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Closure Ideology among Asian Americans:
Three Studies on Group Threat, Ideology, and Mental Illness

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Abstract

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Theorists of group competition argue that when dominant racial group members perceive threats, they become more controlling of their social boundaries, but does the same control of social boundaries emerge for groups occupying the middle of social hierarchies? In this dissertation, I explore the relationship between threat and social boundaries for Asian Americans, a fast-growing racialized group within the United States, whose status within the American racial hierarchy is complex. Like most racial groups situated within racist societies, Asian Americans experience prejudice, racial bias, and discrimination, but their relatively high levels of income and education compared to other groups instantiate a status unique among non-Whites in the U.S. For this reason, many scholars suggest that Asian Americans comprise a racial bourgeoisie, a triangulated status between White Americans at the top and Black Americans at the bottom. Whereas scholars often hypothesize about how dominant and subordinate group members may frame perceptions of threat, fewer theorize about how such triangulated groups may react. In the first two chapters of this dissertation, I investigate how Asian Americans beliefs about their group boundaries, which I term closure ideology, are associated with perceptions of threat. In Chapter 1, I examine the association between group status threat, the perception that discrimination is a major impediment to Asian Americans generally, and closure ideology. In Chapter 2, I examine the relationship between perceptions of interpersonal discrimination and closure ideology. Last, in Chapter 3, I investigate the potential psychological ramifications of closure ideology, assessing associations between perceptions of discrimination, closure ideology, and mental illness. Ultimately, this series of studies empirically advance critical questions and novel theorizations about the causes and consequences of social boundaries among Asian Americans.

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

Change is coming to America. Census data show that the Asian population in the United States is projected to reach 41 million by 2050 and will continue to be the fastest growing foreign-born population in the U.S. (Xie and Goyette 2004; Passel and Cohn 2008; Humes, Jones and Ramirez 2011). With the extreme the increase in the Asian population, there has been a major call in the social sciences to move "beyond black and white" (Xu and Lee 2013) and to consider race relations in a new multiracial paradigm. For example, scholars have begun to examine the relative positioning of racial groups within the American racial hierarchy, where Black Americans are at the bottom and White Americans on the top (Lee and Bean 2010). Most analyses in the U.S. to date suggest that Asians fall somewhere in the middle of the hierarchy. Asians in the U.S. have become an American-made racial "middle class." A focus on the most dominant and subordinate groups in society, with relatively less focus on intermediary groups, is a long-standing sociological practice. For instance, Marx's relentless emphasis on the bourgeois and the proletariat, with comparatively less focus on the middle classes or petit bourgeois demonstrates this point (Urry 1973). Yet, the swift and dynamic shift in demographics in the United States and the rise of Asians as a new racial group occupying a unique racial status as intermediary make a compelling case for understanding how Asians construct their social boundaries that shape racial group interactions.

By boundaries, I refer to "conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices and the constraints that guide behavior based on these conceptual distinctions" (Lamont and Molnár 2002:168). The boundary literature contextualizes the category of race in a field of competitive race relations and highlights the symbolic and social distinctions between the group actors within that field. As opposed to other perspectives which examine the way groups hold or come together, boundary scholars study the forces that shape the transformation and delineation of the group boundaries (Barth 1969; Lamont and Molnár 2002; Wimmer 2013). Such scholars

emphasize how categories such as religion (Bail 2008), gender (Ridgeway 2009), and race shape interactions and structures that form the basis for the inclusion or exclusion of individuals. Understanding how Asians maintain those social boundaries and the effects of those boundaries on group members yield stimulating questions at the intersection of culture and social psychology. Additionally, group boundaries are largely expressed through racial ideologies, which Bonilla-Silva (2003:74) describes as the "medium through which racial life is apprehended, through which individuals perceive themselves as 'Same' or as 'Others.'" So, to fully comprehend the characteristics of Asian social boundaries, it is important to gauge the power of the ideologies that configure them.

The meaning of ideology in the social sciences has changed over time and space. First coined by Antoine Destutt de Tracy in 1796, ideology referred to a prototype of political science, an attempt to build a field of scientific inquiry based on the argument that ideas could be studied like chemistry—not unlike in Comte's coining of the term sociology (Boudon 1989). Talk of ideology fell out of usage in the early nineteenth century (Drucker 1972) until the 1840s when Marx laid the foundations for how people understand ideology today. To Marx, ideologies were the abstract products of social classes meant to instantiate and justify various elite economic systems. Ideologies provided the dual uses of justifying the wealth of the bourgeois and instilling within the lower classes a sense that the exploitive economic system was "right" and inevitable, which ensured worker compliance (Drucker 1972). In essence, Marx argued that material reality generated ideologies post-hoc.

In contrast to Marx's approach, Weber offered a paradigmatic shift in the understanding of ideology in his *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.* In that treatise, he outlines a model in which religious ideologies exercise causal influence, attributing the rise of modern capitalism to changes in the internal psychologies of religious protestants in North and Western Europe (Watson 1971). The shift away from the materialist basis of ideology in Marx to the neo-idealism of Weber reverberate

today, with various scholars considering ideology as both a cause and consequence of social organization, as both a product of collective justification and as part of an atomistic theory of motivation.[1] The complicated legacy of the concept of ideology is additionally troubled by its fashioning within sociology. To quote Siniša Maleševic in *Identity as Ideology* (2006:2):

> "The academic equivalent of a mullet is the concept of ideology. Whereas in the 1970s and 1980s this was an almost requisite idiom in any analyst's toolbox, since the 1990s the term has been relegated to the third division, suddenly replaced by the proliferation of new hip analytical concepts – 'discourse', 'meta-narrative', 'simulacra', and most of all 'identity'. As 'ideology' became almost universally identified as a research tool from a Marxist toolbox, and as Marxist inspired theories of social change lost their popular appeal, so the concept of ideology has been demoted."

Maleševic further describes how "identity" became the new, and more positive, idiomatic standard within sociological discourse. Individuals may bluster at accusations of being ideological but are keen to describe their pertinent identities. Whereas identity is said to capture how individuals conceptualize themselves as part of a group or role, an ideology can be currently defined "as a set of beliefs or worldviews, whether social, political, or religious, regarding how the social world is and/or should be arranged" and is tied to social groups and specific cultures that provide the beliefs or worldviews (Kay and Brandt 2016:110). In theory, a person can identify as a member of a group and yet not endorse its normative beliefs or practices and instead attempt to redefine the normative beliefs. Thus, despite what some might claim as a conceptual closeness between identity and ideology, the two are separate theoretical constructs. And, for too long ideology has been overlooked. Here, I attempt to understand the source and effects of ideology for theoretical reasons and do so among intermediately-statused Asian Americans for practical ones. Understanding group-based beliefs for one of the fastest growing racialized groups in America, especially ideas that relate to group boundaries, offers insight into how future intergroup interactions may unfold and why.

In this dissertation, I aim to augment the role of ideology as both consequence and cause (loosely constructed) by examining some potential sources and implications of ideologies relating to

Asian Americans. Specifically, I focus on ideology related to group boundaries, defining "closure ideology" as a set of beliefs concerning the strength of an ingroup's boundaries, the degree to which outgroup members are restricted from it, and the extent of the policing of those boundaries. Primarily, I examine the conditions under which Asians in the U.S. adopt closure ideologies and the social psychological impact of those ideas.

Chapter 1

Theories of group boundaries often state that groups erect social boundaries in an attempt to gain or protect valued resources in a field of competitive group relationships (Alba and Nee 2005; Wimmer 2013). Group members are logically invested in the benefits and resources associated with group membership and are therefore sensitive to threats to their group. In my first investigation, I analyze the extent to which Asian Americans' perception of *group* threat shapes their closure ideology. Most research on group threat and boundaries has primarily focused on the boundaries of White or Black Americans with increasing attention being paid to Hispanic Americans, but relatively little has focused on Asian Americans (Lee and Bean 2010). Two strategies that groups may adopt are: boundary expansion and boundary contraction. Expansion describes changing boundaries to make them more inclusive—indicating a more permissive closure ideology; contraction denotes changes that make this group narrower—indicating a more restrictive closure ideology. I argue that under threat Asian Americans are more likely to restrict access to their group than expand it. Using data from a nationally representative sample of Asian Americans in the United States from 2012, I utilize a series of logistic regressions to measure the impact of group threat on a number of outcomes related to closure ideology. This study contributes to the literature on race and boundaries in at least two ways. First, it is one of the first quantitative analyses to contextualize group threat and

boundaries in the context of Asian Americans. Second, it advances novel theorizing concerning intermediately situated racial groups and social closure.

Chapter 2

In Chapter 2, I examine the potential effects of *individual* threat on the closure ideology of Asian immigrants, framing the analyses within the study of racialized assimilation. Traditionally, scholars of assimilation in the U.S consider racialization, the process by which racial identities become ascribed to a social relationship or a social group that did not identify itself as such (Bonilla-Silva 2006), to be something that hinders assimilation. The racialized assimilation hypothesis suggests that for Asian Americans, racial transformation and assimilation may be co-occurring phenomena (Lee and Kye 2016). Lee and Kye (2016) argue that Asian immigrants, as a group, tend to have higher educational status and incomes than other racial groups, yet still combat experiences of discrimination daily. Relatively little research has examined the processes that may contribute to racialized assimilation. Experiences of perceived interpersonal discrimination may act as a mechanism to explain the racializing beliefs of Asian immigrants. Additionally, boundary theorists postulate that group boundaries exist to protect resources, suggesting that high incomes might make Asian immigrants more protective. An incentive to protect valued resources earned through economic assimilation may forecast the racialized assimilation hypothesis. Using data from a nationally representative sample of Asian immigrants in the United States, this research focuses on perceptions of immigration-related discrimination on closure ideology. Then I assess the relationship between discrimination, closure ideology, and income using stratified logistic regression analyses. In the context of this dissertation, this study provides more evidence about the sources of boundary formation. Whereas in Chapter 1, I examine how *group* threat may be associated to racialized boundary beliefs, in Chapter 2 I examine how the perception of *individual* threat may be associated to

racialized boundary beliefs. Additionally, by restricting the sample to immigrants, this study adds to the growing literature on the racialized processes within assimilation and integration studies.

Chapter 3

One of the most well-established relationships regarding race and health is the association between perceiving interpersonal discrimination and worse mental health (Paradies et al. 2015; Yip 2019). Research in this area typically seeks to determine what factors diminish or exacerbate the impact of discrimination. Although scholars often focus on social identity as a potential protective factor, findings pertaining to Asian Americans are equivocal in this regard, providing no consistent evidence for protection or exacerbation (Yoo and Lee 2008). In this chapter, I assess the role closure ideology may play at the intersection of discrimination and mental illness. Using the sample of Asian immigrants from Chapter 2, I first examine whether closure ideology is linked to discrimination-related mental illnesses at all, specifically looking at depression and anxiety. Then I assess whether closure ideology moderates the impact of two types of discrimination, immigrant and everyday, on both forms of illness. This chapter extends the work of my previous chapters in an important way by moving beyond the "causes" of closure ideology to some of its potential "consequences." Additionally, this Chapter extends my analyses of ideology and boundaries into the mental health literature, offering unique insights into a field that generally uses identity as its main social psychological driver of mental illness variation in racial minorities.

Taken altogether, this dissertation offers and assesses a novel concept, closure ideology, that has uses in a variety of contexts and fields, particularly for theorists of boundaries and intergroup interaction by providing operationalizations and arguments that will greatly aid future scholarship. Furthermore, by couching closure ideology within the theoretical tradition of Weber this dissertation provides consistent connections to classical ideas within sociology that evidence their ability to be

adapted to answer new questions in social psychology. Additionally, this body of work contributes immensely to a growing literature on Asian Americans who will continue to reshape America as demographic trends unfold. Last, utilizing quantitative analyses in each chapter engenders an array of starting points for future investigations relating to the questions raised throughout these studies, especially through qualitative and experimental investigations.

ENDNOTES

1. For fear of mischaracterizing, however, both Marx and Weber argued that material reality and ideas interact in a dialectical process to produce changes, but one could readily argue about the primacy that either theorist places on which is more causal (for a full discussion of this see Walton 1971).

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CHAPTER 1:

How Does Threat Impact Asian American Boundaries?

