

- H2 (self-interests theory): Asian ethnic groups who demonstrate less socioeconomic success, and who have typically immigrated for non-educational and occupational reasons, like Vietnamese Americans, will show more support for Affirmative Action policies.
- H3 (Racialization and Gender): There will be a gender difference in attitudes toward Affirmative Action programs in the United States.
- H4 (stratification beliefs): Individuals within Asian ethnic groups who have experienced discrimination will show more support for Affirmative Action policies, because those experiences may influence them to view society as racially and/or gender stratified.
- H5 (immigrant ideology): First-generation immigrants within Asian ethnic groups will show less support for Affirmative Action policies because they are more likely to subscribe to the dominant ideology (Cheng & Espiritu 1989).
- H6 (denial of discrimination argument): Asian ethnic groups who believe Asians experience less discrimination than Blacks or Latinos will be less likely to support Affirmative Action policies for Asian Americans, because they do not believe it is necessary for Asian Americans.

Chapter 4 Methods

For this study, I utilized a mixed methodology to examine my research question. First, I analyzed a secondary data set – the Pilot National Asian American Political Survey (PNAAPS), 2000-2001. This is a multi-ethnic study of Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, South Asian, and Vietnamese families based in Los Angeles, New York, Honolulu, San Francisco, and Chicago. For the purposes of this study, I only analyzed Chinese, Filipino, South Asian, and Vietnamese respondents. The locations for this study were chosen because 40% of the nation's Asian American population resided in these metropolitan areas in 2000 (Lien 2004). Secondly, I conducted interviews with Chinese, Filipino, South Asian, and Vietnamese individuals.

4.1 Participants

According to the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Science Research (ICPSR) description of the PNAAPS study, study participants were obtained through a

“Semi-random sample of households occupied by adults from one of the six major Asian-American ancestries selected to approximate the size of the ethnic population among Asian Americans according to the 1990 Census. Telephone households in the metropolitan areas of Los Angeles, New York, Honolulu, San Francisco, and Chicago were sampled using a dual-frame approach consisting of random-digit dialing (RDD) at targeted Asian ZIP-code densities and listed-surname frames” (Lien 2004:iii).

The response rates varied for each ethnic group. There were 308 Chinese respondents, 266 Filipino respondents, 141 South Asian respondents, and 137 Vietnamese respondents. The interviewees for my study will be of these Asian ethnic groups. I did not use or collect data on Japanese or Korean Americans. East Asians are represented in my sample by Chinese Americans. This is not to claim that Chinese Americans can represent other East Asian ethnic groups; rather, for the purposes of my qualitative data collection, I needed to limit the number of

Asian ethnic groups in my study. The breakdown of male and female respondents in each ethnic group is shown in the table below:

Table 4.1: Ethnic Group by Gender Breakdown

Ethnic Group	Male	Female	Total
Chinese	143 46.4%	165 53.6%	308 100%
Filipino	139 52.3%	127 47.7%	266 100%
South Asian	83 58.9%	58 41.1%	141 100%
Vietnamese	87 63.5%	50 36.5%	137 100%

4.2 Dependent Variable

The dependent variable for this study is “Affirmative Action.” I use the nominal definition identified in the PNAAPS survey: “Affirmative Action refers to any measure, policy, or law used to increase diversity or rectify discrimination so that qualified individuals have equal access to employment, education, business, and contracting opportunities.” (Lien 2004:14). This definition was utilized in one of the three questions in the PNAAPS survey relating to Affirmative Action. They are:

1. Affirmative Action refers to any measure, policy or law used to increase diversity or rectify discrimination so that qualified individuals have equal access to employment, education, business, and contracting opportunities. Generally speaking, do you think Affirmative Action is a good thing or a bad thing for Asian Americans, or doesn't it affect Asian Americans much?
2. Some people feel that because of past disadvantages there are some groups in society that should receive special job training and educational assistance. Others say that is

unfair. What about you? Do you strongly favor, favor, neither favor nor oppose, oppose, or strongly oppose special job training and educational assistance for Asian Americans?

3. Some people feel that because of past disadvantages there are some groups in society that should be given preferences in hiring and promotion. Others say that is unfair. What about you? Do you strongly favor, favor, neither favor nor oppose, oppose, or strongly oppose special preferences in hiring and promotion to Asian Americans?

For question #1, responses are coded as 1 = A Bad Thing; 2 = Doesn't Matter Much; 3 = A Good Thing. Responses of "not sure" or "refused" are recoded as missing variables. This question refers more to believing the principles behind Affirmative Action as good or bad for Asian Americans. For questions # 2 and #3, responses are coded as 1 = Strongly Oppose; 2 = Oppose; 3 = Neither Favor nor Oppose; 4 = Favor and 5 = Strongly Favor. Responses of "not sure" or "refused" are recoded as missing variables. These two questions relate more to the actual practice of Affirmative Action in education/training and the workplace.

4.3 Independent Variables

The independent variables I used for this study were "ethnicity" and "gender." I tested the relationship between ethnicity and attitudes towards Affirmative Action. The ethnicities I used were Chinese, Filipino, South Asian, and Vietnamese. Additionally, I tested the relationship between gender amongst ethnic groups and attitudes towards Affirmative Action. These groups were coded as dummy variables and my reference group for this sample was Chinese Americans. The reason for this choice is that East Asian Americans – Chinese Americans, specifically – are stereotyped as representative of all Asian Americans (Lowe 1996;

Park 2008). They are also the largest group in my sample. For gender, I used men as my reference group.

In order to test the theories discussed by Inkelas (2003b) I also tested the effects of perceived discrimination on Asian ethnic group and gender attitudes toward Affirmative Action policies. The nominal definition of discrimination I used was “the unequal treatment of an individual due to their perceived group belonging (racial, ethnic, gender, religious, class, etc).” This definition is influenced by Pager and Shepard’s (2008) discussion of discrimination in their article “The Sociology of Discrimination: Racial Discrimination in Employment, Housing, Credit, and Consumer Markets.” I used the question “Have you ever personally experienced discrimination in the United States?”. The respondent could choose “yes” or “no.” I coded this question as a dummy variable.

To test the immigrant ideology argument, I recoded dummy variables for immigrant status. If a respondent was born in Asia, they were coded as 1 – respondents not born in Asia were the reference group. I then computed an interaction for each ethnic group by the recoded immigrant status and ran linear regressions on each of the dependent variables.

Finally, to test the “denial of discrimination” argument, I used the question: “How would you rate the extent of discrimination against Asians relative to other groups in general? Do you think Asians generally suffer less, do they suffer more, or are they in just about the same situation as, say, Latinos or blacks?” These responses were coded as: 1= less; 2 = same as; 3 = more. Responses of “not sure” or “refused” were recoded as missing variables. I computed an interaction for this response by each Asian ethnic group and ran regressions to examine the effect that perceptions of discrimination faced by Asians, relative to other racial minority groups, had on each ethnic group attitude toward Affirmative Action.

4.4 Control Variables

Age -- Respondents were placed into one of the following age groups: 1. 18-28; 2. 29-37; 3. 38-47; 4. 48-60; 5. 61-100. Age is an important control variable because Asian Americans will have had more experiences, both in education and the workplace, as they get older. This may correlate with more experiences with discrimination, perhaps correlating with viewing society as racially and/or gender stratified. The racial stratification theory argues that those who view society as racially stratified are more likely to support race-based programs (Bobo & Kluegel 1993; Inkelas 2003b).

Immigrant status – I determined immigrant status from the question “Were you born in Asia?” Inkelas (2003b) discusses the “immigrant ideology” argument, which states that first-generation immigrants are more likely to adhere to the dominant ideology; therefore, they may have less support for race-based programs.

Education – Respondents were asked what the highest level of education or schooling they had completed was. Their choices were: 1. Grade School or Less; 2. Some High School; 3. High School Graduate; 4. Vocational/Technical Training Beyond High School; 5. Some College; 6. College Graduate; 7. Some Graduate School; 8. Post-Graduate Degree (Beyond College Degree). Previous studies have found that individuals with higher levels of education hold more tolerant racial attitudes (Bobo and Licari 1989; Sindanius et al. 2000); therefore, they may be more likely to support Affirmative Action policies.

Total Family Income – Respondents were asked to add together the yearly incomes of all the members of their family living at home last year. The choices were: 1. Less than 10K; 2. 10K-19,999; 3. 20K-29,999; 4. 30K-39,999; 5. 40K-59,999; 6. 60K-79,999; 7. Over 80K. Income may correlate with the self-interests theory (Bobo & Kluegel 1993; Inkelas 2003b). Individuals

with higher incomes, who do not need to or stand to benefit from race-based policies, may be less likely to support these policies.

Political Affiliation – Respondents were asked, “How would you describe your views on most matters having to do with politics?” with the responses: 1. Very Liberal; 2. Somewhat Liberal; 3. Middle of the Road; 4. Somewhat Conservative; 5. Very Conservative. Liberals tend to have more support for government involvement in social issues (Sears et al. 2000); therefore, they may be more likely to support Affirmative Action policies.

Marital Status – Respondents were asked “What is your marital status?” and were given the choices of: 1. Married; 2. Single; 3. Divorced; 4. Widowed; 5. Separated. This control variable may give insight into the effects marriage has on women’s attitudes toward Affirmative Action.

4.5 Interviews

For my interviews, I identified three to four individuals from Chinese, Filipino, South Asian, and Vietnamese ethnic groups, resulting in 15 interviews. There was variation in my respondent’s gender amongst each ethnic group. To identify my interviewee pool, I approached different pan-Asian or Asian ethnic organizations or businesses in the Washington, D.C. area, asking if employees or members would be willing to participate in my study. I digitally recorded the interviews so as to ensure an accurate reporting of the respondent’s quotes. During these interviews, I took notes, so as to best remember when an important statement was made. Each respondent signed an ‘informed consent’ form.

These were semi-structured interviews. As to provide the best supplementary information for my data from the PNAAPS, I asked questions that were used in the survey. However, I allowed for them to be answered in a more open-ended manner. The questions I asked respondents are listed in Appendix A. The quotes from the interviews are meant to be

supplementary data, placing the data from my quantitative analysis in context. Though the numbers from my statistical output give insight into *what* the attitudes of ethnic groups and the attitudes of men and women within them are, the quotes give some insight into *why* these attitudes exist.

4.6 Research Questions

My central research question is: *How do ethnicity and gender effect Asian American attitudes toward Affirmative Action?* This is followed by two sub-questions:

- 1) *Are attitudes influenced by both ethnicity and gender?*
- 2) *To what extent do we need to disaggregate Asian American groups?*

4.7 Analytic Strategy

To explore the different theoretical predictions, I conducted the following quantitative analysis. I utilized linear regression to explore each theory. This is appropriate for testing these theories because it shows the effect that multiple independent variables have on my dependent variables. Linear regression allows me to look at the effects of independent variables, while controlling for other variables (Allison 1999).

For analysis of the self-interests theory, I ran a linear regression on each of my dependent variables – the three Affirmative Action questions – with ethnic group as the independent variable. I hypothesized that more socioeconomically successful groups, and those who immigrated to the United States for educational and occupational reasons, would be less favorable toward Affirmative Action in principle and in practice. I was able to analyze the effect each ethnic group on attitudes toward Affirmative Action, controlling for other variables. To test

my hypothesis relating to the intersections of ethnicity and gender, I computed interactions for each ethnic group by gender. I examined the effects that this new independent variable had on attitudes toward Affirmative Action, by running linear regressions.