An Analysis of Group Threat and Closure Ideology

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Keywords: race, Asian Americans, boundaries, ideology

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ABSTRACT

How do members of racial minority groups draw their boundaries when their group is threatened? paid to Hispanic Americans, but relatively little has focused on Asian Americans (Lee and Bean 2010). Two strategies that groups may adopt are: boundary expansion and boundary contraction. Expansion describes changing boundaries to make them more inclusive—indicating a more permissive closure ideology; contraction denotes to changes that make this group narrower—indicating a more restrictive closure ideology. Little work, however, considers boundary strategies among groups whose social status is ambiguous, such as Asian Americans. This paper investigates which strategy Asian Americans, the fastest growing racial minority in the U.S., adopt under threat, arguing they are more likely to restrict access to their group than expand it. Using 2012 data from a nationally representative sample of Asian Americans in the United States, I utilize a series of logistic regressions to assess the impact of group threat on a number of outcomes related to racial group boundaries. Results demonstrate that believing discrimination is a major problem for members of one's racial group profoundly affects markers signaling group boundaries including more conservative beliefs about interracial marriage, increases in racial homophily, and decreases in the perception of interracial cooperation with White and Black Americans (but not Hispanic Americans, perhaps owing to their similar ambiguity in the American racial hierarchy). Findings from this investigation provide insight into how Asian Americans may continue to reconfigure their boundaries in the face of ongoing perceptions of threat.

Du Bois famously said, "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line" (Du Bois 1903:3). While in the twentieth century the color-line was mostly a Black-White divide, in twenty-first century America the problem of the color-line has splintered to include multiple colors, cultures, and issues. This new diversity stems from social changes, such as increasing globalization and migration. New pan-ethnic racial groups such as Asian and Latinx Americans represent a wide range of phenotypes, languages, and cultures that challenge traditional models of the racial hierarchy in the U.S. with their social status within that racial hierarchy very much up for debate (Bonilla-Silva 2004; Shiao 2017). Social scientists still understand relatively little about how groups define their racial boundaries. Previous scholarship by boundary theorists demonstrates a powerful relationship between a group's social boundaries and threats to their group status, wherein members of the group perceive that either material resources, such as access to capital, or symbolic resources, such as social status, are under attack (Stephan, Ybarra, and Morrison 2009). Importantly, the group status threat need only be perceived for it to impact attitudes and behaviors and not necessarily grounded in any factual basis.

In this study I investigate how Asian Americans draw their boundaries under conditions of group status threat. Scholarship around intergroup processes demonstrate that social groups react to group status threats with a number of strategies including either reasserting their ingroup identity or derogating outgroup members (Wimmer 2013). Boundary-making scholars also analyze more group based strategies that individuals may employ to protect their group's status— sharpening the boundaries between their group and others (Wimmer 2013; Abascal 2020). Most theories related to group boundaries suggest that racial groups should react to group status threats by restricting their social boundaries, homogenizing their membership to enhance the group's value and security. I refer to the constellation of beliefs about how open or closed one's social group boundaries should be as *closure ideology* and to beliefs that promote exclusivity of the group as being part of a restrictive

closure ideology. The current study investigates the possible boundary contraction among members of the Asian American community.

To investigate the effect of group status threat on closure ideology, I analyze data from a nationally representative survey of Asian Americans from 2012. Specifically, to instantiate group status threat, I examine how perceptions of discrimination as a major problem for their group affects outcomes related to group boundaries including interracial marriage beliefs, the practice of racial friend group homophily and beliefs about cooperation with outgroups. Ultimately, I find that perceptions of group status threat lead to a more restrictive closure ideology among Asian Americans. Additionally, I find that this association is only found amongst those whose social identity is linked to the category of Asian American demonstrating that there is a critical interaction between identity and ideology. The arguments and findings in this study further knowledge about the shaping of the Asian experience in the U.S. Moreover, the importance of such work cannot be understated especially as geopolitical concerns such as COVID19 continue to exacerbate discrimination against Asian Americans in the U.S. (Litam 2020) and highlight the need to understand more clearly how social forces shape racial experiences going forward.

BACKGROUND

Group Threat and Asian Americans

Since the passage of legislation in 1965 that essentially voided the Chinese Exclusion Act enacted in 1882, the number of Americans of Asian ancestry in the U.S. has increased tremendously, generating new questions about the traditional racial order (Daniels 2005). In particular, questions about how populations from various ethnic groups and nationalities coalesce and become racialized continue to demand answers. Some arguments emphasize how racial groupings are forced on others contributing to a racialized social system benefiting Whites (Bonilla-Silva 2006), while others

examine the way disparate groups come together on purpose to gain power (Okamoto 2003).

Either way, what is certain is that over the last 55 years Asian Americans have increasingly delineated social boundaries between themselves and other groups. By social boundaries, I refer to the rules concerning group membership that produce feelings of similarity and through which people acquire status and control resources (Lamont and Molnár 2002). Scholars who examine group boundaries have yet to fully investigate the potential sources of Asian American boundary-making. Some observers postulate that the relatively high incomes and education of Asian Americans suggest an eventual convergence with White Americans much like the racialized Irish and Eastern Europeans of the early twentieth century (Alba and Nee 2003; Bonilla-Silva 2006). In contrast, Lee and Kye (2016) describe the way that racial boundaries may be solidified by Asian Americans despite their structural integration. I extend this argument, emphasizing that the perception of group status threat leads to social boundaries becoming "solidified rather than dissolved," which may partially explain why Asian Americans may see continued economic integration but social separatism (Lee and Kye 2016, p.255).

The perception that an individual's group is under threat can take many forms. Some work distinguishes between threats to the ingroup as a whole (i.e., group threat) and individual threat where individual members experience threat as a function of their membership in a particular ingroup (Stephan and Renfro 2002). Stephan, Ybarra, and Morrison (2009) further delineate types of threats between realistic group threats, which focus on a group's power, resources, and general welfare, and symbolic group threats, which pertain to a group's religion, values, ideology, philosophy, or worldview. For example, a Black American female may sense that intermarriage raises symbolic threats owing to its potential to erase elements of black culture but may feel no realistic threat the group's power. Individual members of a group may fear that impairments to their group status increase the risk of losing both tangible resources, such as labor market outcomes for group

members (Jetten, Postmes, and McAuliffe 2002) and intangible resources such as group esteem (Branscombe, Spears, Ellemers, and Doosje 2002; Cameron, Duck, Terry, and Lalonde 2005). Awareness of discrimination—the perception of unfair treatment based on social group membership—suggests inequitable access to resources for one's social group or that the group's social status and power are relatively low. Both forms of discrimination indicate the perception of group threat.

Much recent work focused on Latino/a Americans has examined the role discrimination plays in shifting attitudes about race and social groups (Golash-Boza 2006; Golash-Boza and Darity 2008; Emeka and Vallejo 2011). This work shows that discrimination acts as a powerful catalyst of racialization, signaling otherness in a way few other social interactions do (Golash-Boza and Darity 2008; Krieger 2014). Experiences of discrimination imply that no matter the socioeconomic attainment, people, especially those in the majority group, may cast a given social group as "other" and not fully equal. Extrapolating from this body of work, I propose that awareness of discrimination, as an indication of general group status threat, shapes the strength of social boundaries for Asian Americans.

Boundary Strategies as a Result of Group Threat

Recent work by social psychologists highlights three potential responses to perceived group threat. The first is repositioning oneself within a social group. Researchers describe strategies of repositioning oneself relative to the group as "individual mobility" (Ellemers and Haslam 2012) or "positional moves" (Wimmer 2013), which suggest individually based strategies for navigating social boundaries as opposed to group-based strategies. An example of research that looks at individual boundary strategies is demonstrated in how Latin Americans chose to identify themselves, Golash-Boza (2006) found that higher education and English fluency indicated an increase in the likelihood

that they would identify as simply American, but that experiences with discrimination predicted the embrace of the Latino(a) American label, repositioning themselves as more racialized. These individuals had to grapple with perpetual otherness, and in the process, embraced a racial identity that gave visibility to their experience. A second, and perhaps more straightforward, argument states that when perceiving group threats individuals respond with outgroup vilification such as with intolerance and dehumanization (Skitka, Bauman, and Mullen 2004; Shamir and Sagiv-Schifter 2006). Individuals also change how they perceive various outgroup characteristics such as casting outgroups as more homogenous or changing attributions regarding an outgroup's behavior or outcomes (Rothgerber, 1997; Costarelli, 2005).

Aside from individual strategies such as repositioning and outgroup derogation, boundary scholars point to another potential route; members may alter their social group boundaries as an adaptation to threat, suggesting a more collectively oriented strategy as opposed to more atomistic strategies. Understanding the shifting boundaries between groups and how they transform has been a core sociological question since the founding of the discipline (Lamont and Molnár 2002). In this regard, classical sociological ideas help to develop a clearer understanding of the modern phenomena of how group threat may affect social boundaries for Asian Americans.

One especially useful theoretical idea is the Weberian concept of social closure (Weber 1968), which refers to how social groups protect their group boundaries to confer advantages among their members (Roscigno et al. 2007; Fiel 2015). Weber (1968) describes different types of social relationships characterizing groups including open relationships, where membership is open to anyone willing to join, and closed relationships, where membership is tightly controlled (Fiel 2015). In other words, some social groups have permissive social boundaries, whereas other groups have restrictive social boundaries. Restrictive social boundaries serve to protect members and their resources by limiting access to outsiders. I refer to the beliefs about how open or closed one's social

group boundaries should be as closure ideology and to beliefs that promote exclusivity of the group as representing a restrictive closure ideology.

While early scholars of social closure used the concept to explore class boundaries (Parkin 1974, 1979; Murphy 1988; Fiel 2015), arguments relating to social closure, and therefore closure ideology, can fluidly be extended to race through Weber's notion of ethnicity. Weber (1968) contextualizes ethnicity as the notion that for certain groups: "Their similarity rests on the belief in a specific honor of their members, not shared by the outsiders" (p. 390). The comparison of Weber's ethnicity to modern conceptions of race are parallel enough to persuasively argue that the concept social closure is applicable to racial groups. Furthermore, Weber delineates *status groups* as collections of people who share a history and culture or other non-economic features (Weber 1968). This concept can also apply to race in the U.S. In this sense, the shared experiences of Asian Americans and the unique challenges they face due to their specific cultural history make them a status group.

Social closure theorists posit two key group-based strategies in response to group-based threats. First, members of more privileged groups utilize social closure to exclude outsiders and thereby monopolize status and resources. Parkin (1974) calls this the exclusion principle. For instance, Simmel (1955) famously argued that as groups expand, there is more opportunity for differentiation within the group, whereas tightening boundaries lent itself to more homogeneity. He goes on to argue that groups in conflict tend to seek homogenization. He argues they are likely to do so because increasing homogeneity of the group, even if it shrinks its size, increases its solidarity and promotes successful organization in the face of group threats. For example, Abascal (2020) demonstrated that when group status threat is primed for White Americans, they fall back on more restrictive boundary strategies. In her study, she collected picture samples of racially ambiguous Hispanic individuals and presented them to different groups of White Americans. One group of White respondents was primed with information about the demographic decline of White

Americans in the U.S. and in this condition, they were far less likely to categorize the ambiguous pictures as White than individuals who had not been primed with demographic threat. Her findings suggest that in the face of group threat, dominant groups are likely to enact a boundary-making strategy of group contraction and exclusion, reflecting a more restrictive closure ideology.

Despite the prevalence of arguments linking group threat to the contraction of social boundaries, this pattern is not guaranteed. A second strategy that some group members may pursue is to expand their boundaries when faced with group threat, for example, by being more permissive with membership to increase group size thereby increasing the group's power. Okamoto's (2003) longitudinal analyses of pan-ethnic formation among Asian Americans bears this out wherein she finds that when Asian ethnic groups are located spatially close to one another, members chose to expand their boundaries from their smaller nationality group to the larger pan-Asian identity. Wimmer (2013) notes that such strategies for boundary expansion conferred Asian Americans with increased access to government welfare and affirmative action policies. Racialized pan-ethnic groups like Asian Americans, who have already demonstrated an ability to expand their boundaries, may be likely to continue that strategy under group threat.

So, if Asian Americans are a status group for which principles of social closure apply, are Asian Americans more likely to contract or expand their boundaries? To answer this question it is important to consider the status of Asian Americans. Kim (1999) importantly theorized that Asian Americans triangulate their position in the racial hierarchy somewhere between White and Black Americans, trading economic success in exchange for significantly less political power than other racial groups. This aligns with a view of Asian Americans as being a disadvantaged group with incentives to gain and protect resources and aligns with Okamoto's (2003) pan-ethnicity work that traced the development of individual Asian ethnic groups coalescing around the Asian American label to garner more power. Having merged various ethnic groups of Asian ancestry together in the

1960s and 1970s, Asian Americans are now seen as one of the five racial groups that comprise contemporary American life, alongside White, Black, Latinx, and Indigenous populations (Foldes, Duehr, and Ones 2008).

Theorists who posited in the early part of the 2000s that Latinx and Asian Americans were going to access an "honorary white" status have not borne fruit. Research, especially since the 2016 election, has emphasized that Latinos and Asians continue see increases in discrimination and worry about their place in America (Lopez, Gonzalez-Barrera, and Krogstad 2018). For example, Phoenix and Arora (2018) examined how racial groups may be primed by different emotions when engaged in political action. They found a strong positive association between expressed fear and electoral participation among Asian Americans, whereas other groups had stronger associations with anger. What is important here is that the Asian Americans racial group was analytically distinct and their responses uniquely motivated threat. The fact that threat and political power are uniquely associated within the Asian American community lends credibility to the continuing distinctiveness of the Asian American category that defy expectations of some further assimilation.

Thus, there is little evidence in the literature that Asian Americans have further increased the boundaries of their group since individual ethnic groups of Asian ancestry coalesced in the later part of the twentieth century. Moreover, there is little reason to suspect that Asian Americans, who remain politically disadvantaged, see any incentive to incorporate with other groups into some larger category such as Non-White that could potentially lead to losses in economic power, or integrate into Whiteness, which they increasingly see as associated with threat. Since social closure posits that disadvantaged group members challenge outgroups groups by pushing for strategies of solidarity with their ingroup (Parkin 1974), this principle of solidarity and exclusion is the most expected strategy threatened Asian Americans will endorse. Ultimately, this suggests the overarching

hypothesis for this paper: that for Asian Americans, perceived group status threat is positively related to more restrictive social closure ideology.

However, one pressing question in hypothesizing the ideology behind boundary contraction is determining how sociologists assess closure ideology. To capture robustly closure ideology among Asian Americans, I focus on several empirical indicators that, when assessed together as dimensions of closure ideology, should constitute evidence confirming or disconfirming the overarching hypothesis about Asian Americans, threat, and closure ideology. Additionally, I assess group status threat can be indicated a number of ways. In the aforementioned Abascal (2020) study, she primed group status threat through illustrating demographic changes. I assess group status threat through inquiring about the respondent's perceptions concerning discrimination against their group and whether they believe it is a foremost issue hindering their group in a generalized way. This operationalization is extremely useful as it is both about the collective fortunes of their racial group and discrimination is unambiguously a marker of lower status and of group-based jeopardy.

One dimension of closure ideology pertains to how groups police boundaries by determining who is allowed into the group via marriage. Scholars reason that group attitudes towards intermarriage and intimacy with out-group members represent a key measure of social distance, and an important indication about that group's social boundaries (Herek 1986; Biernat et al. 1996; Wyman and Snyder 1997). For the purposes of this analyses, I assess the extent to which Asian American respondents are uncomfortable with their children marrying someone without Asian background. Such that:

> *Hypothesis 1:* Respondents who perceive discrimination as a major problem for Asian Americans will be more likely than those who only perceive it as a minor problem to express more discomfort with exogamy.

A second dimension of the restrictiveness of one's closure ideology may be expressed in the lived experience of Asian Americans via their friend groups. Scholars explain racial homophily (Lazarsfeld and Merton 1954) as the tendency of individuals to associate with racially similar others. Some explanations of racial homophily emphasize the role of structure and racial segregation (Massey and Denton 1993) such as by arguing that physical togetherness is the most salient aspect of homophily while other explanations focus on individual agency such as some individualized cultural preference (McPherson et al. 2001). Additionally, others argue that homophily may be the product of group competition, with individuals choosing to align themselves with similar others as a safeguard (Giles and Evans 1986; Currarini, Jackson and Pin 2009). Presuming that group threat implies group competition, and that homophily indicates important information about an individual's social boundaries, individuals with more restrictive closure ideologies are likely to express more homophily than members of the group with more permissive ideologies. Thus:

> *Hypothesis 2:* Respondents who perceive discrimination as a major problem for Asian Americans will be more likely than those who only perceive it as a minor problem to have more racial homophily in their friend network.

Last, in addition to in-group preferences in marriage beliefs and friend networks, I suggest that outgroup perceptions are also an important dimension of closure ideology. Threats to group increase awareness of antagonism and should therefore decrease the perception of intergroup cooperation. An individual who perceives that their own ingroup, in this case Asian Americans, do not get along with specific outgroups (e.g., other identifiable racial ethnic groups) is not only acknowledging distinctive social boundaries, but endorsing that cooperative interaction ought to be limited to ingroup members. Therefore, I suggest that:

Hypothesis 3a: Respondents who perceive discrimination as a major problem for Asian Americans will be more likely than those who only perceive it as a minor problem to perceive less cooperation with White Americans.

Hypothesis 3b: Respondents who perceive discrimination as a major problem for Asian Americans will be more likely than those who only perceive it as a minor problem to perceive less cooperation with Black Americans.

Hypothesis 3c: Respondents who perceive discrimination as a major problem for Asian Americans will be more likely than those who only perceive it as a minor problem to perceive less cooperation with Hispanic Americans.

Social Identity as Moderating Effect

Additionally, scholars of intergroup threat indicate that members who are highly-identified with their group should be more likely than less-identified group members to both perceive and react to threats from an outgroup (Stephan et al. 2002). It is likely, then, that the more central a group identity is to individuals, the more strongly they will react to group threat, resulting in the expression of more restrictive closure beliefs. Some work already shows that group threat is linked to stronger personal identification for Asian Americans. For example, Masuoka (2006) found that as the perception of interpersonal discrimination increased, so did respondent's identification of being "Asian." If perceptions of threat are linked to stronger individual identification and threat is linked to boundary-making, then it is likely these two phenomena are connected.

The relationship between beliefs about one's self and the beliefs about how one's group should act may hinge on the notion of linked fate. Proponents of the concept of linked fate argue that given the power of racism in America, a minority individual's identity may motivate a strong connection to the needs of the racial group to which they belong (Dawson 1994; Tate 1994;

McClain et al. 2009). In essence, linked fate captures the ties between what happens to one member of a social group and what is happening to members of the whole social group and vice versa. Studies have extended the concept of linked fate, originally used to describe the experiences of Black Americans, to the experiences within Asian communities. For instance, some analyses find that linked fate is tied to political participation for Asian Americans (Lien, Conway, and Wong 2008; Masuoka 2006). In so far as social identity promotes beliefs thought to be in the interest of the group through linked fate, individuals who identify strongly as Asian American should be more sensitive to threats towards their ingroup versus those who endorse alternative primary identities like American. As such, social identity may condition the effects of group status threat on closure ideology; respondents' whose primary identity is that of American, as opposed to Asian American, may perceive limited group threat, which in turn should decrease the restrictiveness of their closure ideology whereas those identifying as Asian American may perceive greater group threat and thus lean toward more restrictive closure ideology.[3] In summary, the relationship between group threat and closure ideology will be stronger among those who identify as Asian American than those identifying more generally as American. As such, I predict:

> *Hypothesis 4a:* The relationship posited in *Hypothesis 1* regarding perceived discrimination and intermarriage will be stronger among those identifying as Asian American than those identifying as American only.
>
> *Hypothesis 4b:* The relationship posited in *Hypothesis 1* regarding perceived discrimination and friendship homophily will be stronger among those identifying as Asian American than those identifying as American only

METHODS

Data

Data for these analyses come from the Asian-American Survey (2012 done by the Pew Research Center. The total sample consisted of 3,511 Asian-American adults and was specified to only gather data on those eighteen and older living in the U.S. This probability sample aimed to account for a nationally representative sample of Asians living in the U.S. consisting of multiple and achieved coverage of approximately 95 percent of the Asian population living in the U.S. Additionally, the survey, targeted and oversampled the six largest Asian subgroups which are Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, Indian, or Vietnamese, as well as a smaller sample of Asians from other backgrounds. Each of the main six subgroups are roughly 0.4 percent to 1.3 percent of the adult U.S. population.

In order to ensure that the data on race was concordant with respondent's self-identification, only those who self-identified as some form of Asian American or marked one of the specific subgroups, i.e. Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, Indian, or Vietnamese, were qualified to take the survey. This included those whose self-identification was multiracial or those who also marked one of the Hispanic ethnicity categories. The question on racial identity also gave respondents the option to answer in a number of other racial categories including White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Interviews were conducted between Jan. 3 to March 27, 2012 in English and a number of other Asian languages including each in the languages of the six major Asian subgroups and including Mandarin and Cantonese for Chinese respondents.

Pew used a number of different weighting techniques to capture the complexity of the survey design. Pew utilized the 2010 American Community Survey microdata sample to balance the weights with the sample accounting for the population total of the Asian American adult population

in the U.S. Pew also used the January-June 2011 National Health Interview Survey as another way to ensure the balance of the final survey was correct once probability weights are included.

Measures

To operationalize closure ideology, I use a number of measures related to ideas about social boundaries. The first measure of closure ideology is an item on interracial marriage beliefs. The question was framed as "How comfortable would you be if a child of yours married someone who has no Asian background?" with initial attributes ranging from "Very comfortable, Somewhat comfortable, Not too comfortable or Not at all comfortable." I recode this item to be dichotomous where "0" was equal to "Very comfortable," indicating permissive closure ideology, and "1" was set to encompass "Somewhat comfortable" to "Not at all comfortable," indicating a more restrictive closure ideology.

A second item gauging friend group racial homophily assesses the boundaries of respondents' social circles. Respondents were asked a pair of questions with stem "how many of your friends in the U.S. are:" and then "from the same Asian background as you?" and "an Asian background from different countries than yours?" Attributes for both items were "All of them, Most of them, Some of them, Hardly any of them, None of them." I generated a dichotomous homophily variable by combining responses that included all or most of their friends being Asian to "1" versus some, hardly, or none being coded as "0."

Third, items related to intergroup cooperation constitute another means to assess a more restrictive closure ideology. The item was "How well do you think Asian Americans and [insert racial group] get along with each other these days?" Options for the item included "whites, blacks, Hispanic or Latinos" With responses varying from "Very well, Pretty well, Not too well, or Not at all well?" Attributes were coded such that higher scores indicate more perceived conflict or

antagonism with other racial groups with the lowest score being "Very well" coded as "0" and the highest being "Not at all well" coded as "3."

Turning to the theoretically relevant independent variables, perception of group status threat was measured by: "In general, to you think discrimination against Asian Americans is a major problem, minor problem, or not a problem?" Responses were recoded such that respondents who indicated discrimination as a major problem were coded as "1" and those who responded with a minor problem or not a problem were coded as "0." To evaluate the impact of social identity on the proposed relationships between group threat and closure ideology, I utilize an item asking: "People sometimes use different terms to describe themselves. In general, which ONE of the following terms do you use to describe yourself MOST OFTEN:" with possible answers including "[ethnic group] American, Asian American, American." Reponses were recoded such that "[ethnic group] American" and "Asian American" were coded as "0" and identifying as simply "American" was coded as "1." Due to this coding schema I refer to this variable as a marker of "de-identification."

I include standard sociodemographic controls for age, sex, income, education, citizenship, marital status, U.S. region, and region of Asian origin. Age was represented in years. Sex was coded as "Female" =1 and "Male" =0. Income was measured in a 9-category variable. Education was a four-attribute categorical variable: HS or Less, Some College, College Grad, and Post Grad. Citizenship status was coded as either "No" =0 or "Yes" =1. Marital status included "Married" = 1, "Single" = 2, and "Separated/Divorced" = 3. Region was measured as "Northeast, Midwest, South, West," which were respectively numbered 1-4. Last, region of Asian origin reflected each respondent's national origin. To shrink the number of attributes, countries of origin were recoded as either belonging to "East Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia," respectively numbered 1-3. Codes were as follows: 1) East Asian= Chinese, Taiwanese, Korean, Japanese 2) SE Asian= Filipino,

Vietnamese, Burmese, Cambodian, Hmong, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysian, Thai 3) South Asian= India, Bangladesh, Nepali, Pakistani, Sri Lankan.

Analytic Strategy

Means and standard deviations are assessed for continuous variables and percentages for categorical variables to examine distributions and establish baseline sample characteristics. Then, I fit the data on pair of logistic regressions examining the effects of group threat on intermarriage beliefs to test *Hypothesis 1* (Model 1) and racial homophily to test *Hypothesis 2* (Model 2). Models 3 through 5 utilize ordinal logistic regressions to examine the outgroup cooperation variables (*Hypotheses 3a-3c*). To test *Hypothesis 4a* and *4b*, I first reran Model 1 and Model 2 with an interaction term between group status threat and Asian identity and found that the interaction term was not significant (see Appendix A). However, there are cases when stratified models may be used even when the interaction term is insignificant because the differing underlying assumptions for interaction and stratified models.