To analyze the theory about differing beliefs about the structure of opportunity in the United States (dominant vs. stratified ideology), I tested the effect experiencing discrimination had on respondent's attitudes toward Affirmative Action. For this, I computed interactions for the discrimination variable by ethnic group and ran linear regressions. I hypothesized that those who have experienced discrimination will be more likely to hold a stratified view of the structure of opportunity in the U.S.; therefore, they would be more favorable toward policies like Affirmative Action. I also tested the effect of attitudes toward discrimination experienced by Asians, in relation to Blacks and Latinos. To do this, I computed interactions for each ethnic group by their response to the question about Asian Discrimination and examined the effects that had on attitudes toward Affirmative Action by running linear regressions.

To test the immigrant ideology theory, I computed interactions for each ethnic group by immigrant status (born in Asia) and examined the effects that the new variable had on attitudes toward Affirmative Action. I also ran linear regressions to test this theory. Based on the theory, I hypothesized that first generation immigrants would be less favorable toward Affirmative Action policies, due to their potential belief in the dominant ideology (as outlined in the immigrant ideology theory).

I derived conclusions based upon the output of these linear regressions. I then utilized quotes from the interviews conducted to place this statistical output in context. The quotes highlight the more nuanced aspects of attitudes toward Affirmative Action policies, which cannot come across in quantitative analysis. The interviews that contained rich and interesting

data were transcribed completely and verbatim. For the others, I only transcribed the most interesting points from the interview. I reviewed each transcript or listened to each interview for any emerging patterns or themes.

Chapter 5 Results

The 308 Chinese respondents, 266 Filipino respondents, 141 South Asian respondents, and 137 Vietnamese respondents in this sample were recoded as dummy variables, with Chinese respondents being used as the reference group because they are the largest group in the sample. The use of Chinese respondents as the reference group is important for a few reasons. First, Chinese Americans have typically been considered the representation of all Asian Americans (Lowe 1996; Park 2008). Second, in comparison to the other ethnic groups in my study, Chinese Americans may represent a “middle ground.” South Asians have typically been much more successful, socioeconomically and in educational attainment, than all the other ethnic groups in this study; while Vietnamese Americans have been less successful relative to the other groups (Census – American Community Survey 2008). This may correlate with attitudes toward policies like Affirmative Action. Finally, Allison (1999) points out that some researchers choose the largest group in the sample to be the reference group. In this case, Chinese respondents are the largest ethnic group represented in my sample. Figure 5.1 illustrates the distribution of ethnic groups in my sample of 852 respondents.

Figure 5.1: Ethnic Group Distribution

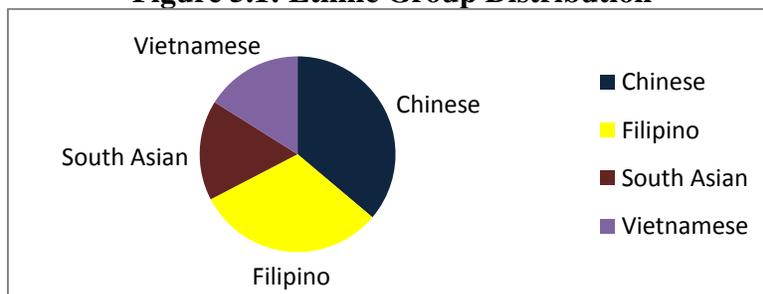
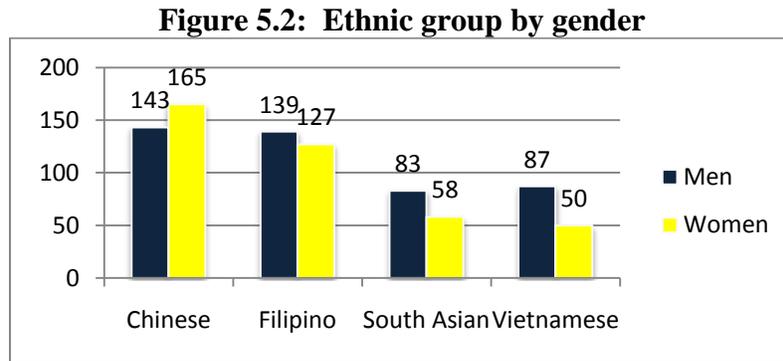


Figure 5.2 illustrates the break-down of ethnic groups by gender. For Chinese respondents, there were 143 men and 165 women. For Filipino respondents, there were 139 men and 127 women. For South Asian respondents, there were 83 men and 58 women. And for

Vietnamese respondents, there were 87 men and 50 women. This resulted in 452 men and 400 women in the sample. Gender was recoded as a dummy variable, with men as the reference group.



5.1 Asian Ethnic Group Attitudes toward Affirmative Action

I ran linear regressions on the three Affirmative Action questions based on ethnicity in the first model, followed by ethnicity and control variables in the second model. For the first question: “Generally speaking, do you think Affirmative Action is a good thing or a bad thing for Asian Americans, or it doesn’t affect Asian Americans much?” Respondents could choose *A Bad Thing* (1), *Doesn’t Affect Much* (2), or *A Good Thing* (3). The mean response was 2.69 – indicating an overall belief in Affirmative Action being a good thing. For this regression, there was a sample size of 654. While there were 892 respondents of Chinese, Filipino, South Asian, and Vietnamese descent, missing variables for controls decreased the sample size in addition to the missing responses from the dependent variable. In this sample, 32.7% were Filipino, 17.1% were South Asian, and 16.8% were Vietnamese. The mean age group was between the 29-37 and 38-47 age groups. The average respondent had attended some college, and had a mean income between the \$30-39,999 and \$40-59,999 ranges. The mean political ideology was

“middle of the road.” 62.5% of respondents were married, 44.5% were women and 84.2% were born in Asia with the average number of years in the United States being 17 years.

The regression results, shown in Table 5.1, indicate that Vietnamese respondents were more likely to think Affirmative Action was a good thing for Asian Americans; Filipino and South Asian respondents were less likely to think so – all in comparison to Chinese respondents. Each variable was significant in the first model. With the addition of control variables in the second model, Vietnamese respondents are still more likely to think Affirmative Action is a good thing in comparison to Chinese respondents, with South Asian respondents still being less likely to think so, also in comparison to Chinese respondents. Filipino respondents no longer yielded significant results. The control variables were education, income, political ideology, gender, age, marital status, immigrant status, and years living in the U.S. Of these controls, age groups and years in the U.S. were the only significant variables. Older respondents were a little more likely to think Affirmative Action was a good thing. Respondents who had lived longer in the U.S. were slightly less likely to think Affirmative Action was a good thing. The adjusted R-square shows that in Model 1 ethnicity explains 6.3% of the variance in responses to the first Affirmative Action question. In Model 2 ethnicity and the control variables explain 8.4% of the variation in those responses.

The second question was: “Some people feel that because of past disadvantages there are some groups in society that should receive special job training and educational assistance. Others say that is unfair. What about you?” Response options were *Strongly Oppose* (1), *Oppose* (2), *Neither favor nor oppose* (3), *Favor* (4), *Strongly Favor* (5) – these responses specifically related to respondent’s opinions about special job training and educational assistance for Asian Americans. The mean response for this question was 3.9, leaning toward favoring

special job training and educational assistance. The means for ethnic groups and control variables were all similar to those from the first question. In the first model, only Vietnamese respondents yield significant results. They are more likely than Chinese respondents to strongly favor special job training and educational assistance for Asian Americans. With the addition of control variables in Model 2, Vietnamese respondents still yield highly significant results and are more likely to strongly favor assistance for Asian Americans than Chinese respondents. Age groups are a significant control variable – older respondents are slightly more favorable toward these practices. Income is also significant. Respondents with higher family household incomes are less favorable toward these practices. The adjusted R-square shows that in Model 1 ethnicity explains 9.3% of variance in responses to the job training and educational assistance question. In Model 2 ethnicity and the control variables explain 11.8% of variation in those responses.

The final question related to Affirmative Action was: “Some people feel that because of past disadvantages there are some groups in society that should be given preferences in hiring and promotion. Others say that is unfair. What about you? (For Asian Americans)” Response options were *Strongly Oppose* (1), *Oppose* (2), *Neither favor nor oppose* (3), *Favor* (4), *Strongly Favor* (5). The mean response for this question was 3.2, leaning towards neither favoring nor opposing the practice. The mean for ethnic groups and control variables were similar to those from the first and second questions. In the first model, only Vietnamese respondents yielded significant results. They are more likely than Chinese respondents to strongly favor preferences in hiring and promotion for Asian Americans. With the addition of control variables in Model 2, Vietnamese respondents still yield highly significant results and are more likely to strongly favor preferences in hiring and promotion for Asian Americans than Chinese respondents. Age groups was also significant – older respondents were more supportive of this practice. Gender was also

a significant control variable, with women being more favorable toward this practice than men.

The adjusted R-square shows that in Model 1 ethnicity explains 16.6% of variance in responses to the job training and educational assistance question. In Model 2 ethnicity and the control variables explain 19.2% of variation in those responses.

Table 5.1: Ethnic Group Attitudes toward Affirmative Action
Unstandardized Coefficients: B (Standard Error)

	Affirmative Action Principle		Special Job Training and Education Assistance		Preferences in Hiring and Promotion	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Filipino	-.163*** (.054)	-.099 (.056)	-.019 (.092)	.133 (.096)	-.026 (.109)	.136 (.113)
South Asian	-.279*** (.065)	-.196** (.068)	-.019 (.111)	.137 (.241)	.022 (.132)	.222 (.139)
Vietnamese	.175*** (.065)	.197** (.066)	.856*** (.113)	.877*** (.115)	1.421*** (.137)	1.459*** (.139)
Education		-.021 (.013)		-.026 (.022)		-.048 (.026)
Income		-.011 (.015)		-.056* (.025)		-.041 (.030)
Political Ideology		-.019 (.023)		-.050 (.039)		-.073 (.046)
Gender (female=1)		.056 (.044)		.073 (.045)		.204* (.090)
Age Group		.058** (.019)		.072* (.033)		.114** (.039)
Marital Status (married=1)		-.035 (.050)		.083 (.086)		-.052 (.103)
Born in Asia		-.011 (.015)		.062 (.131)		.073 (.153)
Years in the U.S.		-.004** (.002)		-.004 (.003)		-.005 (.003)
Constant	2.761	2.867	3.798	3.968	2.986	3.163
R ²	.063	.084	.093	.118	.166	.192
N	654		683		664	

*p <.05, **p <.01; ***p <.001

5.2 Ethnicity and Gender

In Table 5.1, gender as a control variable was significant for the third question, relating to preferences in hiring and promotion. This variable showed that female respondents were more likely to be supportive of that policy than male respondents. The significance of this control variable indicates that gender does have an effect on attitudes toward Affirmative Action policies for Asian Americans, specifically in relation to preferences in hiring and promotion.

Upon computing interactions for each ethnic group by gender, I found no significant results for Filipina women or Vietnamese women. For South Asian women, the response about special job training and educational assistance yielded a significant result. My interaction showed that South Asian women were less likely to be supportive of special job training and educational assistance than Chinese men. As the interactions yield lower numbers, I changed the significance cut-off to 0.10. With this change, I also found that South Asian women were less favorable toward preferences in hiring and promotion for Asian Americans. Table 5.2 shows these results. In both of these cases, South Asian women were less favorable than Chinese men toward the Affirmative Action practices. However, with the inclusion of the interaction, South Asians, as a whole, become significant in the second model – showing more favorable attitudes toward Affirmative Action in comparison to Chinese respondents. Gender is also a significant control variable in those of these cases, indicating that women have more favorable attitudes toward these policies than male respondents. Again, these findings demonstrate that gender is an important variable to consider when examining attitudes toward Affirmative Action for Asian Americans.