For instance, Buckley et al. (2017) ran analyses grouped by sex in their study of endocrine disruptors. They separately interpreted both an interaction term analysis and stratified analysis. They found that the interaction term approach was biased when confounders had sex-dependent associations with the outcome. Compared to the traditional product of interaction analyses, they showed that stratified analyses were unbiased but less precise (Buckley et al. 2017). Additionally, there are theoretical reasons for stratifying analyses if there is an a priori reason for examining the coefficients of the respective strata, which in this case is predicated around those who identify racially versus those who do not. As to why there may be significant within strata effects but not between strata, one potential explanation is the large change in power known to affect interaction term analysis (Shieh 2008). A stratified sample useful is when the power of the analysis is greatly

transformed by the creation of the two subgroups, in this case based on social identity. The subgroupings here create an Asian identified category with an N of 2092 but a de-identified N of only 165 respondents. Due to this drastic change in the Ns, I conclude there is sufficient reason to expect that while the interaction term between group threat and identity may be insignificant due to sample size, it is theoretically important to assess the coefficients of the subgroups independently to understand them better. Therefore, to assess *Hypothesis 4a* and *4b,* I ran additional regression models pertaining to intermarriage beliefs and racial homophily stratified by the social identification measure. Models 6 and 7 assess stratified intermarriage beliefs outcomes while Models 8 and 9 represent identity stratifications for homophily. As logistic regressions are run for each model, odds ratios are reported in the text and tables.

All models used the complex survey design functions within STATA to adjust the results for full sample weighting including the jackknife function that estimates the specified statistics (or expressions) for a Stata command or a user-written program. The data was fit using the Pew provided full sampling weight variable. Postestimation diagnostics were run to ensure minimal collinearity and model specification. All analyses are conducted using Stata 14.2 and standardized betas are reported.

Sample Characteristics

Table 1 displays the unweighted descriptive statistics for the key theoretical variables in the models. For the various measures of closure ideology there is fairly similar variation between them. Roughly 54.2 percent of the sample reported more restrictive intermarriage beliefs and 51.9 percent reported relatively high racial homophily. Scores for outgroup cooperation are similar as well as the mean for White Americans ($\bar{x}$=0.85), Black Americans ($\bar{x}$=1.24), and Hispanic Americans ($\bar{x}$=1.09) all hover around "Pretty well." Although the mean for White Americans closer to 0 indicates that

respondents reported the most cooperation with this group. For both independent variables of interest there is significantly less variation. Roughly 85.3 percent of Asian Americans describe discrimination towards their group as either a "minor problem" or "no problem at all" while 14.7 percent perceive discrimination as a major threat to their group. Asian Americans were also far more likely to indicate some form of racialized identity (87.5 percent) as opposed to identifying ass simply American (12.5 percent).

[Table 1 about here]

Table 2 describes the demographic characteristics of the sample. Respondents range in age from 18-80 with an average age of 46.93. About 48.8 percent of the sample identifies as female and about 68.2 percent of the sample are citizens of the United States at the time of collection. The majority of the sample (59.7 percent) had college degrees or more and most likely hailed from the Western region of the United States (50.4 percent). The median income category is "50 to under $75,000." In terms of Asian origin, nearly half the sample is of East Asian decent (49.8 percent), followed by Southeast Asian (31.8 percent) and South Asian (18.4 percent).

[Table 2 about here]

RESULTS

Is Group Status Threat Associated with Intermarriage and Homophily?

Table 3 displays the standardized coefficients of logistic regression analyses for Model 1 and Model 2 testing *Hypothesis 1*, relating group threat to intermarriage beliefs, and *Hypothesis 2*, relating group threat to homophily, respectively. First attending to Model 1, results show that perceived group threat is associated a significant increase in the restrictiveness of interracial marriage attitudes for their ingroup (OR = 1.694, $p < .001$). In concert with my theoretical arguments, this suggests that threat generates an ideological barrier to boundary-crossing, signifying a more restrictive closure

ideology, and confirming *Hypothesis 1*. Model 1 also displays that respondents who were already married or cohabitating (OR = 2.283, $p < .001$) and respondents of South Asian descent (OR =1.688, $p < .01$) were also more likely to endorse more exogamic beliefs relative to their single and East Asian counterparts respectively. Conversely, Mode1 1 shows that higher incomes categories (OR = 0.899, $p < .001$) and higher educational levels, especially obtaining post graduate degree (OR = 0.514, $p < .01$), indicate considerably more open beliefs about interracial marriage. Taken together, these results imply that socioeconomic class status is closely linked with the marriage attitudes of Asian Americans. Respondents who chose to identify as American, versus some ethnoracial category, also were considerably more open to interracial marriage (OR = 0.441, $p < .001$), a result that will receive more attention when discussing *Hypotheses 4a* and *4b*.

[Table 3 about here]

Model 2 displays coefficients relating to homophily and, similarly, I find that group status threat is related to an increase in race-based homophily in the respondent's friend group (OR = 1.855, $p < .01$), consistent with *Hypothesis 2*. Similar to intermarriage beliefs, marriage or cohabitation are correlated with more homogenously Asian friend networks (OR = 1.402, $p < .05$) while indicators of class, income (OR = 0.919, $p < .001$) and post-graduate education (OR = 0.590, $p < .001$), are associated with more racial heterogeneity. Interestingly, there were no significant differences based on Asian descent like in Model 1, but citizenship became relevant in Model 2 being linked to more same race homophily (OR = 1.740, $p < .001$). Ultimately, Model 2 demonstrates support for *Hypothesis 2* building more evidence towards the conclusion that group status threat is connected to a more restrictive closure ideology. Multicollinearity was assessed using variation inflation factors (VIFs). The mean VIF for Model 1 and Model 2 were both 1.22 with no VIF above 2, well below common thresholds for multicollinearity (O'Brien 2007). Link tests were performed to address potential model specification errors. Link tests for Model 1 and Model 2

suggest no detectable specification errors.

Is Group Status Threat Associated with Outgroup Antagonism?

Models related to outgroup antagonism—*Hypotheses 3a-3c*— are displayed in Table 4. Results indicate general support for the prediction that group status threat will be associated with more perceived outgroup incompatibility. Specifically, group status threat is correlated to increases in perceived antagonism with White Americans (OR = 1.810, $p < .05$) and Black Americans (OR = 1.759, $p < .01$) but had no effect on perceived incompatibility with Hispanic Americans (OR = 1.305, $p > .05$). Altogether, results confirm *Hypothesis 3a* and *3b,* but not *Hypothesis 3c.* In terms of intergroup relations with White Americans, income, education, de-identification, and being of South Asian or Southeast Asian descent all showed decreases in antagonism with the dominant American racial group, while having U.S. citizenship displayed an increased perception of antagonism with them.

[Table 4 about here]

In terms of perceived antagonism with Black Americans, results parallel those of White Americans, indicating a consistency among factors related to this measure. The one exception in regard to Black Americans is with income, where income is related to less antagonism with White Americans (OR = 0.949, $p < .05$) it showed no such impact for Black Americans. Aside from disconfirmation of *Hypothesis 3c,* most other results related to intergroup cooperation with Hispanic Americans are similar to results regarding other Americans. Another exception here is citizenship status. While perceived antagonism with White and Black Americans was associated with respondent's citizenship, this was not the case for Hispanic Americans (OR = 1.187 $p > .05$). An overall pattern that emerges from the data in regard to these antagonism measures is that East Asians perceive significantly more antagonistic relationships with all three racial groups than South

and Southeast Asians and that higher education significantly increases the perception of intergroup cooperation.

Stratified Identity Models

Table 5 displays results Models 6 through 9 relating to whether the primary identification of the respondent as Asian American or simply American conditioned the relationship between group status threat and intermarriage beliefs and homophily. Regarding the intermarriage outcome in Models 6 and 7, the analysis finds that *Hypothesis 4a* is confirmed as group status threat was predictive of more restrictive beliefs in Model 6 (OR = 0.410, $p < .001$), for those who identified as Asian Americans, but not in Model 7 (OR = -.998, $p > .05$), for those who identified as American. Marital status was also important in this model as being married is associated with restrictive beliefs for those who identified as Asian American (OR = 0.808, $p < .001$), but not for de-identified individuals (OR = -0.114, $p > .05$). The patterns for Model 6 and 7 are largely replicated in Models 8 and 9 for homophily. Group status threat is linked to more homogenous friend groups for those who identified as Asian American (OR = 0.417, $p < .01$) but not for American (OR = .450, $p > .05$). This confirms *Hypothesis 4b* and provides evidence for an association between group threat and racial homophily that is conditioned on social identity.

[Table 5 about here]

DISCUSSION

So, how do Asian Americans react when they perceive that their group status is threatened? Findings suggest that when Asian Americans perceive group threat they react protectively, endorsing beliefs and strategies consistent with a more restrictive closure ideology. Aside from this broad conclusion, I draw three more specific conclusions from this study.

First, there is a strong association between sensing discrimination towards ingroup members and restrictive strategies and beliefs across a variety of outcomes related to social boundaries. Specifically, this study provides evidence that intermediary groups, such as Asian Americans, adopt ideologies similar to dominant social groups when faced with threat (see Abascal 2020 for an example of how dominant groups react to threat). For example, the analysis shows that perceived group threat is connected to a significant increase in the restrictiveness of interracial marriage attitudes for members of their ingroup. Since many theoretical arguments suggest that intermarriage constitutes an important indicator of social boundaries between groups (Biernat et al. 1996; Alba and Nee 2003)—something that has been found to be particularly salient for Asian Americans (Qian and Lichter 2011; Shiao 2017)—this result suggests that group threat solidifies the boundary between Asian Americans and other outgroups by normatively diminishing a central means by which outgroup members may join their ingroup.

Additionally, I find that the perception of group status threat is associated with more racially homogenous friend groups, providing evidence for the argument that group status threat, to borrow from Lamont and Molnár's (2002) dichotomy, pertains to both symbolic and social boundaries, addressing both cognitive and behavioral elements. Moreover, the analyses suggest perceiving generalized group threat led to decreases in the perception of cooperation with White and Black Americans but not Hispanics. The finding that perceptions changed for White and Black but not Hispanic Americans is consistent with theories that postulate Hispanic and Asian Americans as being both part of an American racial middle class of "honorary whites" (Bonilla-Silva 2004; Lee and Bean 2010). Seen as similarly situated others, the disconfirmed hypothesis regarding Asian-Hispanic cooperation indicates that Asian Americans perceive group competition between themselves and Hispanic Americans as fundamentally different than with White and Black Americans. However, the fact that group threat is associated with more antagonism towards both White and Black Americans

indicate that it is still a generalized tightening of the social boundary, and not simply oriented, for instance, towards the dominant racial group. This is relevant as a more restrictive closure ideology is meant to indicate a contraction of group boundaries generally and is not meant to be specifically oppositional. Taken together, these findings support the argument that the threat response strategy of Asian Americans is boundary contraction as opposed to expansion.

A second broad conclusion from the analyses is that socioeconomic status plays an important role in determining an Asian American's closure ideology. In every model higher income and/or education are associated with a more permissive closure ideology to a meaningful degree. These findings suggest that the continued structural integration of Asian Americans could lead to a weakening or blurring of Asian American social boundaries. Specifically, both increases in income and education level were associated with more cooperative beliefs towards White Americans but not for Black or Hispanic Americans. This suggests that Asian Americans may sense more economic competition with White Americans and that access to economic capital assuages this sense of competition with them to an extent not seen with Hispanic and Black Americans.

A third broad empirical focuses on the relevance of social identity in understanding when a more restrictive closure ideology may be "activated" for Asian Americans. In all models including the de-identification item it is significantly associated with more openness, supporting arguments that link identity and ingroup ideology, such as the literature on linked fate (Masuoka 2006). Moreover, when analyses are stratified specifically by the racial identification item, findings show that group threat only is only related to a more restrictive closure ideology for respondents who identified as Asian American and did not appear for individuals who most often identify as simply American. Put simply, identity, ideology, and threat are in large part conditional on each other.

A strength of this study is that it reinserts and quantitively extends social closure theorizing into broader discussions of race and boundary work especially as it pertains to intermediate groups.

In particular, the novel conceptualization of closure ideology provides a jumping-off point for many similar types of analyses merging more traditional sociological work and a modern analysis of ethnoracial differences. The closure ideology construct helps extend the social psychological race and boundary literature beyond solely using social identity as the central component in similar analyses. Applying classical theory to reveal changing intergroup beliefs of Asian Americans in the U.S continues the tradition of sociology answering questions about a rapidly changing society.