Table 5.2: South Asian Female – Interactions
Unstandardized Coefficients: B (Standard Error)

	Special Job Training & Educational Assistance		Preferences in Hiring and Promotion	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Filipino	-.019 (.092)	.129 (.096)	-.026 (.109)	.133 (.113)
South Asian	-.019 (.111)	.334* (.141)	.022 (.132)	.396* (.168)
Vietnamese	.856*** (.113)	.896*** (.115)	1.421*** (.137)	1.477*** (.139)
Education		-.022 (.022)		-.044 (.026)
Income		-.058* (.025)		-.043 (.030)
Political Ideology		-.045 (.039)		-.069 (.046)
Gender (Female = 1)		.157* (.082)		.277** (.098)
Age Group		.074* (.033)		.115** (.039)
Marital Status (Married = 1)		.088 (.086)		-.046 (.103)
Born in Asia		.023 (.132)		.040 (.153)
Years in the U.S.		-.005 (.003)		-.005 (.003)
South Asian Female		-.505* (.202)		-.440+ (.241)
Constant	3.798	3.934	2.817	2.829
R ²	.093	.125	.166	.195
N	683		664	

+p<.10, *p <.05, **p <.01; ***p <.001

Additionally, I ran each regression analysis separately for men and women in each ethnic group in order to get a better understanding of gender differences for each ethnic group. There were 363 men and 291 women in this sample. For the first question about Affirmative Action the mean response for men was 2.66, illustrating a belief that Affirmative Action is a good thing. There were 30.85% Filipino respondents, 19.56% South Asian respondents and 19.56% Vietnamese respondents. There was a mean age group of 2.88, meaning the mean age approached the 38-47 age group. The mean for education was some college, with a mean income range of between \$30-39,999 and \$40-59,999. The mean political ideology was 2.77, approaching “middle of the road.” Finally, 65% of these men were married and 85.7% were born in Asia. The average number of years in the U.S. was almost 18 years.

For women the mean response to the Affirmative Action question was 2.72, also illustrating a belief that Affirmative Action is a good thing. There were 35.05% Filipina respondents, 14.09% South Asian respondents, and 13.40% Vietnamese respondents. There was a mean age group of 2.66, meaning the mean age was between the 29-37 and 38-47 age groups. The mean for education was some college, with a mean income range of a little over \$30-39,999. The mean political ideology was 2.71, approaching “middle of the road.” Finally, 59% of these women were married and 82.5% were born in Asia. The average number of years in the U.S. was almost 16 years.

Table 5.3 illustrates the regression results for men and women relating to the Affirmative Action question. For men in Model 1 all ethnic groups were significant. Vietnamese respondents were more likely to think Affirmative Action was a good thing for Asian Americans than Chinese respondents; South Asian and Filipino respondents were less likely to think so in comparison to Chinese respondents. In Model 2 only Vietnamese Americans yielded significant results, remaining more likely to think of Affirmative Action as a good thing than Chinese respondents. Education was also moderately significant, indicating that more educated respondents were less likely to think of Affirmative Action as a good thing. The number of years the respondent lived in the United States was also moderately significant, demonstrating that for each year increase in living in the U.S., belief that Affirmative Action is a good thing decreases slightly. The adjusted R-square for Model 1 shows that ethnicity explains 6.7% of the variation in men’s responses to the Affirmative Action question. For Model 2 the adjusted R-square shows that ethnicity and the controls explain 8.2% of the variation; however, this was not a significant R-square.

For women (also in Table 5.3), only Filipina and South Asian respondents yield significant results for Model 1, with both groups being less likely to think Affirmative Action is a good thing than Chinese respondents. In Model 2 only South Asian women retain significant results and are less likely to think Affirmative Action is a good thing for Asian Americans. The age group control variable was significant, showing that older respondents were more likely to think Affirmative Action is a good thing. None of the other control variables were significant. The adjusted R-square for Model 1 shows that ethnicity explains 5.4% of variation in women's responses to the Affirmative Action question. For Model 2 the adjusted R-square shows that ethnicity and the controls explain 6.3% of the variation.

Table 5.3: Affirmative Action Principle
Unstandardized Coefficients: B (Standard Error)

	Men		Women	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Filipino	-.153* (.054)	-.114 (.079)	-.169* (.076)	-.102 (.082)
South Asian	-.213* (.086)	-.154 (.090)	-.353*** (.101)	-.271* (.108)
Vietnamese	.237** (.086)	.235** (.087)	.107 (.102)	.146 (.107)
Education		-.034* (.017)		-.003 (.020)
Income		-.002 (.020)		-.026 (.022)
Political Ideology		-.027 (.030)		-.006 (.038)
Age Group		.065 (.028)		.063* (.027)
Marital Status (Married = 1)		-.047 (.076)		-.004 (.071)
Born in Asia		-.068 (.109)		-.026 (.114)
Years in the U.S.		-.005 (.002)*		-.004 (.003)
Constant	2.706	2.957	2.817	2.829
R ²	.067	.082	.054	.063
N	363		291	

*p <.05, **p <.01; ***p <.001

For the second question about Affirmative Action, relating to special job training and educational assistance, the mean response for men was 3.91, approaching a “favorable” attitude toward special job training and educational assistance for Asian Americans. For women, the

mean response was 3.94, also approaching a “favorable” attitude toward special job training and educational assistance for Asian Americans.

Table 5.4 illustrates the regression results for men and women relating to the special job training and educational assistance question. For men in Model 1 only Vietnamese American respondents yielded significant results, indicating that they have much more favorable attitudes toward special job training and educational assistance for Asian Americans. This remained statistically significant in the second model with the addition of the control variables. Age group was the only control variable that was statistically significant, indicating that older respondents became more favorable toward special job training and educational assistance for Asian Americans. The adjusted R-square for Model 1 shows that ethnicity explains 9.3% of the variation in men’s responses to the question. For Model 2 the adjusted R-square shows that men’s ethnicity and the controls explain 11.5% of the variation in men’s attitudes toward special job training and educational assistance for Asian Americans.

For women (also in Table 5.4) in Model 1 only Vietnamese American respondents yielded significant results, showing that they also have much more favorable attitudes toward special job training and educational assistance for Asian Americans. This remained statistically significant in Model 2 with the addition of the control variables. In this group income was a statistically significant control variable, indicating that Asian American women with higher family household incomes have slightly less favorable attitudes toward special job training and educational assistance for Asian Americans. The adjusted R-square for Model 1 shows that ethnicity explains 10.9% of the variation in women’s responses to the question. The adjusted R-square for Model 2 shows that ethnicity and the controls explain 14.6% of the variation in women’s attitudes toward special job training and educational assistance for Asian Americans.

Table 5.4: Special Job Training and Educational Assistance for Asian Americans
Unstandardized Coefficients: B (Standard Error)

	Men		Women	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Filipino	-.050 (.124)	-.045 (.129)	.024 (.135)	.252 (.144)
South Asian	.171 (.141)	.272 (.148)	-.301 (.179)	-.042 (.191)
Vietnamese	.795 *** (.143)	.840*** (.144)	1.004*** (.185)	.957*** (.192)
Education		.001 (.028)		-.057 (.035)
Income		-.024 (.032)		-.090* (.038)
Political Ideology		-.071 (.048)		-.027 (.064)
Age Group		.145** (.046)		.006 (.049)
Marital Status (Married = 1)		-.043 (.123)		.154 (.126)
Born in Asia		-.168 (.179)		.246 (.199)
Years in the U.S.		-.007 (.004)		-.004 (.005)
Constant	3.748	3.864	3.846	4.225
R ²	.093	.115	.109	.146
N	374		309	

*p <.05, **p <.01; ***p <.001

For the third question about Affirmative Action, relating to preferences in hiring and promotion for Asian Americans, the mean response for men was 3.15, indicating that the average response was “neutral”. For women, the mean response was 3.26, also indicating that the average response to this question was close to “neutral”.

Table 5.5 illustrates the regression results for men and women relating to their attitudes toward preferences in hiring and promotion for Asian Americans. For men in Model 1, Vietnamese Americans are the only group that yielded statistically significant results, showing that they are much more favorable toward preferences in hiring and promotion for Asian Americans. This group remained statistically significant in Model 2 with the addition of the control variables. Age group was the only statistically significant control, showing that older respondents have more favorable attitudes toward preferences in hiring and promotion. The adjusted R-square for Model 1 shows that 16.7% of the variation in responses to this question

can be explained by ethnic groups. For Model 2 the adjusted R-square shows that 19.9% of the variation in responses can be attributed to ethnic groups and the control variables.

For women (also in Table 5.5) Vietnamese Americans were the only ethnic group that yielded statistically significant results in Model 1. This showed that Vietnamese American women were much more likely to have a favorable attitude about preferences in hiring and promotion for Asian Americans. This ethnic group remained statistically significant in Model 2. There were no significant control variables for women relating to this question. The adjusted R-square in Model 1 shows that ethnic groups explain 18.1% of the variation in responses to attitudes toward preferences in hiring and promotion for Asian Americans. In Model 2 the adjusted R-square is also 18.1%.

Table 5.5: Preferences in Hiring and Promotion for Asian Americans
Unstandardized Coefficients: B (Standard Error)

	Men		Women	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
Filipino	.042 (.155)	.200 (.159)	-.078 (.150)	.077 (.164)
South Asian	.259 (.179)	.445 (.186)	-.260 (.198)	-.087 (.216)
Vietnamese	1.439*** (.181)	1.452*** (.181)	1.542*** (.214)	1.521*** (.227)
Education		-.025 (.035)		-.063 (.041)
Income		-.048 (.040)		-.032 (.045)
Political Ideology		-.057 (.060)		-.086 (.074)
Age Group		.204*** (.057)		.034 (.055)
Marital Status (Married = 1)		-.162 (.153)		-.028 (.144)
Born in Asia		.054 (.219)		.092 (.221)
Years in the U.S.		-.006 (.005)		-.004 (.005)
Constant	2.826	2.828	3.144	3.674
R ²	.167	.199	.181	.181
N	369		295	

*p <.05, **p <.01; ***p <.001

5.3 Experiences with Discrimination

After recoding the discrimination variables (discrimination in general, accent discrimination, ethnic discrimination, and gender discrimination) as dummy variables, I found that none of these mediating variables were statistically significant for any of the questions about or relating to Affirmative Action. Discrimination in general refers to respondents who replied “yes” to having experienced any type of discrimination in the United States. I also computed interaction variables for the recoded “discrimination in general” variable by each ethnic group. Again, none of these variables were statistically significant when running regressions on any of the dependent variables. I did not compute interactions for ethnic groups by the accent, ethnic, or gender discrimination variables due to the very low numbers that would have resulted for the new variables.

Table 5.6 shows the number of people within the four ethnic groups who have experienced any kind of discrimination. Additionally, it shows the number within each group who have experienced the three different types of discrimination (accent, ethnic, and/or gender). These responses were not mutually exclusive so respondents were allowed to choose more than one type of discrimination. Vietnamese respondents had a very small number of people who said “yes” to having experienced discrimination (18), as well as Asian Indian and Pakistani respondents (54). When these numbers are further broken down by type of discrimination, they become even smaller. These low numbers may correspond with the lack of statistically significant results for the discrimination variables; however, they do not explain everything. For example, both Chinese and Filipino respondents have 100+ experiences with discrimination in general but the computed interactions still did not yield significant results.

Table 5.6: Experiences with Discrimination by Ethnic Group

Have you experienced discrimination?	Ethnic Group				Total
	Chinese	Filipino	South Asian	Vietnamese	
Yes	120 (39.9%)	100 (38.8%)	54 (40.0%)	18 (13.2%)	292 (35.2%)
<i>Accent</i>	72 (23.5%)	49 (18.6%)	28 (20.0%)	7 (5.2%)	156 (18.8%)
<i>Ethnic</i>	109 (35.7%)	92 (34.8%)	49 (35.0%)	15 (10.9%)	265 (31.9%)
<i>Gender</i>	21 (6.9%)	28 (10.6%)	16 (11.5%)	5 (3.6%)	70 (8.4%)
No	181 (60.1%)	158 (61.2%)	81 (60.0%)	118 (86.8%)	538 (64.8%)

Figure 5.3 illustrates the distribution of responses to the discrimination question within each ethnic group.

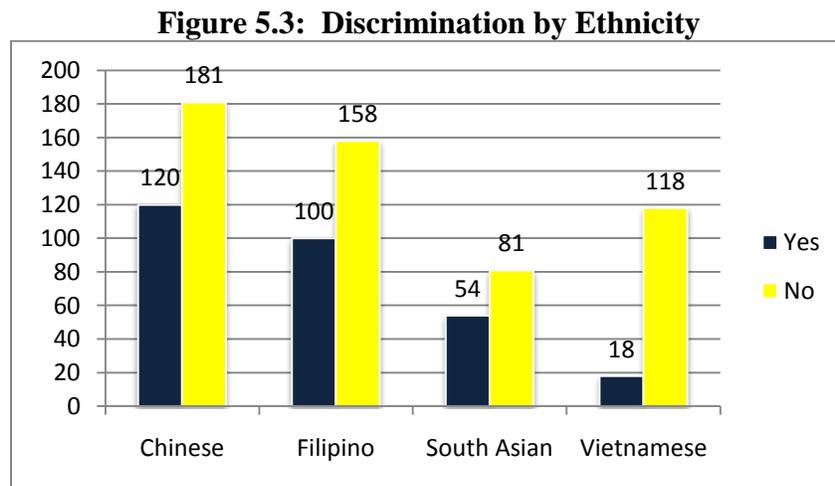


Table 5.7 shows the number of experiences with discrimination by ethnic group, further broken down by gender. Due to these even smaller numbers, I did not compute interactions for experiences of discrimination by gender within each ethnic group, nor did I run regressions separately for men and women within each ethnic group.

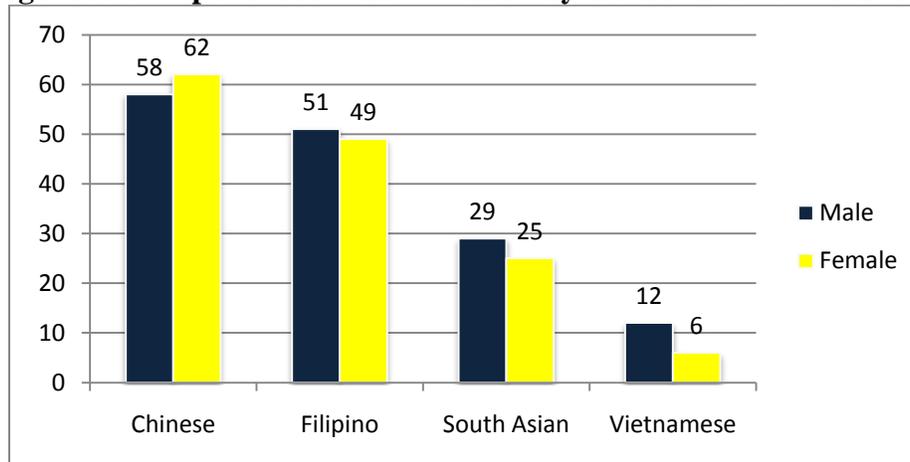
Table 5.7: Experiences with Discrimination by Ethnic Group by Gender

Men/Ethnic Group					
Have you experienced discrimination?	Chinese	Filipino	South Asian	Vietnamese	Total
Yes	58 (41.7%)	51 (37.8%)	29 (37.2%)	12 (14.0%)	150 (34.2%)
No	81 (58.3%)	84 (62.2%)	49 (62.8%)	74 (86.0%)	288 (65.8%)

Women/Ethnic Group					
Have you experienced discrimination?	Chinese	Filipino	South Asian	Vietnamese	Total
Yes	62 (38.3%)	49 (39.8%)	25 (43.9%)	6 (12.0%)	142 (36.2%)
No	100 (61.7%)	74 (60.2%)	32 (56.1%)	44 (88.0%)	250 (63.8%)

Figure 5.4 illustrates the amount of men and women in each ethnic group who have experienced discrimination.

Figure 5.4: Experienced Discrimination by Gender and Ethnic Group



5.4 Immigrant Attitudes

I computed a dummy by dummy variable interaction for each ethnic group by their immigrant status. Upon running the regressions, I realized that multicollinearity for some groups, specifically Vietnamese Americans, was incredibly high. The number of immigrants is much higher than that of non-immigrants. In the case of Vietnamese respondents 135 of the 137 respondents were born in Asia. Among South Asian respondents 121 were born in Asia and 20

were not. Filipino respondents were the only group without a multicollinearity problem; 180 were born in Asia and 86 were not. Finally, for Chinese respondents 279 were born in Asia and 26 were not. Due to this, I was unable to examine the effect of immigrant status on attitudes toward Affirmative Action for each ethnic group.

5.5 Attitudes about Discrimination faced by Asians

The final linear regressions I ran included a mediating variable – attitudes toward discrimination faced by Asians. The question asked of respondents was: “How would you rate the extent of discrimination against Asians relative to other groups in general? Do you think Asians generally suffer less, do they suffer more, or are they in just about the same situation as, say, Latinos or blacks?” The answers they could choose were *Less Than* (1); *Same As* (2), and *More Than* (3). First, I ran regressions with this variable added in as a mediating variable. This variable is labeled “Asian Discrimination.”

For these regressions, I only found statistically significant results relating to attitudes about discrimination faced by Asians for the third question about Affirmative Action regarding preferences in hiring and promotion for Asians. The results of this regression can be found in Table 5.8. In Model 1 Filipino and South Asian respondents do not yield significant results, with Vietnamese respondents yielding highly significant results. Vietnamese respondents are much more favorable toward preferences in hiring and promotion than Chinese respondents. In the second model, with the inclusion of the control variables, South Asian respondents actually become significant, showing more favorable attitudes toward preferences in hiring and promotion than Chinese respondents. Vietnamese respondents remain significant, showing even more favorable attitudes toward preferences in hiring and promotion of Asians than Chinese

respondents. Age groups and gender are also significant control variables. Older respondents become a little more favorable toward these policies. Women are shown to be more favorable than men toward preferences in hiring and promotion. For the question about Asian discrimination relative to other groups, the output shows that respondents who believe Asians suffer the same as or more discrimination than other racial minorities in the United States have more favorable attitudes toward preferences in hiring and promotion.

The adjusted R-squared for the first model shows that the ethnic groups explain 12.6% of the variance in attitudes toward preferences in hiring and promotion for Asians. With the inclusion of the control variables, including the question about discrimination faced by Asians relative to other groups, the adjusted R-square shows that these variables explain 15.8% of the variance in attitudes toward preferences in hiring and promotion.

Table 5.8: Asian Ethnic Group Attitudes toward Preferences in Hiring/Promotion (with Attitudes toward Discrimination faced by Asians)

Unstandardized Coefficients: B (Standard Error)

	Preferences in Hiring and Promotion	
	Model 1	Model 2
Filipino	-.004 (.088)	.186 (.125)
South Asian	.087 (.146)	.232* (.154)
Vietnamese	1.386*** (.166)	1.501*** (.167)
Education		-.047 (.030)
Income		-.025 (.033)
Political Ideology		-.062 (.050)
Gender (Female = 1)		.259** (.101)
Age Group		.150*** (.045)
Marital Status		-.067 (.114)
Born in Asia		-.025 (.033)
Years in the U.S.		-.005 (.004)
Asian Discrimination		.136* (.068)
Constant	2.933	2.681
R ²	.126	.158
N = 558		

*p <.05, **p <.01; ***p <.001

I also ran interactions between each ethnic group and the “Asian Discrimination” variable. I used these interactions for each ethnic group in regressions for each question relating to Affirmative Action. I also found that the interaction was only significant for the question about preferences in hiring and promotion, and only for Filipino respondents. These results are shown in Table 5.9. In the first model only Vietnamese respondents yield statistically significant results, which indicate that they have much more favorable attitudes toward Affirmative Action. In the second model, with the inclusion of the control variables, every ethnic group yields significant results. South Asian respondents are a little more favorable toward preferences in hiring and promotion for Asians. Vietnamese respondents are much more favorable than Chinese respondents on this issue. Filipino respondents, however, are less favorable toward the policy.

With the inclusion of control variables I found that age group and gender were statistically significant variables. Older respondents become more favorable toward the policy. Female respondents are also more favorable than male respondents toward preferences in hiring and promotion for Asian Americans. Finally, with the inclusion of the interaction, the variable about attitudes toward discrimination faced by Asians yielded no significant results; however, the interaction of Filipino respondents with this variable did. Filipino respondents who believe discrimination faced by Asians to be the same as or more than other racial minorities have more favorable attitudes toward preferences in hiring and promotion for Asians.

The adjusted R-squared for Model 1 indicates that ethnic groups explain 12.6% of the variance in attitudes toward preferences in hiring and promotion for Asians. In Model 2 the adjusted R-squared indicates that the addition of the control variables explain 17.5% of the variance in respondent’s attitudes toward preferences in hiring and promotion for Asians.

Table 5.9: Asian Ethnic Group Differences in Preferences in Hiring/Promotion (with Attitudes toward Discrimination faced by Asians x Filipino Respondents)

Unstandardized Coefficients: B (Standard Error)

	Preferences in Hiring and Promotion	
	Model 1	Model 2
Filipino	-.004 (.088)	-.700** (.280)
South Asian	.087 (.146)	.301* (.152)
Vietnamese	1.386*** (.166)	1.461*** (.166)
Education		-.046 (.029)
Income		-.026 (.033)
Political Ideology		-.050 (.050)
Gender (Female = 1)		.247** (.100)
Age Group		.150*** (.045)
Marital Status (Married = 1)		-.058 (.113)
Born in Asia		.073 (.164)
Years in the U.S.		-.004 (.004)
Asian Discrimination		-.015 (.080)
Filipino x Asian Discrimination		.531*** (.150)
Constant	2.933	2.887
R ²	.126	.175
N = 558		

*p <.05, **p <.01; ***p <.001

Since the interactions for the South Asian and Vietnamese groups by the “Asian Discrimination” variable did not yield significant results, the “Asian Discrimination” variable did not have an effect on South Asian and Vietnamese respondents’ attitudes toward preferences in hiring and promotion for Asians compared to Chinese respondents. The “Asian Discrimination” variable was significant in the regressions including those interactions. This means that attitudes about discrimination faced by Asians do have an effect on attitudes about preferences in hiring and promotion for Asians, just not specific to South Asian and Vietnamese groups. However, because the interaction for Filipino respondents by the “Asian Discrimination” (and not the “Asian Discrimination” variable alone) variable was significant, Filipino attitudes about discrimination faced by Asians do affect their attitudes about preferences in hiring and

promotion for Asians. To ensure that multicollinearity was not affecting these results, I re-ran the regressions with a centered analysis. This yielded the same results.

Chapter 6 Discussion and Conclusions

I will use the four theories from my theoretical framework section as a guide for discussing my results. This discussion will be supplemented by quotes from the fifteen interviews I conducted during the course of my research to give insights into the quantitative findings. Table 6.1 shows data about my interview respondents, using some of the same demographics from my dataset in order to situate my respondents in relation to the quantitative analysis.