Nonetheless, several limitations of this study may propel a vigorous research agenda for future researchers. First, this study only used one item to assess group threat. Using only one item to assess such a complex construct as group status threat limits the robustness of the analyses. While the measure, which asked a question related to whether the respondent views discrimination as a major problem for their group, is only one item, the item is clear and concise enough to sufficiently indicate the perception of a more generalized awareness of group threat, a measure that is not commonly assessed on surveys of Asian Americans. In general, the existing scholarship on group threat and social boundaries has had empirical challenges when it comes to operationalizing the awareness of group threat, with many studies still innovating experimentally to find best practices (Lee and Kye 2016; Abascal 2020). The item chosen for this study is distinctly linked to a sense that Asian Americans face major social obstacles in society, and therefore is suitable for testing this study's hypotheses.

A second major limitation is the cross-sectional nature of the data. One could reasonably assume reverse causality for a number of the proposed and tested models. Establishing necessary or sufficient causality of any outcome with cross-sectional data, however, is near impossible and not the aim of this study. Instead, the theory and results establish evidence for a consistent and not-likely random association between perceptions of threat and more restrictive beliefs for Asian Americans.

Establishing that relationship is the core empirical aim of this study and should remain useful to future scholars who wish to pursue more longitudinal studies examining racial group ideologies.

A third notable limitation pertains to the sample size of the social identity analyses. Only about 13 percent of the sample predominantly identified as "American." While this is consistent with other studies that use the same measure, for example Golash-Boza (2006) found that 16 percent Hispanics identified as "American," it is likely that the smaller size of the sample increases estimation errors and that this study is missing some potentially significant results. Analyses related to the de-identification measure should be further investigated in the future with an over-sample of Asian respondents who primarily identify as American. Nonetheless, stratified models related to identity in this study are still estimating for a substantial population size, nearly 740,000 people, and are certainly adequate for providing evidence for the arguments in this paper.

In the wake of COVID-19 this type of research may be more important than ever, as the perception of threat against Asian Americans increases as a result of that crisis. The Asian Pacific Policy & Planning Council (2020) has uncovered thousands of hate crimes against Asians from March 19th to April 1, 2020 related to the pandemic. Moreover, analysis of social media showed a deluge in the use of anti-Asian language in 2020 (Schild et al. 2020). This study provides important answers as to how Asian Americans might adapt their ideologies going forward as threats to group status increase. In summary, this paper provides evidence that more restrictive strategies and ideas linked to group boundaries are interconnected to perceived group threat for Asian Americans, the boundaries of which have received relatively less attention than their White and Black counterparts. Beyond this central finding, this study provides evidence that structural factors, such as socioeconomic status, and social psychological factors, such as an individual's social identity, are both relevant to the dialectical between threat and ideology.

ENDNOTES

1. To illustrate this point, consider a survey study on attitudes toward immigrants in Germany, conducted by Semyonov, Raijman, Tov, and Schmidt (2004).

2. For this definition, I adapt Lamont and Molnár's (2002) definition of symbolic boundaries. They contest that symbolic boundaries are intersubjective beliefs whereas social boundaries are the objective distinctions concerning material resources and patterned behavior of social groups. While I acknowledge their argument as a useful distinction in some cases, for the purposes of this analyses both symbolic and social boundaries will mean the same thing.

3. Using identification as an ethnoracial American versus those who primarily identify as American has been used in previous work to assess racial identification (Golash-Boza 2006).

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TABLES

Table 1. Sample Characteristics of Key Variables

Variable	Mean /Percentage	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Intermarriage Beliefs				
Permissive	45.8%		0	1
Restrictive	54.2%		0	1
Homophily				
Some to None	48.1%		0	1
All or Most	51.9%		0	1
Lack of Outgroup Cooperation				
White Americans	0.85	0.59	0	3
Black American	1.24	0.74	0	3
Hispanic Americans	1.09	0.66	0	3
Group Threat				
Minor Problem or less	85.3%		0	1
Major Problem	14.7%		0	1
De-identification				
Asian American	87.5%		0	1
Just American	12.5%		0	1
N	3,332			

Table 2: Sample Characteristics for all control variables.

Variable	N	Mean/ Percentage	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Age	3,332	46.93	16.24	18	80
Income	2,976		2.65	1	9
Less than $10,000	312	10.48			
10 to under $20,000	294	9.88			
20 to under $30,000	244	8.2			
30 to under $40,000	213	7.16			
40 to under $50,000	236	7.93			
50 to under $75,000	429	14.42			
75 to under $100,000	403	13.54			
100 to under $150,000	406	13.64			
$150,000 or more	439	14.75			
Education					
HS or Less	3,320	23.8%			
Some College	3,320	16.4%			
College Grad	3,320	32.6%			
Post Grad	3,320	27.1%			
Sex					
Male	3,332	51.2%			
Female	3,332	48.8%			
Citizenship					
Yes	2,570	68.2%			
No	2,570	31.8%			
Region of Asian Origin					
East Asian	3,278	49.8%			
SE Asian	3,278	31.8%			
South Asian	3,278	18.4%			
Marital Status					
Single	3,325	20.5%			
Married or Cohabitating	3,325	67.7%			
Divorced/Widowed	3,325	11.8%			
U.S. Region					
Northeast	3,332	20.3%			
Midwest	3,332	9.4%			
South	3,332	20.0%			
West	3,332	50.4%			

Table 3: Logistic Regression Analyses on Intermarriage Beliefs and Homophily respectively

Variables	Model 1	Model2
	Endogamic Beliefs	Homophily
Group Status Threat	1.694***	1.855**
	(0.15)	(0.20)
De-identification	0.441***	0.470**
	(0.18)	(0.22)
Income	0.899***	0.919***
	(0.03)	(0.02)
Education (HS Degree)		
Some College	0.673	0.791
	(0.22)	(0.22)
College Grad	0.715*	0.958
	(0.17)	(0.19)
Post Grad	0.514**	0.590***
	(0.20)	(0.15)
Female	1.120	1.238
	(0.13)	(0.14)
Citizenship	1.228	1.740**
	(0.17)	(0.17)
Asian Ancestry (East Asian)		
SE Asian	0.839	0.980
	(0.20)	(0.15)
South Asian	1.688**	0.903
	(0.18)	(0.21)
Marital Status (Single)		
Married / Cohabitating	2.283***	1.402*
	(0.17)	(0.17)
Divorce/Widowed/Separated	1.388	1.015
	(0.27)	(0.26)
Observations	2257	2257
Population	8,079,042	8,079,042
Replications	100	100
Design df	99	99
F	5.23	8.31
Prob > F	0.000	0.000

* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001

+Non-significant controls are excluded from tables

Table 4: Logistic Regression Analyses on Intergroup Antagonism

Variables	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	White Antagonism	Black Antagonism	Hispanic Antagonism
Group Status Threat	1.810*	1.759**	1.305
	(0.28)	(0.18)	(0.23)
De-identification	0.605*	0.557*	0.581*
	(0.24)	(0.23)	(0.23)
Income	0.949*	0.967	0.983
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Citizenship	1.583**	1.348*	1.187
	(0.17)	(0.14)	(0.13)
Education (HS Degree)			
Some College	0.636*	0.734	0.466**
	(0.18)	(0.23)	(0.25)
College Grad	0.547**	0.568***	0.430***
	(0.20)	(0.15)	(0.20)
Post Grad	0.607*	0.632*	0.514***
	(0.21)	(0.19)	(0.19)
Asian Ancestry (East Asian)			
SE Asian	0.630***	0.465***	0.685*
	(0.13)	(0.14)	(0.17)
South Asian	0.508***	0.424***	0.499***
	(0.17)	(0.22)	(0.15)
Observations	2,171	2059	2032
Population	7,760,791	7,383,336	7,316,978
Replications	100	100	100
Design df	99	99	99
F	10.13	9.18	8.65
Prob > F	0.000	0.000	0.000

* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p < .001

+Non-significant controls are excluded from tables

Table 5: Logistic Regression Analyses on Intermarriage and Homophily Stratified by Identity

Variables	Endogamic Beliefs		Homophily	
	Asian American	American	Asian American	American
	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
Group Status Threat	1.765***	0.147	1.795**	2.323
	(0.16)	(1.17)	(0.21)	(1.12)
Income	0.917**	0.619***	0.929**	0.760*
	(0.03)	(0.10)	(0.02)	(0.11)
Female	1.115	0.878	1.156	4.258**
	(0.13)	(0.57)	(0.14)	(0.54)
Citizenship	1.261	0.760	1.659**	4.780
	(0.17)	(0.91)	(0.17)	(0.95)
Education (HS Degree)				
Some College	0.722	0.0429**	0.861	0.141*
	(0.22)	(0.97)	(0.23)	(0.98)
College Grad	0.755	0.145*	0.950	0.639
	(0.17)	(0.82)	(0.20)	(0.91)
Post Grad	0.537**	0.161*	0.586**	0.332
	(0.21)	(0.83)	(0.16)	(0.73)
Marital Status (Single)				
Married / Cohabitating	2.357***	0.870	1.251	8.520*
	(0.19)	(0.73)	(0.16)	(1.02)
Divorce/Widowed/Separated	1.421	0.974	0.949	5.185
	(0.28)	(1.10)	(0.27)	(1.40)
Observations	2092	165	2,092	165
Population	7,341,309	737,734	7,341,309	737,734
Replications	100	71	100	71
Design df	99	70	99	70
F	5.07	2.71	8.34	3.74
Prob > F	0.000	0.004	0.000	0.000

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

+Non-significant controls are excluded from tables

APPENDIX A

Interaction Effect between Group Status Threat and Social Identity

	Model 1	Model2
	Intermarriage	Homophily
Group Status Threat	1.744***	1.773**
	(0.28)	(0.36)
De-identification	0.459***	0.439***
	(0.09)	(0.10)
Group Threat X Identity	0.588	2.656
	(0.45)	(1.86)
Age	1.000	1.008
	(0.00)	(0.01)
Education (HS Degree or Less)		
Some College	0.669	0.797
	(0.14)	(0.18)
College Grad	0.709*	0.970
	(0.12)	(0.18)
Post Grad	0.511**	0.595**
	(0.10)	(0.09)
Female	1.116	1.243
	(0.14)	(0.17)
Citizenship	1.234	1.730**
	(0.21)	(0.30)
Asian Ancestry (East Asian)		
SE Asian	0.840	0.979
	(0.17)	(0.15)
South Asian	1.691**	0.900
	(0.30)	(0.19)
Marital Status ((Single)		
Married / Cohabitating	2.289***	1.398
	(0.40)	(0.24)
Divorce/Widowed/Separated	1.385	1.018
	(0.37)	(0.26)
U.S. Region (Northeast)		
Midwest	0.645*	0.672
	(0.14)	(0.17)
South	0.903	0.618*
	(0.22)	(0.14)
West	0.902	0.768
	(0.24)	(0.14)
Income	0.898***	0.920***
	(0.03)	(0.02)
Observations	2257	2257
Population	8,079,042	8,079,042
F	7.51	8.98
Prob > F	0.000	0.000

CHAPTER 2

Discriminatory Transformations:

Examining the Racialized Assimilation of Asian Immigrants

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ABSTRACT

Asian immigrants, as a group, tend to have higher educational status and incomes than other racial groups, yet still combat experiences of discrimination daily. This paper investigates how discrimination shapes the social boundaries of Asian immigrants, and in so doing, highlights racialized assimilation—a phenomena where racial transformation and assimilation co-occur for immigrants. Relatively little research has examined the processes that may contribute to racialized assimilation. Experiences of interpersonal discrimination may act as a mechanism to explain the racializing beliefs of Asian immigrants. Using data from a nationally representative sample of Asian immigrants in the United States, this research focuses on perceptions of immigration-related discrimination on a specific form of racialization, closure ideology, that emphasizes an individual's beliefs about their group boundaries. Since theorists of group boundaries suggest threats to resources as acritical reason for individuals to feel protective of their groups, I examine the relationship between discrimination and closure ideology at high versus low income levels. Findings from ordinal logistic regression models demonstrate that discrimination does shape the way Asian immigrants view their group boundaries at above average incomes but not at below average levels. The results suggest that Asian immigrants, especially at high socioeconomic status levels, adopt more restrictive closure ideologies. These findings lend credibility to arguments concerning the racialized assimilation of Asian immigrants in the U.S. and suggest that aspects of assimilation and racialization are more closely linked than previously thought.