Table 6.1: Interviewee Descriptive Statistics

<i>ETHNIC GROUP</i>	Mean	N
Chinese	20%	3
Filipino	27%	4
South Asian*	33%	5
Vietnamese	20%	3
<i>CONTROL VARIABLES</i>		
Female	46.67%	7
Education	6.5	Between Bachelors and Some Graduate School
Income	6.36	\$60-79,999 range
Age Group	2.27	28-39 years old
Born in Asia	67%	10
Married	40%	6
Years in U.S.	24.6	
<i>RESIDENTIAL LOCATION</i>		
Northern Virginia	60%	9
Southwest Virginia	33.3%	5
Eastern Tennessee	6.7%	1
<i>INTERVIEW STYLE</i>		
In-person Interviews	86.7%	13
Phone Interviews	13.3%	2

* 3 Asian Indian, 1 Pakistani, 1 Sri Lankan

The interview lengths averaged at 16 minutes, 29 seconds. I believe my social positioning as a half-Filipina woman allowed interviewees to be more comfortable with discussing Asian Americans with me. However, two of my interviews had to be conducted over the phone. In considering this issue, I recognized that respondents may be more candid with me

over the phone because we were not sitting face-to-face and, consequently, were unable to respond to each other's visual cues. The other 13 interviews were all conducted face-to-face, allowing me to build more of a rapport with respondents, usually discussing other topics before getting to the interview. With the phone interview, I felt like I needed to get straight to the interview, as opposed to socializing for awhile. Additionally, the phone interviewees could not gauge whether I was Asian or not. One interviewee, a Sri Lankan male, specifically asked if I was of Asian descent in the beginning of the interview. The other, a Chinese male, did not ask, nor did I provide that information.

Ten of my interviews were conducted in the Washington, DC/Metro area. This correlates more with the metropolitan regions that the Pilot National Asian American Political Survey (PNAAPS) respondents were located. Due to a lower-than-expected interview response in the DC area, four of my interviews were conducted with respondents in the Southwest Virginia area. However, a majority of these respondents were professionals; only one was a college student. One respondent is from the Eastern Tennessee area, approximately 2.5 hours away from Southwest Virginia. This interview took place in Southwest Virginia.

These interview subjects represent a select sample of Asian Americans. Many of them have a very high socioeconomic status. In correlating my analysis with the PNAAPS dataset, which codes any income higher than \$80,000 as the highest, I found that the respondents averaged in the \$60-80,000 range – already placing them above the national average. However, the actual average income of my interview respondents amounts to almost \$110,000.

Finally, it is important to note that my 'South Asian' respondents consisted of 3 Asian Indians (2 females, 1 male), 1 Sri Lankan male, and 1 Pakistani male. As there was no way to disaggregate Asian Indians from Pakistani respondents in my dataset, I decided to interview

people of South Asian descent. However, I focused on recruiting Asian Indian respondents. With Asian Indian Americans being the third-largest ethnic group in the United States, and Pakistani Americans being the 10th largest, I expected that a majority of the respondents in the PNAAPS dataset were probably also Asian Indian (Reeves & Bennett 2004).

Table 6.2 shows detailed information on each of my interview respondents, with their fictitious names.

Table 6.2: Interviewee Information with Fictitious Names

Name	Ethnic Group/Gender	Education	Occupation	\$*	Age	Born in Asia	Years in US	Political Affiliation	Married
Mei	Chinese Female	Bachelors	Director of Multicultural Learning	60,000	60+	Yes	41	Liberal	Yes
Phillip	Half Filipino Male	Some College	Student	-	20	No	20	Liberal	No
Carmen	Filipina Female	Masters	College administration	45,000	34	No	34	Liberal	No
William	Filipino Male	Some College	Business Owner	90,000	34	Yes	24	Unsure	Yes
Divya	Asian Indian Female	Law School	Staff Attorney	120,000	33	No	33	Liberal	Yes
Lian	Chinese Female	Masters	Deputy Chief	240,000	49	Yes	30	Conservative	Yes
Maganda	Filipina Female	Bachelors	Registered Nurse	140,000	50+	Yes	24	Unsure	No
Ravith	Sri Lankan Male	Bachelors	Accountant	200,000	27	Yes	23	Other	No
Chris	Chinese Male	Masters	Consultant	90,000	29	No	29	Moderate	No
Joyce	Vietnamese Female	Some College	Salon Manager, Nail Technician	80,000	31	Yes	15	Moderate	No
Ahmed	Pakistani Male	Bachelors	Lobbyist	200,000	35	Yes	29	Liberal	Yes
Michael	Vietnamese Male	Some College	Nail Technician	55,000	32	Yes	12	Moderate	No
Sasmita	Asian Indian Female	PhD	Staff Counselor	52,000	31	Yes	10	Apathetic	No
Tuan	Vietnamese Male	M.D.	Surgical Resident	100,000	27	Yes	16	Moderate	No
Naveen	Asian Indian Male	Bachelors	Software	55,000	29	No	29	Unsure	No

* Total Family Income

6.1 Self-Interests Theory

The self-interests theory posits that individual's attitudes toward Affirmative Action policies are influenced by how their access to scarce material resources (like college admissions or employment) will be affected (Inkelas 2003b). For this theory, I hypothesized that Asian ethnic groups who demonstrate greater socioeconomic success, and who have immigrated more for educational and occupational reasons, like Filipinos and South Asians, will show less support for Affirmative Action policies. These groups, on average, will be less likely to need Affirmative Action programs to obtain job training, educational assistance, or hiring and promotion. In contrast, I hypothesized that Asian ethnic groups who have demonstrated less socioeconomic success, and who have typically immigrated for non-educational and non-occupational reasons, like Vietnamese Americans, will show more support for Affirmative Action policies. This was supported by the statistical output of some of my regressions.

When analyzing the question relating to Affirmative Action, in principle, I found that in comparison to Chinese respondents, Vietnamese respondents were much more supportive of Affirmative Action policies and Filipino and South Asian respondents were less supportive of the policies. When analyzing the specific questions relating to Affirmative Action practices (in education and the workplace), the only statistically significant results yielded were for Vietnamese respondents – who were much more favorable toward the Affirmative Action practices than Chinese respondents. This indicates that there was no noticeable difference between the Chinese and Filipino and Chinese and South Asian groups in their attitudes toward Affirmative Action in practice. This lack of difference may correlate with the similar immigration paths of these three Asian ethnic groups.

6.2 Racialization and Gender

In arguing for an intersectional approach to examining Asian American attitudes toward Affirmative Action, it was important to evaluate the impact that both ethnicity and gender would have on attitudes. I predicated that gender would make a difference when examining attitudes toward Affirmative Action. The significance of gender as a control variable for a few of my regressions indicates that gender does influence attitudes. In the cases of the control variables, female respondents, as a whole, were more likely to have favorable attitudes toward some Affirmative Action policies. Additionally, the significance of the interactions for South Asian female respondents also indicates that gender influences attitudes toward Affirmative Action for Asian Americans. In this case, South Asian females had less favorable attitudes toward these policies.

When splitting the ethnic groups by gender, there were no noticeable differences between men and women's responses to the Affirmative Action in principle question. The direction of the coefficients for men and women within each group were the same. For the question on special job training and educational assistance for Asians, Vietnamese women showed a stronger favorable attitude than Vietnamese men; however, both groups were still more favorable toward the policy than Chinese respondents. For the question on preferences in hiring and promotion, Vietnamese women showed a stronger favorable attitude to the policy than Chinese women did; Vietnamese men also showed more favorability toward the policy than Chinese male respondents. As both Vietnamese men and women showed more favorable attitudes toward Affirmative Action policies than Chinese men and women, there is not a major difference in Vietnamese attitudes by gender. The magnitude of the coefficients for Vietnamese women just

indicates a slightly stronger favorable attitude for Affirmative Action in practice than Vietnamese men.

6.3 Structure of Opportunity

The belief in the structure of opportunity in the United States is correlated with the stratified ideology and dominant ideology. The stratified ideology argues that individuals who view the structure of opportunity in society as racially or gender stratified will be more likely to support programs and policies like Affirmative Action, because they believe the structure of opportunities is uneven across lines of race or gender (Inkelas 2003b). This stands in contrast to the dominant ideology about the structure of opportunity in the U.S. This ideology posits that people need to work hard to excel in education and occupational fields (Inkelas 2003b). To test the potential effect of having a stratified ideology, I examined the effect that experiences of discrimination had on attitudes toward Affirmative Action by ethnic group. I hypothesized that individuals within ethnic groups who have experienced discrimination will show more support for Affirmative Action policies. My statistical output did not yield significant results for experiences with discrimination in general, or even specific kinds of experiences (gender, ethnic, or accent). Therefore, I could not draw a conclusion on the effect that experiences with discrimination would have on attitudes toward Affirmative Action policies, in general and by ethnic group.

6.4 Immigrant Ideology

The “Immigrant Ideology” argument posits that immigrants will adhere more to the dominant ideology because many have immigrated to the United States in search of opportunities

(Cheng & Espiritu 1989; Inkelas 2003b). In computing interactions, no ethnic and immigrant group yielded statistically significant results. Unfortunately, the percentage of immigrants in the PNAAPS dataset was so high that variation between immigrants and non-immigrants for each ethnic group was not testable due to multicollinearity.

6.5 Denial of Discrimination

Finally, I hypothesized that Asian ethnic groups who believe Asians experience less discrimination than Blacks or Latinos will be less likely to support Affirmative Action policies for Asians because they will be less likely to believe it is a necessary policy for Asians. I found that, in general, the belief that Asians experience the same or more discrimination than other racial minorities in the United States corresponds with an increased favorable attitude toward preferences in hiring and promotion for Asians. My analysis of the other two questions did not yield statistically significant results for the “Asian Discrimination” variable.

When I ran interactions to test the separate effect of beliefs about discrimination faced by Asians by each ethnic group, I found that this was only significant for Filipino respondents. The respondents who believe Asians suffer the same as or more discrimination than other racial minorities in the United States become more favorable toward preferences in hiring and promotion for Asians. However, the coefficient just for the Filipino ethnic group is negative and stronger than the coefficient for this interaction. This indicates that, even if a Filipino respondent believes Asians suffer the same or more discrimination than other racial groups, Filipino respondents are still less favorable than Chinese respondents for preferences in hiring and promotion for Asians.

6.6 Quantitative Analysis Conclusions

In connecting my quantitative results back to my theories and hypothesis, I am able to make a few conclusions. My main research question was: *How do ethnicity and gender affect Asian American attitudes toward Affirmative Action?* I found that ethnicity does affect attitudes toward Affirmative Action. In relation to Affirmative Action in principle, ethnic groups do have differing attitudes, with Vietnamese respondents more likely to think it is a good thing, than Chinese respondents. With the inclusion of control variables, South Asian respondents are less likely to think Affirmative Action is a good thing, in comparison to Chinese respondents. For Affirmative Action in practice, Vietnamese respondents are the only group that yielded statistically significant results; being much more favorable toward the practice than Chinese respondents. This result was very important, considering the fact that, of the groups in my sample, Vietnamese Americans are the only ones who immigrated to the United States for much different reasons than Chinese Americans.

My ethnicity by gender interactions only yielded two significant results for South Asian women. However, gender as a control yielded significant results as well, in a few of my regressions. My research sub-question was: *Are attitudes influenced by both ethnicity and gender?* As both variables yielded significant results, I have concluded that attitudes toward Affirmative Action are influenced by both ethnicity and gender for Asian Americans.

When testing the effect experiences with discrimination had on attitudes toward Affirmative Action, my analysis yielded no statistically significant results. This may be partially attributed to the very low numbers of experiencing discrimination for ethnic groups, like Vietnamese Americans. However, Filipino respondents had 100 respondents who experienced

discrimination, and this group still did not yield significant results. My qualitative analysis may provide insight into why this is the case.