Since 1965, millions of new immigrants have entered the country from regions phenotypically different than the mostly white and black population of the U.S. (Lee and Bean 2010; Cohn 2015). These migrants represent a wide range of phenotypes, languages, and cultures that challenge traditional models of racialization and assimilation. In particular, immigrants from East Asia confront an American racial system that forces on to them the racial designation of "Asian," a racial designation infused with stereotypical images and has led to well-documented issues with discrimination (see Chou and Feagin 2014; Lee and Kye 2016). In an American context that is increasingly hostile to new immigrants, the importance of understanding the consequences of discrimination cannot be underestimated.

This paper focuses on how perceived discrimination impacts the ideologies of the fastest-growing group of racialized migrants: Asian immigrants. In doing so, this study investigates one mechanism that may explain how racial boundaries form for this group despite its relatively high socioeconomic status, a traditional marker of assimilation. In contrast to immigration scholars who generally associate racial boundary formation with downward mobility, Golash-Boza (2006) argues that immigrants may be successfully integrating in structural ways while at the same time strengthening racial identities through interactional experiences (Portes and Zhou 1993). Thus, she suggests that racialization and assimilation are actually co-occurring processes and not mutually exclusive routes for immigrants. However, the few studies of racialized assimilation to date have focused on how discrimination shapes internal racial identity (Lee and Kye 2016). This paper focuses on an area that has received less attention: how perceptions of interpersonal discrimination impact social boundaries, i.e. beliefs about who people allow in their social groups. Specifically, I examine the influence of perceived discrimination on Asian immigrants' ideology about integration.

To address racialized assimilation among Asian immigrants I first briefly consider racialized assimilation's applicability to this group. Second, I couch the racialized assimilation of Asian

immigrants in terms of closure ideology, conceptualized as the extent to which group members police the boundaries of their racial group. In theorizing about closure ideology, I argue that increases in perceived immigrant discrimination will elicit a more restrictive closure ideology (operationalized through racial intermarriage beliefs), and that this restrictive closure ideology should be more evident at higher levels of income. Last, I assess quantitively these arguments using a dataset of Asian immigrants living in the United States.

BACKGROUND

Racialized Assimilation and Asian Immigrants

For many years well into the twentieth century, federal immigration policy limited immigration to those who presented as white, thereby eliminating the need to consider the racial dynamics of immigration (Daniels 2005). Yet with changes in immigrant patterns since the mid-century, new issues concerning racialization and immigration have emerged. Racialization is the "extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice, or group" (Omi and Winant 1986: 111). The concept of racialization transforms the static understanding of race into a dynamic process. More so than a fixed conception of a set number of "races" that reinforces the essentialist idea that races are real in some biological sense, racialization sees race as part of an ongoing ever-changing social process that occurs at both the structural and interpersonal level (Omi and Winant 2014).

Omi and Winant's (2014) seminal theory of racial formation describes how racial meanings are applied to groups from the top-down, inserting power and domination into the ascription of racial meaning. Other scholars emphasize that racialization occurs not only in a top-down fashion, but groups can also racialize themselves (Miles and Brown 2003). Regardless of the causal direction, the racialization of groups and individuals marks a separation from the dominant social group,

restricting access to societal power and resources and limiting opportunities for integration (Silverstein 2005). As Gonzalez-Sobrino and Goss (2019) write: "...racialization is understood as a racial logic that delineates group boundaries" (p.506-507). Consequently, assimilation and racialization—integration versus separation—appear paradoxical. However, researchers have hardly examined the impact that race and racialization have had on immigrants, in part due to the historical restriction placed on phenotypically different immigrants. Scholars who have begun to look at the racial component of immigrant assimilation have found evidence that these may actually be co-occurring processes (Golash-Boza 2006; Golash-Boza and Darity 2008; Lee and Kye 2016).

When researching how Latinx migrants chose to identify themselves, Golash-Boza (2006) found that while higher education and English fluency indicated an increase in the likelihood that they would identify as American, experiences with discrimination pushed them to embrace the Latino(a) American label, a racialized identity. She labels this process, where immigrants assume racial identities that make sense in the contemporary United States regardless of structural integration, racialized assimilation (Golash-Boza 2006). These immigrants and their children were just as American as any citizen yet had to grapple with perpetual otherness, and in the process, embraced an identity and social grouping that gave visibility to their experience.

Lee and Kye (2016) extend the idea of racialized assimilation more formally to Asian immigrants to explain some of the complicated questions surrounding the unique position of Asians in American society. Due to the relatively high socioeconomic status of Asians living in the U.S., researchers have proposed that they are on track to assimilate in ways similar to many of the European groups of the early twentieth century and are trending towards what some have called "honorary whiteness" (Alba and Nee 2003; Bonilla-Silva 2006). However, they argue that ties of socioeconomic status to assimilation are overstated and such positions ignore research emphasizing the ways Asians continue to face marginalization (Xu and Lee 2013; Chou and Feagin 2014). In

summary, the relatively high incomes and educational status of Asians in the U.S. indicates structural assimilation and *simultaneously* indicates being racialized to see themselves as "others" culturally. By social boundaries, I refer to the rules concerning group membership that produce feelings of similarity and through which people acquire status and control resources (Lamont and Molnár 2002).[1]

Most research to date examining racialized assimilation has focused on the role of discrimination as a racializing force (Golash-Boza 2006; Golash-Boza and Darity 2008; Emeka and Vallejo 2011). To understand how immigrants become racialized, researchers often use individual's perceptions of discrimination—the perception of unfair treatment based on social group membership. Discrimination is a powerful catalyst of racialization, signaling otherness in a way few other social interactions do (Golash-Boza and Darity 2008; Williams et al. 2019). Experiences of discrimination imply that no matter immigrant legal status or socioeconomic attainment, they are "other" and not seen as fully equal. In each of the aforementioned studies looking at racialized assimilation and Latinx immigrants, discrimination was used to assess shifts in social identity. In a similar way, I propose using discrimination to examine the racialization process of Asian immigrants, but with particular focus on how discrimination shapes their social boundaries instead of their social identities. To explain how discrimination may impact social boundaries for Asian immigrants, I use of the theoretical perspective known as social closure.

The Social Closure Perspective

To date, little research has examined how discrimination may impact social boundaries for immigrants, not just their social identities as previous work has demonstrated. Understanding the boundaries between groups and how they form has been a core sociological question since the founding of the discipline (Lamont and Molnár 2002). In this regard, classical sociological ideas can

contribute to developing a clearer understanding of the modern phenomena of racialized assimilation. Therefore, to address the connection between discrimination and social boundaries, I use the Weberian concept of social closure (Weber 1968).

The concept of *social closure* refers to how social groups protect their group boundaries to confer advantages among their members (Roscigno et al. 2007; Fiel 2015). Weber (1968) describes different types of social relationships that groups can have including open relationships, where membership is open to anyone willing, and closed relationships, where membership is tightly controlled (Fiel 2015). In other words, some social groups have very loose social boundaries, whereas other groups have restrictive social boundaries. Restrictive social boundaries serve to protect members and their resources by defending them from outsiders. While Weber describes a number of different social groups for whom this applies, the closest analogy to Asian immigrants in Weber's writings is perhaps what he calls status groups. *Status groups* are collections of people who share a history and culture (Weber 1968). In this sense, the shared experiences of Asian populations migrating to America and the unique challenges this brings due to their specific racialized history make them a status group. While early scholars of social closure used the concept to demarcate class boundaries (Parkin 1974, 1979; Murphy 1988; Fiel 2015), Weber (1968) also applies it to ethnicity: "The belief in common ethnicity often delimits 'social circles.' … Their similarity rests on the belief in a specific honor of their members, not shared by the outsiders" (p. 390). Interpreting Asian immigrants as type of status group facilitates understanding of how perceptions of prejudice and discrimination would elicit social closure.

These groups may use any number of means to enforce group boundaries, generally closing off groups in the face of threat (Branscombe et al. 2002). Research demonstrates that perceptions of threat, of which discrimination serves as a type, may lead to more favorable ingroup attitudes, and even increase the perceived similarity among ingroup members (Karasawa, Karasawa, and Hirose

2004; Stephan, Ybarra, and Morrison 2009). This increased favorability and closing or tightening of group boundaries is the process of social closure. Social closure among groups results in differential levels of power and status, which play a critical role in social conflict and inequality (Murphy 1988; Fiel 2015).

The concept of social closure encompasses three main pathways for individuals and groups facing discrimination to undertake. First, more privileged groups utilize social closure to exclude outsiders and thereby monopolize status and resources. Parkin (1974) calls this the exclusion principle. For example, in racial terms, the dominant group in the U.S. is White Americans, and for much of the early twentieth century, they used the courts to ensure whiteness belonged to a select few. In both Takao Ozawa v. the United States (1922) and United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind (1923) judges ruled that those of Japanese or Indian descent—regardless of caste—were not to be considered White. Such rulings established the denial the legal benefits of whiteness and effectively closed off access to resources to Asians living in the U.S. (the United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind 1923; Takao Ozawa v. the United States 1922). These exclusionary practices are especially true in terms of immigration, where immigration- specific social and legal institutions exist to regulate the maintenance of the dominant group boundary.

Second, disadvantaged groups challenge these monopolies by pushing for solidarity, securing what resources they have against the privileged group. Parkin (1974) calls this the solidarity principle. For example, the Black Power movements of the 1960s represent disadvantaged groups coalescing around their group membership to secure access to resources, primarily looking out for their insiders. A third option exists when a social group member attempts to simply reposition themselves in regard to some previous social group membership. The process of dis-identifying is called the individuation principle (Banton 2008). Individuals then may try to pass as members of other social groups. As these principles aid discussions of racialized assimilation, the question becomes will

Asian immigrants be more likely to adopt the solidarity principle— increasing ingroup favoritism and differentiation—or the individuation principle—advocating for more racial group mixing through advocating a more individualistic stance.

Discrimination and Closure Ideology

Social closure is a straightforward way to understand how perceptions of discrimination will influence why Asian immigrants seek to protect their social boundaries. Membership in social groups imparts common traditions, values, and language and provides social and financial resources that people seek to protect (Stephan et al. 2002; Tajfel and Turner 2004). As a consequence—and as Social Identity Theory postulates—social group members generally view their group positively and seek to protect it and their resources (Branscomb et al. 2002; Tajfel and Turner 2004; Yip 2018). From a social closure perspective, individuals sensing threats in the form of discrimination will restrict access to their group to protect its resources. This connection between social closure and discrimination is not new, but perhaps can be reframed to apply to more sociological inquiry (Rothgerber 1997). In many ways, discrimination, or perceived discrimination rather, serves as a type of interaction symbolizing the relative importance of a social characteristic throughout everyday life. Perceived discrimination marks that individuals are in a socially competitive environment and that their collective identity is relevant (Sue et al. 2009; Fuller-Rowell et al. 2018).

In this sense, perceiving discrimination acts as a closure mechanism, spurring a set of called beliefs called *closure ideology,* which refers to how restrictive or permissive one's social group boundaries and membership should be. Closure ideology lies on a continuum where an individual who believes that their group membership and resources should be closed off to all nonmembers is the most *restrictive*, and someone who believes their group should be completely open would be considered the most *permissive.* This continuum is different from the one proposed by Weber or

Parkin in that it is purely a measure of an individual's beliefs about his or her group rather than of the actuality of the open or closed nature of a group's membership (Weber 1968; Parkin 1974; Murphy 1988). Its theoretical and analytic utility extend social closure to the realm of interacting individuals, thereby constituting a more social psychological approach than that envisioned by Weber. Beyond consistency with social closure, the examination of perceived discrimination and closure ideology is similar to other research that emphasizes understanding social boundary formation but with a new focus on ideology (Stephan and Stephan 2017).

Essential to the discrimination-closure ideology link is understanding how unequal treatment is perceived, not necessarily whether it occurred in some objective sense. Asian immigrants may identify occurrences of racism in a completely subjective sense, and this does not diminish in any way its negative consequences (Chou and Feagin 2014). Discriminatory behaviors by American society do not have to be explicitly driven by racism and xenophobia against Asian immigrants for Asian immigrants to sense hostility (Kessler et al. 1999; Paradies et al. 2015). Discriminatory behaviors may be, for the most part, unconscious and subtle (Krieger 2014). What is important, however, is how minority group members perceive their treatment by others, not the motivations of the dominant group members. Individuals who perceive they are facing high levels of discrimination in their daily lives due to racial or immigrant status would feel that groups, in the context of American racism, are competitive and antagonistic towards one another, regardless of their educational or financial successes.