I also tested the effect that attitudes toward discrimination faced by Asians had on attitudes toward Affirmative Action. This only yielded significant results for the question about preferences in hiring and promotion for Asian Americans. Respondents who believe that Asians experience the same or more discrimination relative to Blacks and Latinos had more favorable attitudes toward this Affirmative Action practice. In relation to each Asian ethnic group, this variable was only significant in the interaction computed for Filipino respondents and answers to this question.

6.7 Qualitative Results

There were a few patterns that I identified in my analysis of the interviews. For the Affirmative Action questions, I only found consistent responses among my Chinese interviewees. All three of them felt that Affirmative Action hurt, rather than helped, Asian Americans in some way. They pointed especially to instances of Affirmative Action working against Asian Americans in college admissions. One respondent, a female, acknowledged that it was a good idea but felt that it worked against Asians. In relation to preferences in hiring and promotion, all of my Chinese respondents felt that hiring and promotion should be based on qualifications and ability, not ethnicity. I did not find any patterns between responses to questions about Affirmative Action or experiences with discrimination and gender.

All of my respondents, except for one Vietnamese female, felt that they had experienced discrimination or stereotyping while living in the United States. My two Vietnamese male respondents pointed only to ethnic stereotyping. For my Filipino respondents, two discussed

experiencing ethnic stereotyping. A Filipino male discussed a very recent and specific experience with discrimination and a Filipina female says that she felt she had been discriminated against years before, when she first arrived in the United States. For my Chinese respondents, both females pointed out specific experiences with discrimination. My Chinese male respondent highlighted ethnic stereotyping.

All five of my South Asian respondents reported experiencing discrimination, beyond ethnic stereotyping. Two of the men, one Asian Indian and the other Pakistani, both pointed to their belief that perceived or actual religious affiliation affected their being discriminated against. Ahmed, a Pakistani male respondent, discussed an increase in discrimination after September 11th. He felt that Asians experienced discrimination in a different way than other racial groups, in that their loyalty to the country is questioned. Naveen, an Asian Indian male respondent, connects this to a belief that if someone is Muslim then they are also unpatriotic. Interestingly, this also connects to what Divya, an Asian Indian female, stated about her experiences growing up in a predominately white town. She explained that her father joined the U.S. Army Reserve as a way to prove that his family was patriotic and to combat the discrimination they faced.

This pattern in my qualitative data is helpful in answering one of my research sub-questions: *To what extent do we need to disaggregate Asian American groups?* My respondents highlight the effect that religion, or even perceived religious affiliation, have on their lives. Ahmed and Naveen indicate that South Asians may be assumed to be Muslim and discriminated against based on perceived religious affiliation. Naveen states, “So, I think that South Asians are kind of feeling that [...] they're conglomerated with Muslims.” While all of my interviewees but one reported experiences with discrimination or ethnic stereotyping, the fact that South Asian respondents stand out in their discussions of religion is a very important difference.

Analysis of my interviews yielded very interesting results, which can help place the quantitative data in context. This section will be broken down in as follows: (1) Experiences with Discrimination; (2) Belief in the Dominant Ideology; (3) Dual Beliefs, and (4) Discrimination faced by Asians. Through connecting this discussion to my quantitative conclusions, this analysis will highlight the complexity of attitudes toward Affirmative Action and suggests that this may not be easily or adequately explored through quantitative analysis alone.

Experiences with Discrimination

In conducting my interviews, I noticed some respondents indicating that they had experienced discrimination; however, some pointed to a belief in things having changed. In response to the question “Have you ever personally experienced discrimination in the United States?” Lian, a Chinese female, states,

“I remember one time [...] when we were moving from California to Texas and we were, that was a long time ago, I guess 20 years ago. *So, things could be different now*, but we had to go to the bathroom [...] at a gas station and then [my husband] went in to go use the bathroom – they let him use it and then when he came out, I needed to go in, they said they didn’t have a bathroom for me” (emphasis added)

She concludes, “... that was, I think because he’s White and I’m Asian and we were in the middle of nowhere.” Lian’s responses indicate that this experience with discrimination was connected to geographic location and to things being different 20 years ago. In response to the same question, Maganda, a Filipina female, stated, “maybe before, a long time ago, but not anymore.” Though not explicitly stated, Maganda implies that things have changed for her since she immigrated to the United States.

Additionally, other interview respondents minimized their experiences with discrimination. I had six respondents claim that they had not experienced discrimination;

however, they were subject to ethnic stereotyping. For example, when asked about having personally experienced discrimination, Tuan, a Vietnamese male, commented:

“Personally, personally not really. Not [so] much discrimination as misunderstanding or ignorance. I tend to think of discrimination as malice, as having malice at the forefront of it. I think a lot of what happened to myself personally has been misunderstanding more than anything. For example, I was once asked if I spoke English simply because of my name, and I don't think that these individuals realized that I've been living in the United States for about 20 years. So, they weren't necessarily malic[ious], maybe they were just thinking that I was a foreign medical, I mean a foreign student coming here to visit so they were asking if I spoke English very well.”

Tuan went on to say that he felt discrimination would require something “that would work to bring me down.” However, the associations these people made with Tuan's name could have led to discriminatory acts, like not hiring him based on the assumption that he did not speak English.

This distinction between discrimination and stereotyping was also made by Carmen, a Filipina woman. She gave an example of an individual assuming she could speak Japanese, just by her looks. She goes on to state:

“Having heard the stereotypes of being the smartest and hardest working and always being achiever, yes, absolutely. Do I associate that with discrimination? No. I associate that more with stereotyping than anything else. Are they closely related? Yes. Has it negatively impacted me in the way I think discrimination would? No. So, it's a fine line for me.”

These examples point to a much more complicated understanding of how respondents might view discrimination than is evident in the quantitative analysis. These complications may contribute to explaining why experiencing discrimination did not significantly affect attitudes toward Affirmative Action in the quantitative analysis.

Some of my respondents did have examples of having been discriminated against, but felt that things had changed since the time they had been discriminated against. Others felt they had been treated differently because of their ethnicity, but not unfairly disadvantaged because of it.

However, one respondent discusses the negative consequences of ethnic stereotyping, including Asians not being viewed as “leadership” material. Lian states,

“... I’m Chinese and they look at you as a technical person and not like a manager type or something, and I guess I’m kind of exceptional in that they see me – actually, it took a long time to see me as a manager – but overall, they kind of see you as a technical person.”

Lian acknowledges how some of the ethnic stereotypes facing Asians may hinder advancement in the workplace. In her case, it took them a long time to see her as a manager. Though she did not say this, it is also likely that her not being viewed as a manager could be attributed to *both* her gender and her ethnicity. Only one interview respondent discussed experiencing gender discrimination. Divya, an Asian Indian woman states,

“For example, if I go to things on Capitol Hill – I walk in a room and its mainly white men and I have many strikes against me. Overall, I’m glad I look young for my age – I’m glad I get carded in a bar, but it works against me in professional situations. *And I’m a woman and I’m a minority.* So, I always have that gut sense of, ok, great, I have to work extra hard for them to take me seriously. And that is definitely very frustrating.” (emphasis added)

Divya seemed to take an intersectional approach in her discussion of this discrimination.

Looking young and being a woman of color in a professional environment – particularly an environment dominated by white men – adds extra pressure to prove herself as an attorney.

Overall, I did not notice women discussing experiences with discrimination more than men.

However, for respondents like Lian, this may be related to not noticing that gender may have played a role in being discriminated against.

Belief in the Dominant Ideology

There was a very strong belief, across all of the ethnic groups and across gender, that educational advancement or job hiring and promotion should be based on merit. This belief

correlates strongly with the dominant ideology in working hard to achieve goals. In response to the question about preferences in hiring and promotion, William, a Filipino male, states,

“As far as Asian Americans, we’ve always been competitive in what we do [...] But if you are someone who stands out as far as performance or work ethic, I think that plays a bigger role in whether you deserve a promotion or not. As far as favoritism, in terms of race or things like that, I don’t think that it should be acceptable at this day and age.”

In response to a question about Affirmative Action being a good or bad thing for other racial minorities in the United States, Lian says: “I really don’t like the Affirmative Action program for any group. I think it should be based on your ability.” These responses do not correspond with my hypothesis. Both William and Lian discussed experiences with discrimination, but they do not hold a stratified ideology about the structure of opportunity in the U.S. This was not an uncommon occurrence in my interviews. Many of my respondents acknowledged experiencing discrimination – from ethnic stereotyping to being spit upon – but many of those same respondents adhered to the dominant ideology.

The above responses indicate a belief that hard work and ability should be the only factors that contribute to advancement in education or at work. William’s response highlights Asian Americans as a group with a strong work ethic and a competitive edge. This correlates with the positive associations that Asian Americans may have with the model minority stereotype (Kibria 2002; Lee 1999). Being typecast as a hard-working group is not necessarily negative. One respondent, Chris, a Chinese male, pointed out how the stereotypes for Asian Americans work both ways. In regard to him *not* getting in trouble in high school, he states,

“I think the stereotype plays both ways – that the Asian kid is kind of quiet and dorky and studious. I think that’s gotten me out of some trouble or out of some consequences I should have received that, otherwise if I was a different race I would have certainly gotten in trouble.”

Continuing with a belief in the dominant ideology, when asked if she thought Affirmative Action was necessary for Asian Americans, Joyce, Vietnamese woman, states:

“I don’t think it’s necessary. To Asians, I think we basically – like, we can live anywhere and we work hard and you know, like I think we automatically have people loving us, you know, because we just, you know, we’re just so open, you know, we’re just open minded. We’re open minded and work hard and, yeah, understanding. It’s not necessary, but it’s good to have.”

When I asked him how he felt about Affirmative Action in college admissions, William responded,

“They should base that on who qualifies and who does not qualify. If it states that you have to have a certain grade or GPA in order for you to make avail [of] any educational funds available, it should be just that. It should be for everybody – not just restricted to racial groups. I think it’s available for everybody. It’s just a matter of who is qualified and who is not, based upon qualifications that are laid out. If you can meet that, you should make avail of that, if you cannot, then of course, you can’t just be given a grant if you are not capable of fulfilling those qualifications.”

William believes that qualifications should be strict guidelines for admission, and that race should not play a factor in whether or not someone is admitted into college. This correlates with his earlier attitudes that related to the dominant ideology.

Dual Beliefs

As the previous discussion shows, despite experiencing discrimination, many of my respondents still believed in the dominant ideology. This indicates the existence of dual beliefs for my respondents – they recognize the existence of discrimination, and perhaps inequality, in the United States; however, they still feel that the structure of opportunity is equal and advancement in education or the workplace should be solely based on hard work and merit.

Naveen, an Asian Indian male, felt that job training and educational assistance is a good thing for Asian Americans because he believes that we do not live in a fair system and recognizes that

ethnic discrimination occurs. He also feels that Asian Americans should benefit from Affirmative Action in hiring, but felt that should not extend to promotion. Naveen states,

“Once you have the job, your performance in the job is what should determine your promotion and raises. Honestly, that can work both ways too. Certain groups could be discriminated against [in] promotion or given promotion based on ethnicity and I think it should be quality of work.”

Despite acknowledging the existence of discrimination, Naveen still felt that quality of work should be the only consideration in promotion.

Some respondents also felt that affirmative action may be more necessary in education, but not in the workplace. Mei, a Chinese female, felt that job training and educational assistance should be provided for Asian Americans if they do not have the opportunities available to them.

However, in relation to preferences in hiring and promotion, she states:

“I feel that they should be hired and promoted for their ability and not because of their race, not because they are of a certain culture and background – it should be the person themselves. I’ve seen many incompetent people put in high positions because of their race. I don’t agree with that [...] However, I do encourage people to give minorities the opportunity to prove what they can do. But not hand it on a silver platter.”