In this way, closure ideology is a potential factor undergirding racialized assimilation processes. An individual's closure ideology can be formed independently of their financial or educational status as it is a result of a separate racialization process. They are distinct but linked forms of competition—one materially-based, one status-based—which allow, under the right conditions, an individual to be racialized and possess a restrictive closure ideology and yet be

structurally assimilated. In fact, the forces of racialization, as signified by closure ideology, may be more salient for those already at high incomes due to their increased resource levels. Those with more resources have more to lose from differential treatment. Therefore, I hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 1: Increased perceptions of immigrant discrimination will be positively related to a more restrictive closure ideology.

Hypothesis 2: The positive relationship between perceived immigrant discrimination and restrictive closure ideology will be stronger at higher levels of income than at lower levels.

The Effect of Social Identity

Additionally, the strength of individuals' social identity as members of the group may moderate link between discrimination and closure ideology. The work that spurred discussions of racialized assimilation examined the impact of discrimination on social identity, utilizing social identity as the marker for racialization. Scholars found that Latinos and Latinas who faced discrimination were more likely to identify with their ethnoracial group, here using social identity as the key dependent variable (Golash-Boza and Darity 2008). Other results demonstrate a similar pattern in Asian American populations, although not explicitly for immigrant only populations. For example, Masuoka (2006) found that discrimination played a role in determining which Asian Americans felt a strong pan-ethnic "Asian" identity relative to Asian Americans who perceived that discrimination was an irrelevant factor in their lives. She found that as the strength of feelings concerning discrimination increased, so did perceptions of being "Asian" (Masuaoka 2006). This pattern reinforces the notion that discrimination acts as a type of racializing force for this population.

Therefore if, as other researchers argue, a racial identity is a part of the racializing process and, as I argue, closure ideology may be the product of a racializing process, social identity might

condition the effects of perceived discrimination on closure ideology. This relationship between beliefs about one's self and the beliefs about how one's group should act may hinge on the notion of linked fate. The concept of linked fate describes how an individual member of a given social group's interests are tied to the interests of their group overall (Dawson 1994; Tate 1994; McClain et al. 2009). In essence, linked fate is the idea that what happens to one member of a social group is tied to what is happening to members of the whole social group and vice versa. Although originally linked fate was utilized to describe the experiences of Black Americans, studies have demonstrated the prevalence of this idea within Asian communities. Scholars find that linked fate is tied to political participation for Asian Americans (Masuoka 2006; Lien, Conway, and Wong 2008).

Insofar as social identity promotes more beliefs thought to be in the interest of the group through linked fate, individuals with strong social identities may be more sensitive to the destruction wreaked by group members' exposure to discrimination. As such, social identity may moderate the effects of perceived discrimination on closure ideology. This leads to hypothesis:

> *Hypothesis 3:* The impact of discrimination on closure ideology will be greater for those with strong social identities. In the absence of a strong social identity, discrimination may be less impactful on closure ideology.

METHODS

Data

To test the proposed hypotheses, I use data from the National Latino and Asian American Study (NLAAS). The NLAAS is one of the few surveys that contains a nationally representative sample of Asian Americans and Asian immigrants in the U.S. Importantly, this dataset includes a number of key questions relevant to group beliefs and social identity (Alegria et al. 2004). The NLAAS sampling procedure utilized a multistage stratified area probability design where certain

Census block groups were oversampled, targeting those of Chinese, Filipino, and Vietnamese origin. These sampled block groups were at least 5 percent of any of those nationalities. Then the NLAAS sampled a second respondent from households where someone else from that house had already participated. The NLAAS is a component of the larger Collaborative Psychiatric Epidemiological Survey (CPES) which seeks to measure epidemiological phenomenon for minority groups in the United States. To test the hypotheses, I use only the Asian respondents of this survey.

Respondents were recruited between 2002-2003 from 25 different states.[2] All respondents were 18 years and were non-institutionalized. The response rate for the Asian respondents was 83.5 percent. To ensure accurate generalizability, I only used respondents who answered explicitly as "Vietnamese," "Chinese," "Filipino," or "All Other Asian" on the Race/Ancestry measure. This produced an initial sample of 2,095. However, since the arguments in this paper focus on how immigrants respond to discrimination, only those who were born outside the U.S. were included. Thus the analysis pertains to a sample size of 1,641 immigrants of Asian descent.

To administer the questionnaire in a way that was as inclusive as possible, the NLAAS utilized interviewers who spoke the relevant languages and came from similar cultural backgrounds. The questionnaire itself was available to respondents in multiple languages including English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Spanish. NLASS administered questionnaires in languages other than English for 64 percent of the respondents. Respondents in the sample participated in face-to-face interviews, unless this was not possible or if respondents requested telephone interviews expressly.

Measures

The dependent variable of interest is closure ideology. To operationalize what individuals within racial groups believe about their group's boundaries, I use an item addressing attitudes

towards interracial marriage. The question as it appears in the NLAAS is: "How important do you think it is for people who are in your racial group to marry other people who are the same race?" Original attributes were a four-category Likert-type variable coded as: 1= "Not at all important" 2= "Not very important" 3= "Somewhat important" 4= "Very important." This item was recoded as a dichotomous variable such that categories "Somewhat important" and "Very important" are indicated as 1 to reflect restrictiveness whereas "Not at all important
and "Not very important" are coded as 0. This change more effectively highlights the difference between permissive and restrictive ideologies. Thus, higher scores represent more a restrictive racial closure ideology.

I operationalize the concept of immigrant discrimination via a three-item scale adapted from the Mexican American Prevalence and Services Survey (Vega et al. 1998). Respondents reply either 0 = "No" or 1 = "Yes" to questions about: "difficulty finding work due to Asian descent," being "treated badly due to poor/accented English," and "interaction hard due to difficulty with English language" (Alegria et al. 2004). Items were averaged resulting in a range from 0 to 1. The alpha reliability for this measure is 0.69.

To examine the potential moderating effects that an individual's social identity may have on their beliefs about group boundaries, three items measuring social identification are used from the NLAAS. The first item asks how closely the respondent identified with others of the same racial background, followed by questioning their cultural commitment to their racial group, and lastly how much time they would choose to spend with others of the same racial group. Values range from 0 = "Not at all, None, or Not important at all," to 4 = "Very closely, A lot, or Very important." The three items were summed generating a "Social Identity" variable that ranged from 0 to 12. Higher scores indicate higher levels of social identity. Alpha reliability is 0.74.

Control variables are included to ensure the robustness of the results. First, a generalized "Unfair Treatment" variable is utilized to control for respondents who may be overly sensitive to negative perceptions. To capture this, I utilize the Everyday Discrimination Scale (EDS) (Williams and Williams-Morris 2000). It is a 9-item scale and sample items include "You are treated with less courtesy than other people," "You receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores," "People act as if they are afraid of you," and "You are called names or insulted." Questions measured a categorical frequency of perceived experiences of unfair treatment. Response values range from 0 = "Never" to 5 = "Almost Every Day," with items being summed then averaged. Higher scores indicate greater perceptions of discrimination. Alpha for this item is 0.90

Standard sociodemographic controls were included for age, sex, income, education, citizenship, and marital status. Age was represented in years. Sex was coded as "Female" =1 "Male" =0. Self-reported dollars of yearly income provided the means to measure income. Education was assessed as a four-attribute categorical variable: 0-11 years, 12 years, 13-15 years, and greater than 15 years. Citizenship status was coded as either "No" =0 or "Yes" =1. Marital status included "Married" = 1, "Single" = 2, and "Separated/Divorced" = 3.

Analysis Strategy

Means and standard deviations are assessed for continuous variables and percentages for categorical variables to examine distributions and establish baseline sample characteristics. The correlation matrix for variables included in the regression analysis provides Pearson's R^2 to indicate the strength of bivariate relationships. To test my hypotheses, I fit the data within a series of logistic models on closure ideology using the weighting scheme found within the NLAAS. In Table 3, I assess *Hypothesis 1* using Models 1 through 4. Model 1 assesses the effect of immigrant discrimination on closure ideology without education and income, to assess discrimination without

the effect of class while Model 2 inserts the class variables. *Hypothesis 3*, relating to social identity, is tested in Model 3 and Model 4. Model 3 merely inserts the social identity variable while Model 4 interacts social identity with discrimination to explicitly test *Hypothesis 3*. Table 4 assesses *Hypothesis 2* relating to closure ideology, discrimination, and incomes by stratifying my logistic analyses. Models 5 and 6 assess respondents at or below average income while Models 7 and 8 assess respondents at above average incomes. All analyses are conducted using Stata 14.2.

RESULTS

Descriptive Analyses

Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics for the key variables in the models. First, the mean for the main dependent variable leans towards a more permissive closure ideology (M=2.65) but is roughly evenly distributed between the four categories (SD=1.09). Discrimination rates for the sample are low, which is consistent with the literature on Asian Americans living in the U.S. The means for immigrant discrimination (M=0.93) and for unfair treatment (M=0.72) both fall on the lowest end of their respective scales, indicating that such experiences are not common in this sample. The high mean of the generated social identity variable (M=10.03) establishes that respondents in this sample feel strongly committed their respective racial/ethnic groups.

[Table 1 about here]

In terms of the demographics of this sample, ages range from 18-95 with an average age of 41.69. About 52 percent of the sample identifies as female and about 62 percent of the sample are citizens of the United States at the time of collection. The last demographic suggests that even though the focal group is largely treated as foreign, their citizenship status indicates respondents would have fairly high levels of social interaction with non-immigrants in a U.S. context. Average

income is about $71,917.33, which is substantially higher than the national average but in line with the average incomes of Asian immigrants nationally (Lopez, Ruiz, and Patten 2017). Education for this sample is also relatively high compared to other racial minority groups with over 44 percent of respondents having completed a college degree.

The correlational analysis in Table 2 examines the relationships among many of the variables in the regression models. First, I find that closure ideology and immigrant discrimination have a positive, albeit weak, correlation (R^2= 0.05) as predicted. The measure of social identity and closure ideology have a weak-moderate positive correlation (R^2= 0.34), indicating that while related, these social psychological measures relating to the respondent's ethnoracial group nonetheless measure different underlying constructs. Closure ideology has a significant yet weak-positive correlation with age (R^2= 0.13), signifying that older Asian immigrants tend to be more restrictive in their closure ideology. Education has a significant but weak negative correlation with closure ideology (R^2= -0.09) demonstrating that access to educational opportunities has a boundary opening effect.

[Table 2 about here]

Hypothesis 1 and 3: The Effects of Discrimination and Social Identity on Closure Ideology

Logistic regression models were conducted with closure ideology as the dependent variable. Table 3 offers odds ratios and standard errors testing *Hypothesis 1* and *Hypothesis 3*. Findings from Table 3 show that immigrant discrimination is significantly associated with more restrictive closure ideology when education and income are excluded in Model 1 (OR=1.554, $p<0.05$) and when they are included in Model 2 (OR=1.555, $p<0.05$). This finding in Model 2 specifically confirms *Hypothesis 1* by demonstrating that a one unit increase in discrimination is associated with a roughly 56 percent increase in the odds of endorsing a more restrictive closure ideology. Additionally, there are some patterns of note in terms of the controls in Models 1 and 2. Marital status is one such

salient control where, compared to those who are married, single respondents are about 36 percent less likely to endorse a restrictive closure ideology in Model 2 (OR=0.642, $p<0.01$). This finding related to marital status retains a relatively similar size, significance, and direction in all four models in Table 3. Since the dependent variable explicitly asks about marriage, it could be an artifact of the data such that married respondents simply have stronger opinions about marriage characteristics than single respondents. Likewise, country of origin is a relevant variable but since the comparison category is "Other" it is difficult to parse why this may be effect may be occurring.

[Table 3 about here]

Models 3 and 4 assess the effects of the interaction between discrimination and social identity on closure ideology. *Hypothesis 3* specifically predicted that as immigrant discrimination increases, individuals with strong social identities will be more likely to endorse restrictive closure ideologies than those with weak social identities. Model 3 demonstrates that when only social identity enters the analysis, it is associated with a 44 percent increase in the odds of a more restrictive closure ideology (OR=1.439, $p<0.001$), while the effect of immigrant ideology remains significant (OR=1.446, $p<0.05$). Model 4 shows a significant interaction effect between social identity and immigrant discrimination (OR=0.814, $p<0.05$) while both the direct effect of discrimination (OR=11.19, $p<0.05$) and the direct effect of social identity (OR=1.535, $p<0.001$) retain their significance as well.