This correlates with the common misconception that Affirmative Action programs advance unqualified minorities. Having witnessed incompetent people being promoted – in her opinion, because of their race – Mei is not supportive of Affirmative Action. However, at the same time she recognizes that minorities may not be given the same opportunities as others, and she encourages employers to give them these opportunities.

Michael, a Vietnamese male, definitely felt that hard work and being qualified should be the reason for advancement in the workplace. Michael believed that special job training and educational assistance was a good thing for Asian Americans, but that Affirmative Action in the workplace was not fair. Here, it seems that there is recognition that job training and educational

assistance may need to be equalized on the grounds of ethnicity, but that hard work should be the only thing to advance people in the workplace. This correlates with Naveen's earlier response.

Maganda, a Filipina female, states, "... , it's still, you know, majority white, right? But I think those Asian Americans that really excel get the job." Maganda's quote is a great example of holding dual beliefs. She acknowledges that the workplace is still a majority white, but points out that hard-working Asian Americans, the ones who excel, can get the job. All of these respondents seem to recognize that there are not always equal opportunities for minorities; however, at the same time, they ascribe to the dominant ideology.

These quotes give insight into the limitations of my quantitative analysis. Although an individual may have experienced discrimination, or recognizes that discrimination against Asians exists, this does *not* necessarily contribute to having a stratified ideology about the structure of opportunity in the United States. In fact, only one interview respondent clearly held a stratified view of opportunity in the U.S. Divya had very favorable attitudes toward Affirmative Action, both in principle and in practice. In response to the first Affirmative Action question, she stated:

"Generally, or always, I think it is a good thing and the reason I think that is because Asian Americans have historically and in the present day faced discrimination in all contexts of life, be it higher education, business or contracting. And Affirmative Action is needed to rectify the present effects of either past discrimination or present discrimination. And without Affirmative Action, unfortunately, we won't have a level playing field. And even in 2010 we aren't there yet."

I believe it is likely that more of my respondents do not have a stratified ideology due to their high socioeconomic success. Many of my respondents were highly educated and most had total family incomes above the median United States income and above the median Asian American income. This may correlate with the self-interests theory, in that my respondents may not feel that Affirmative Action is necessary for success. Additionally, supporting Affirmative Action may cast doubt upon their own successes – which I discuss more in my Conclusions section.

Discrimination Faced by Asians

Of my 15 interviews, 7 interviewees believed that Asians suffered less discrimination in the United States than Blacks and Latinos. Their reasoning for this belief varied, but there was some overlap. Carmen believed that discrimination faced by Asians is less acknowledged or documented than other racial groups.

“...maybe not being considered an underrepresented group is not calling attention to the community or the population as an underrepresented group and so I think you don't hear as many stories of discrimination within the Asian American community or not aware of them as much as either Latinos or African Americans I think possibly because it's not brought to the forefront in the same way or in the media it plays out in the same way as other groups do, but I think it may ultimately stem from maybe Asian Americans not being considered an underrepresented group.” – Carmen, 34-year old College Administrator

Tuan believed that Asians suffer less discrimination because they are overrepresented in professional fields. He felt that this would expose them to less discrimination than Blacks and Latinos, whom he felt were concentrated in lower level jobs.

“I think we are less, Asian Americans are discriminated against less, and it's, I think it's simply because that there's so many Asians represented in the professional world and, for example, we were talking early in engineering and in math and in science and all of that and whereas the African Americans and Latinos haven't had the chance to get, to obtain those positions yet and they do tend, especially the Latino population, they do still tend to work in lower level jobs such as migrant workers or construction work. So that tends to expose themselves to situations where they can be discriminated against.” – Tuan, 27-year old Medical Student

Both of these responses lend a much more complicated picture of discrimination faced by Asians than quantitative data allows us to examine. Carmen feels that Asians experience discrimination, but that it is not as well documented. Tuan seems to believe that Asians suffer less discrimination because they are represented in professional fields.

One respondent furthers the nuanced aspects of discrimination by differentiating between interpersonal and institutional discrimination. In response to the question about how much

discrimination Asians experience relative to other racial groups, Ravith, a Sri Lankan male, states,

“It’s far less. I mean, you go to like – in terms of interpersonal racism, sure, we get the short end of the stick. But in terms of institutional and systemic, I think far less. Not to say we don’t face any type of discrimination at all, we certainly do – and I’m not taking anything away from the Asian American experience – but we definitely do. But if you go to predominantly black neighborhoods in southeast D.C. it looks like Beirut after an Israeli bombing. It’s crazy. You don’t see a totally Asian neighborhood that just in terrible shape. You hardly see that. And despite the numbers and the amount of time that Black folks have been here, it’s terrible what they face.

Ravith’s comments correlate with the opinions of some other interview respondents who did not think you could compare different group’s experiences with discrimination. Many felt that you had to examine the situation or context for different people and groups.

Only one respondent believed that Asian Americans suffered more discrimination than other racial groups. However, she was putting this in the context of education. Lian states,

“I think from the educational point I think they are worse because they, because they expect Asian to be a certain grade and they don't get that grade they don't get accepted even though they are better than the other groups because, you know, so in the ways of discrimination against them.”

In this case, Lian believes that Asians have higher expectations to perform academically than other groups and if they do not meet those expectations, they will suffer for it – even if they perform better than other racial groups. This statement correlates with arguments against Affirmative Action because of a belief that it negatively affects Asian Americans. Despite their higher academic performance, some people believe that Asian Americans may not be accepted into educational institutions because there are higher expectations of people in that racial category. Furthermore, her statement continues to complicate the ways in which respondents may have viewed the question relating to discrimination faced by Asians, relative to other racial groups. Lian answered the question based upon her belief that Asians suffer more discrimination

due to the higher expectations people have of them. This may contribute to a lack of support for Affirmative Action policies, which Lian had.

On the other hand, Ravith answered the question based upon his belief that Asians suffer far less institutional discrimination than other racial groups. He still felt that Affirmative Action, though, was a good thing for Asian Americans. These interviews highlighted the nuances present in attitudes toward Affirmative Action and about discrimination faced by Asians, which quantitative analysis is not able to examine.

Again, many of my respondents had either experienced discrimination or recognized that discrimination against Asian Americans existed; however, many of them did not have favorable attitudes toward Affirmative Action because of their belief in the dominant ideology. This highlights the existence of a dual belief system amongst some of my interview respondents. This more complicated picture of attitudes toward Affirmative Action may shed light on why the quantitative data did not yield significant results for people who have experienced discrimination.

6.8 Suggested Changes to Affirmative Action

Though it was not explicitly asked, six of my interview respondents suggested changes or amendments to Affirmative Action programs in the course of their interviews. A few of these suggestions were more in the context of “what kind” of Asian would or should benefit from Affirmative Action. These suggestions were mainly to consider class differences or immigrant status when considering the need for educational or occupational assistance.

Ahmed, a Pakistani American male, suggests: “I think there should be training programs for new immigrants or people within poorer neighborhoods that haven’t had the same

opportunities, that, maybe some other individuals have. But there should be more criteria than just being an Asian American.” Ahmed suggests a consideration of both immigrant status and socioeconomic status, in addition to race.

Tuan acknowledges the need to recognize ethnic diversity among Asian Americans, but mainly through the consideration of immigrant status. He states,

“So, with the new waves of immigrants, a lot of them from the Southeast, for example, Cambodia or even from the Iraqis the ones they are Asian Americans as well, the ones coming definitely. I think the new wave do deserve a lot more treatment and a lot more training in terms of jobs and in terms of education. So, the newer waves are deserving of that since they're not over represented in the professional fields.”

Carmen’s beliefs correlate with Tuan’s answer. In response to the question about job training and education assistance, she states:

“I’m kind of on the fence about that for a couple of different reasons. I think that if you're an immigrant new to the country I think that's applicable. I think it's sort of where you're raised and sort of, so, for example, for me I don't know that that would be applicable to me. I was born, I was born in Hawaii and raised in the United States and so have a sense of or have only known the educational system in the United States, right? So, if I were an immigrant to this country, I think special job training and/or sort of transition types of education would be applicable. So, it sounds like a double edged sword for me. Do I think it's applicable to all Asian Americans? I don't know. I sort of feel like, and that's just sort of my lens. I've been raised here so don't know what it would be.

Carmen suggests that growing up in the United States does give people an advantage that newer immigrants to this country do not have, so immigrants should have access to special job training and educational assistance. Phillip, a half-Filipino and half-Cuban male agrees on that point.

His own experiences as the son of two immigrants gave him insight into the cultural disadvantages faced by immigrants. He specifically felt that special job training for technology is very important for Asian immigrants – especially because it is something that they do not learn in school. According to Phillip, this education would help them “catch up with what other people already know.”

In relation to class, Lian briefly stated that she feels that looking at the differences between the rich and the poor are more important than considering racial differences. Chris expanded on his beliefs on Affirmative Action and socioeconomic status. He states,

“There is a place for Affirmative Action – maybe not so much in race and ethnicity, but perhaps in demographics of wealth. So poverty versus wealth – opportunity. I guess the pretty straight thing is it’s an equality of opportunity, not necessarily equality of outcome. I am in favor of the equality of opportunity as in, people who are poor, or who perhaps lived in disadvantaged neighborhoods regardless of skin color – so they could be Native Americans, Blacks, Asians, or whatever – could be given, not necessarily preferential treatment, but when making decisions putting those things into context.”

Unfortunately, I did not ask respondents if they felt that race/ethnicity should be completely removed from consideration in Affirmative Action implementation. Some respondents, like Lian and Chris seemed to believe that class differences should be the primary consideration, as opposed to race. However, I did not find evidence supporting or refuting the need to eliminate race/ethnicity as a consideration in my other respondents’ answers.

Sasmita, an Asian Indian American female, offered suggestions for the implementation of Affirmative Action. She questioned the motives behind educational institutions and workplaces use of Affirmative Action. She questioned whether these institutions were implementing the policy to look good or because they recognize the importance of diversity. In relation to job training and educational assistance, Sasmita points out the need for follow-up with individuals who may benefit from these things. She states,

“I really feel like this is just a ‘look-good’ kind of system that we have right now. And I don’t know how much this is actually helping people. So even if people get lucky who get the opportunity, then what is there to follow up to help them move and really succeed in that?”

Sasmita mentions the need for mentoring of students who may receive minority scholarships. Rather than simply giving minorities opportunities, she feels that there needs to be a system in place to continue helping them succeed in the educational or workplace environment.

6.9 Implications of this Study

The statistical analysis suggests that there are some differences in attitudes toward Affirmative Action. More specifically, Asian ethnic groups who have typically immigrated to the United States for educational and occupational reasons, like South Asians and Filipinos, have less favorable attitudes toward the policy than do Chinese. Vietnamese Americans, who have less commonly immigrated for those reasons, have more favorable attitudes toward the policy. This may be connected to differing needs for Affirmative Action, which supports the need to consider the different Asian ethnic groups in Affirmative Action policies (Cho 2002).

As many of my respondents pointed out, immigrant status is an important consideration in the implementation of Affirmative Action. With newer waves of immigrants being refugees, this could be another reason to disaggregate Asian Americans further. This immigrant status, though, is strongly tied to ethnic group. Asian Americans from East or South Asia are much more likely to immigrate under the auspices of the immigration acts which outline who are desirable immigrants. Southeast Asians, on the other hand, are more likely to have immigrated to escape a conflict-ridden country. These groups do not have the educational or occupational prestige which allows them to succeed in the U.S. without the assistance of programs like Affirmative Action.

6.10 Limitations of Study & Suggestions for Further Research

This study was limited in a few ways. The first was the lack of data available on even more recent Asian immigrant groups, like Cambodian Americans or Hmong Americans. These groups are most likely to have immigrated to the United States as refugees and have much higher rates of poverty and lower rates of educational attainment (CARE 2008). The PNAAPS dataset

was meant for collecting data on the six largest Asian groups in the United States, though. In the future, surveys collecting data on different Asian ethnic groups should attempt to gather more data about these newer Asian immigrant groups.

There were also limitations with missing data in the PNAAPS dataset. The main problem was for responses of income. A large amount of respondents did not answer this question or were unsure of their family's household income. This dropped about 300 respondents out of my regressions, resulting in no statistically significant results because samples of each ethnic group got much smaller. Due to this, I recoded the missing variables as the mean.

The PNAAPS dataset also did not allow for the disaggregation of Indian and Pakistani respondents. Though these countries are in the same region, there are certainly big differences between the ethnic groups – perhaps, most notable, are religious differences. This dataset also had a very high immigrant population. For the purposes of my study, this was problematic for testing the effect of immigrant status on attitudes toward Affirmative Action.

Though my study looked at intersections of ethnicity and gender, there is still much more diversity present amongst Asian Americans. For example, within India, there are multiple ethnic groups, religions, and castes which carry over to the United States (Leonard 1997). The ethnic groups in my study are by no means homogenous within. As the purpose of this study was twofold – 1) to examine attitudes toward Affirmative Action, and 2) to disaggregate Asian Americans by ethnic group – it is important to note that further research on Asian Americans should consider more intersections, like religious affiliation, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation. In fact, I did find evidence in my interviews that religion, or perceived religious affiliation, affected South Asian respondents in a way that other Asian ethnic groups did not

identify. Asian Americans are a very heterogeneous group and that diversity should be acknowledged in future research.

6.11 Conclusions

It is very important to recognize Asian Americans as a diverse and heterogeneous group. In examining Asian American ethnic group attitudes toward Affirmative Action in the United States, I paid heed to some of the diversity present amongst Asian Americans. The recognition of this diversity is especially important when considering race-based policies, like Affirmative Action, and their effect on Asian Americans. This study set out to examine three research questions. The main research question was: *How do ethnicity and gender effect Asian American attitudes toward Affirmative Action?* The two sub-questions were: *Are attitudes influenced by both ethnicity and gender?* and *To what extent do we need to disaggregate Asian American groups?* I examined these questions using multiple theories and found that no one theory could explain my findings in this study.

The self-interests theory may connect to some of my quantitative findings, with Vietnamese Americans being more favorable toward Affirmative Action policies than Chinese Americans. In only one case (Affirmative Action in principle) were South Asian respondents significantly less favorable toward the policy than Chinese Americans. While I cannot connect these findings directly to the self-interests theory, they do address the effect ethnicity has on attitudes toward Affirmative Action. I found that some attitudinal differences between ethnic groups and these differences seem to correlate with ethnic groups who have immigrated for educational/occupational reasons versus those who have not. Vietnamese respondents were consistently more favorable toward Affirmative Action, in comparison to Chinese respondents,

than the other ethnic groups in my study. These differences may be reflective of a need for Affirmative Action by some Asian ethnic groups, like Vietnamese Americans, over others, like Asian Indian, Pakistani, and Filipino Americans.

The findings from my qualitative analysis that some respondents were less favorable toward Affirmative Action may be due to their high economic standing, which is an indicator of their success within the present system. It may not have been in their interest to support these policies because they (or even their children) may not need to benefit from Affirmative Action. I hypothesized that ethnic groups with higher socioeconomic status would be less favorable toward Affirmative Action policies; while this prediction cannot be accurately “tested” with my interview sample, it is suggestive. Almost all of the respondents had an income that was much higher than the national average, with many of them higher than the Asian American income average. Many of these respondents may not see the need for Affirmative Action programs because they are already successful, which could have led to a stronger connection with the dominant ideology. In dealing with groups who are successful, it is likely that respondents will not have favorable attitudes toward Affirmative Action because it may cast doubt upon their own success and achievements. This is a very common problem that people of color, specifically African Americans, have with Affirmative Action – the suspicion by others that their achievements are solely due to their race instead of their own merit (Inkelas 2003a).

When incorporating gender into my analysis, I found that gender yielded some significant results – showing that female respondents were more favorable than male respondents toward some Affirmative Action policies. The only interactions that yielded significant results were for South Asian women and the two questions relating to Affirmative Action in practice. This group of women was less favorable toward the policy than Chinese men. Interestingly, with the

inclusion of the South Asian female interaction, South Asians as a whole became significantly more favorable toward the policies. This indicates that South Asian women and men's attitudes were divergent, with women less favorable than men.

I did not find more reports of discrimination from women than men in my qualitative analysis. Additionally, women did not report specifically on gender discrimination. This could be due to a couple of reasons. First, my interviews focused mainly on respondent's attitudes about Affirmative Action for Asian Americans. I did not focus strongly on gender. In fact, race and ethnicity were such strong factors in my interviews that respondents may have discounted gender altogether in their responses. Second, it may be difficult for women to separate out experiences with discrimination based on ethnicity or gender. Taking an intersectional approach, it is important to note the overlap of different types of discrimination. Gender stereotypes for Asian American women and men are very much affected by their race and ethnicity (Espiritu 2008). So, unless respondents experienced discrimination they could directly attribute to gender (such as sex harassment or being told that their treatment was due to their gender) or ethnicity (being told that their treatment was because of their ethnicity), it is likely that their experiences with discrimination were influenced by the intersections of these statuses.

In regards to whether attitudes were influenced by both ethnicity and gender, as I noted above, I did find evidence to support the influence ethnicity has on attitudes toward Affirmative Action, particularly in my quantitative analysis. Gender yielded significant results as a control variable in some of my regressions, indicating that it also had an effect on Asian American attitudes toward Affirmative Action. However, there were some indicators that gender has had an effect, specifically on my female respondents. Previous research has indicated that there are gender differences in attitudes toward Affirmative Action (Inkelas 2003a, 2003b). I believe this

is an area that still needs to be explored for Asian Americans. This is especially important due to the research that continues to highlight the different ways in which Asian American men and women experience their race and ethnicity (Cho 2002; Espiritu 2008; Kibria 1993).

The denial of discrimination argument also did not explain the variation in attitudes toward Affirmative Action. I did find significant results for the question about preferences in hiring and promotion, which indicated that people who believe Asian Americans suffer the same or more discrimination relative to Blacks and Latinos are more favorable toward that Affirmative Action practice. However, this question may not have been an adequate measure for the “denial of discrimination” argument. It pre-supposes a belief by respondents that Blacks and Latinos already suffer discrimination.

Examining the theory about opposing perspectives of opportunity in the United States yielded the most interesting results. My quantitative analysis yielded no significant results, indicating that experiences with discrimination did not affect attitudes toward Affirmative Action. Despite this lack of statistical significance, this was still an important finding. My prediction that people who experienced discrimination would be more likely to subscribe to a stratified ideology – therefore, being more likely to support Affirmative Action – was not supported. I found that my qualitative analysis may have shed light on possible reasons for the lack of significant quantitative results.

When analyzing my interviews, I found evidence of a dual belief system. Many respondents had indicated experiencing discrimination or ethnic stereotyping or recognizing that Asian Americans experience discrimination; however, they also subscribed to the dominant ideology. This stands in contrast to my prediction that experiencing discrimination will lead to a stratified view of the structure of opportunity in the United States; in turn, leading to support for

Affirmative Action programs. These findings correlate with those of Eileen O'Brien (2008) in *The Racial Middle*. She found that her respondents experienced discrimination, but down-played their own experiences. O'Brien (2008) states,

“While racism is something troublingly out of an individual’s control, one can control the extent to which he or she is further deemed un-American by adapting one’s worldview to champion the American dream rather than appear to be criticizing or ‘dwelling’ on racial discrimination” (159).

My own findings may give insight into why none of the theories I examined can explain differences in Asian American attitudes toward Affirmative Action. Feminist theory discusses the existence of dual or multiple consciousnesses for people, specifically women of color (Collins 2009; Smith 1987). Women and men of color in the United States exist in an oppressive system; however, they must conform to that system in order to be successful. Additionally, the theory I was examining assumed that respondents would label the discrimination they faced as such. To the extent that they do not call it discrimination, they may not see the need for a remedy such as Affirmative Action.

This study sheds light on the extent to which we need to disaggregate Asian Americans. My quantitative analysis has definitely demonstrated the need to disaggregate, at the very least, by ethnicity. I also found evidence to support the need to disaggregate by gender. My qualitative analysis also highlights the need for this disaggregation, particularly by ethnicity, especially as it relates to religious affiliation or perceived religious affiliation. South Asian interviewees pointed out the questioning of their (or their ethnic group’s) patriotism and loyalty to the United States, specifically in relation to questions about potential religious affiliation as Muslim.

The misrepresentation of Asian Americans as a homogenous, educationally and socioeconomically successful group is problematic in itself (CARE 2008; Espiritu 2008; Zhou

2004); however, it is also harmful to groups within the “umbrella” of *Asian American* who are in need of assistance and do not receive it due to the perceived overrepresentation of Asian Americans in certain fields (Cho 2002). Zhou (2009) points out these differing needs:

“Immigrants who are predominantly middle-class professionals (such as the Taiwanese and Indians) or predominantly small business owners (such as the Koreans) share few concerns and priorities with those who are predominantly uneducated, low-skilled refugees (such as Cambodians and Hmong)” (230).

Zhou acknowledges the differing social locations of Asian ethnic groups and the effects those social locations may have on concerns and priorities. One of these concerns may be Affirmative Action policies. Groups who immigrate to the United States without an educational background or preferred occupational skills may be in need of policies to help them advance in the U.S., especially in a country that does not warmly receive immigrants – particularly, immigrants of color. Affirmative Action policies need to be revised in their consideration of Asian Americans, perhaps starting with the disaggregation by ethnic group and gender.

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Appendix A

Questions asked of each interview respondent:

1. Affirmative Action refers to any measure, policy or law used to increase diversity or rectify discrimination so that qualified individuals have equal access to employment, education, business, and contracting opportunities. Generally speaking, do you think Affirmative Action is a good thing or a bad thing for Asian Americans, or it doesn't affect Asian Americans much? And why?
2. Do you think Affirmative Action is a good or bad thing for other racial minorities? And why?
3. Some people feel that because of past disadvantages there are some groups in society that should receive special job training and educational assistance. Others say that is unfair. What about you? And why?
4. Some people feel that because of past disadvantages there are some groups in society that should be given preferences in hiring and promotion. Others say that is unfair. What about you? And why?
5. Have you ever personally experienced discrimination in the United States?
6. If yes, in your opinion, why were you discriminated against? (Probe question: Was it because of your ethnic background, gender, accent (regardless of whether or not you have an accent) or for some other reason?)
7. If yes, in which of the following ways, if any, have you experienced discrimination in: getting jobs or promotion, getting education, getting housing, dealing with a government agency, dealing with a business or retail establishment, dealing with your neighbors, or dealing with strangers in a public place?
8. Has a friend or family member ever experienced discrimination?
9. How would you rate the extent of discrimination against Asians relative to other groups in general? Do you think Asians generally suffer less, do they suffer more, or are they in just about the same situation as, say, Latinos or blacks
10. What's the highest level of education you have completed?
11. What is your current occupation?
12. If you were to add up the income of family members who lived in your home last year, what would the total amount to?
13. What is your age?

14. Were your parents born in Asia?
15. Were you born in Asia? The United States? Elsewhere?
16. If not born in the U.S., how long have you lived in the United States permanently?
17. Would you consider yourself to be politically liberal, conservative, moderate, or unsure?
18. What is your marital status?