Since interpreting interaction effects can be difficult, I visualized the interaction in Model 4 in Figure 1. The results suggest that immigrant discrimination has relatively little effect on those respondents who already highly identify racially as Asian. These respondents generally endorse a restrictive closure ideology regardless of the degree of perceived discrimination. However, for respondents with relatively lower social identification, as discrimination increases so does the restrictiveness of their closure ideology. Taken together, this finding fails to confirm my

hypothesized interaction but does show a racializing effect that is taking place for those with low levels of Asian identification. In summary, there is a strong association between highly identified individuals and restrictive closure ideology regardless of perceived threat, however, perceptions of threat greatly increase the restrictive closure ideologies of those who are not already strongly identified with the group.

[Figure 1 about here]

Hypothesis 2: The Association Between Closure Ideology, Discrimination, and Income

Four models in Table 4 test *Hypothesis 2* regarding the effect that income will have on closure ideology for Asian immigrants, predicting that there should be more restrictiveness at higher levels of income than lower. To accomplish this, I stratify my sample into "Above Mean Income" and "Below Mean Income" by transforming income into a dichotomous variable at the mean, sorting respondents above and below $71,917.33 in income. Models 5 and 6 fit the previous Models 2 and 3, respectively, on below average income earners while Models 7 and 8 fit the same models for above average income earners.

[Table 4 about here]

Results in Models 5 and 6 indicate that immigrant discrimination *is not* associated with increases in restrictive closure ideology for the "Below" respondents regardless of whether social identity is excluded (OR=1.393, $p>0.05$) or included (OR=1.419, $p>0.05$) in the model. Increases in social identity are linked to, however, increases in the restrictiveness of the "Below" sample by a significant amount (OR=1.368, $p<0.001$). Results from Models 7 and 8, explicitly testing the "Above" respondents, demonstrate that immigrant discrimination *does* impact the restrictiveness of closure ideology when social identity is excluded (OR=1.969, $p<0.05$). When social identity is

included discrimination retains marginal significance but would succeed in a one-tailed test since it is in the expected direction (OR=1.599, $p<0.10$). These results confirm *Hypothesis 2*, that Asian immigrants at higher levels of income are more impacted by discrimination than those at lower levels.

The controls in Table 4 also exhibit some salient patterns across income levels. For example, age is a significant predictor of closure ideology only at higher incomes (Model 8: OR=1.017, $p<0.05$). Additionally, at above average incomes education is consistently related to more permissive closure ideologies yet the effect is only significant at the difference between high school graduates and those with no degrees (OR=0.383, $p<0.05$). Conversely, marital status only significantly predicted closure ideology at below average incomes for both single respondents (Model 6: OR=0.568, $p<0.05$) and respondents who were separated (Model 6: OR=0.559, $p<0.05$). The martial status finding in these models suggests that married individuals endorse significantly more restrictive closure ideologies than other respondents at lower incomes, while at higher incomes there is no empirically significant difference between these groups.

DISCUSSION

This study sought to answer three questions, first, how do interpersonal experiences of discrimination contribute to the racialization of Asian immigrants? Second, how might this racialization be related to incomes, a traditional marker of assimilation? Third, what is the role of social identity in specifying when the threat-closure relationship may occur? To answer these questions, I empirically tested a number of hypotheses and confirmed two of my three hypotheses, with an unexpected but significant finding as they relate to social identity. The results of this study therefore have a number of significant implications for the literature on immigration, race, and the Asian American experience.

Starting with the most essential prediction, *Hypothesis 1* predicts that discrimination will increase the restrictiveness of individuals' closure ideology, the beliefs they have about who can be a member of their social group. The results from Table 3 provide evidence that my arguments, as they relate to Asian immigrants, are confirmed within this sample, demonstrating that discrimination does indeed shape the way Asian immigrants view their racial group boundaries. In *Hypothesis 2*, I predict that this effect will be conditioned by levels of income and the stratified analyses in Table 4 bear this out. Immigrant discrimination only is associated with more restrictive closure ideologies for respondents with above average incomes. This finding lends credibility to theories of racialized assimilation that propose that increasing structural assimilation and racialization, categorizing and defining oneself in relation to a racial group membership, are co-occurring phenomena for Asian immigrants (Lee and Kye 2016). Thus, sociologists should cautiously interpret structural outcomes for Asian immigrants and avoid assuming that excellent headlines in regard to economic numbers suggest anything about the racial environment in which they navigate and build communities.

Moreover, the results relating to *Hypothesis 3* pertaining to social identity offer an interesting contribution to the literature on Asian immigrants. In this study I found that social identity and closure ideology are highly related to each other. Those respondents who highly identified with their racial group were likely to believe in a more restrictive closure ideology regardless of the level of threat. The perhaps more relevant contribution here is that for respondents who do not feel a strong connection to their group, the perception of discrimination acted as a "wake up" call. As discrimination increased, weakly identified respondents became more and more apt to endorse beliefs that would restrict access to their group from outsiders. Although I did not specifically anticipate this interaction, it nonetheless lines up with arguments that threat primes individuals to be more group oriented and implies a racializing effect (Stephan, Ybarra, Morrison 2009).

Beyond the empirical patterns, I offer three general conclusions. First, this paper reveals further evidence of the racialized assimilation of recent migrant groups of color. In particular, it demonstrates that racialized assimilation does not occur *in spite of* factors like high incomes but is *encouraged* by such factors. Second, this research supports the idea that discrimination is a potentially powerful mechanism in producing racialized assimilation. Third, this analysis reinserts and extends dimensions of classical theory into discussions of race, ethnicity, and immigration. Specifically, the idea of closure ideology provides a jumping-off point for many similar types of analyses merging a classical wing of sociology stemming from the work of Max Weber and a modern analysis of ethnoracial differences. The empirical analyses show the usefulness of the more classical idea of closure ideology as distinct from the more often studied social identity and the results of this study demonstrate the analytical value of separating these concepts. The closure ideology construct helps extend the social psychological race and immigration literature beyond identity as the central component in understanding the role of discrimination. Applying classical theory to reveal changing intergroup beliefs of racial and immigrant groups in the U.S continues the tradition of sociology answering questions about modernity (Lamont and Molnár 2002).

There are several limitations to this study that should be acknowledged to propel a vigorous research agenda for future researchers. First, this paper only used one dimensions of discrimination—immigrant discrimination—to examine the boundary transformations of Asian immigrants. Additionally, more explicit measures of racial discrimination should be investigated to further gauge understanding of racialization processes. Second, this paper uses only one item to capture the concept of closure ideology. While it is evident that interracial marriage attitudes function as a key measure of social boundaries for ethnoracial groups and thus serve as an adequate measure for this study, this remains only a starting point in this research. Other measures that may capture closure ideology may include items specifically examining the ethnoracial composition of

friend groups, which demonstrate social boundary making or measures of social distance with various other racial outgroups.

Third, this paper addresses just one ethnoracial immigrant group, Asian immigrants, which limits the scope of the theoretical application. Future research should provide similar analyses for groups such as Latinx, Middle Eastern, or African immigrants, and analyses should compare these groups with one another. Understanding the ways discrimination and ideology are linked for such groups would increase the generalizability about how immigrant groups respond to adverse host environments. Last, due to the cross-sectional nature of the data, a longitudinal study would be more capable of capturing how various perceptions of discrimination impact group ideologies over time. Examining changes in beliefs over-time alongside the dynamic nature of racial group formation would yield a more accurate picture how these antecedent processes function. Rectifying these limitations serve as a guide for scholarship to develop more thoroughly the theoretical trajectory of mechanisms of racialized assimilation given that it continues to play an essential role in America's political, economic, and social contexts.

Ultimately, I find that perceptions of immigrant discrimination do impact the social boundaries of Asian immigrants, leading to a more restrictive closure ideology. Importantly for research on racialized assimilation, I find that these effects are more prominent at high levels of income, lending credibility to the belief that racial marginalization and assimilation are co-occurring processes. This model combining discrimination, class, race, identity, and social boundaries furthers scholars' knowledge about the shaping of the Asian immigrant experience in the U.S. Moreover, understanding potential sources of social boundary-making is relevant to contemporary socio-political issues and will be for years to come.

ENDNOTES

1. For this definition, I adapt Lamont and Molnár's (2002) definition of symbolic boundaries. They contest that symbolic boundaries are intersubjective beliefs whereas social boundaries are the objective distinctions concerning material resources and patterned behavior of social groups. While I acknowledge their argument as a useful distinction in some cases, for the purposes of this analyses both symbolic and social boundaries will mean the same thing.
2. Despite the time lag between data collection and the present analyses, examining the theoretically proposed relationships should be independent of chronological time.

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TABLES

Table 1. Summary Statistics including Means, Observations, Standard Deviations, and Ranges

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Closure Ideology	1,632	2.65	1.09	1	4
Immigrant Disc.	1,436	0.29	0.35	0	1
Social Identity	1,641	10.03	1.82	0	12
Unfair Treatment	1,572	0.69	0.69	0	5
Age	1,641	42.47	14.27	18	95
Female	1,641	53.0%	0.50	0	1
Income	1,641	$71,917.33	$59,081.81	$0.00	$200,000.00
Citizenship	1,641	61.9%	0.49	0	1
Education	1,641				
0-11 Years		18.3%	0.39		
HS Grad		16.8%	0.37	0	1
Some College		22.5%	0.42	0	1
College Grad+		42.4%	0.49	0	1
Marital Status	1,641				
Married		75.6%	0.43	0	1
Separation		7.9%	0.27	0	1
Single		16.5%	0.37	0	1
U.S. Region	1,641				
Northeast		8.5%	0.28	0	1
Midwest		4.6%	0.21	0	1
South		7.9%	0.27	0	1
West		79.0%	0.41	0	1
Country of Origin	1,641				
Other Asian		19.2%	0.39	0	1
Vietnamese		30.6%	0.46	0	1
Filipino		21.3%	0.41	0	1
Chinese		28.9%	0.45	0	1

Table 2. Correlations Matrix for Selected Variables[1]

		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
1	Closure Ideology	1.00								
2	Immigrant Disc.	0.14***	1.00							
3	Social Identity	0.35***	0.04	1.00						
4	Unfair Treatment	-0.16***	0.06*	-0.12***	1.00					
5	Age	0.14***	0.09***	0.02	-0.14***	1.00				
6	Education	-0.10***	-0.17***	-0.01	0.17***	-0.19***	1.00			
7	Sex	0.00	-0.00	-0.02	-0.09**	-0.03	-0.08**	1.00		
8	Income	-0.04	-0.14***	0.01	0.15***	-0.07*	0.35***	-0.05*	1.00	
9	Citizenship	0.04	-0.08**	-0.00	0.02	0.25***	0.00	-0.00	0.09**	1.00

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

[1]Excluded are the variables Marital Status, Region, and Country of Origin due to their status as nominal variables.

Table 3: Logistic Regression Odds Ratios (Standard Errors) for Effects of Immigrant Discrimination and Social Identity on Closure Ideology

	Closure Ideology			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Theoretically Relevant Variables				
Immigrant Discrimination	1.554*	1.555*	1.446*	11.19*
	(0.27)	(0.28)	(0.27)	(10.62)
Social Identity			1.439***	1.535***
			(0.05)	(0.07)
Immigrant Discrimination X Social Identity				0.814*
				(0.08)
Income (Dichotomous)		0.997	0.936	0.942
		(0.13)	(0.12)	(0.13)
Controls				
Generalized Unfairness	0.839*	0.840*	0.913	0.924
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.09)
Age	1.011*	1.011*	1.013*	1.013*
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Sex	1.188	1.185	1.232	1.241
	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.15)	(0.15)
Citizenship Status	1.106	1.120	1.168	1.186
	(0.14)	(0.14)	(0.16)	(0.16)
Education (Less than HS)				
HS Grad		0.818	0.859	0.887
		(0.17)	(0.18)	(0.19)
Some College		0.895	0.949	0.960
		(0.17)	(0.19)	(0.20)
College Grad or More		0.918	0.859	0.864
		(0.17)	(0.17)	(0.17)
Marital Status (Married)				
Separation	0.704	0.700	0.704	0.694
	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.17)	(0.16)
Single	0.642**	0.642**	0.679*	0.673*
	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Country of Origin (Other)				
Vietnam	1.268	1.265	0.947	0.967
	(0.23)	(0.23)	(0.18)	(0.19)
Philippines	0.645*	0.648*	0.560**	0.553**
	(0.11)	(0.12)	(0.10)	(0.10)
China	0.585**	0.583**	0.619**	0.614**
	(0.10)	(0.10)	(0.11)	(0.11)
Observations	1390	1390	1390	1390
Adjusted R-squared	5,017,446	5,017,446	5,017,446	5,017,446

Exponentiated coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses
†p<0.10 * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

Table 4: Logistic Regression Odds Ratios (Standard Errors) for Effects of Immigrant Discrimination and Social Identity on Closure Ideology Stratified by Income

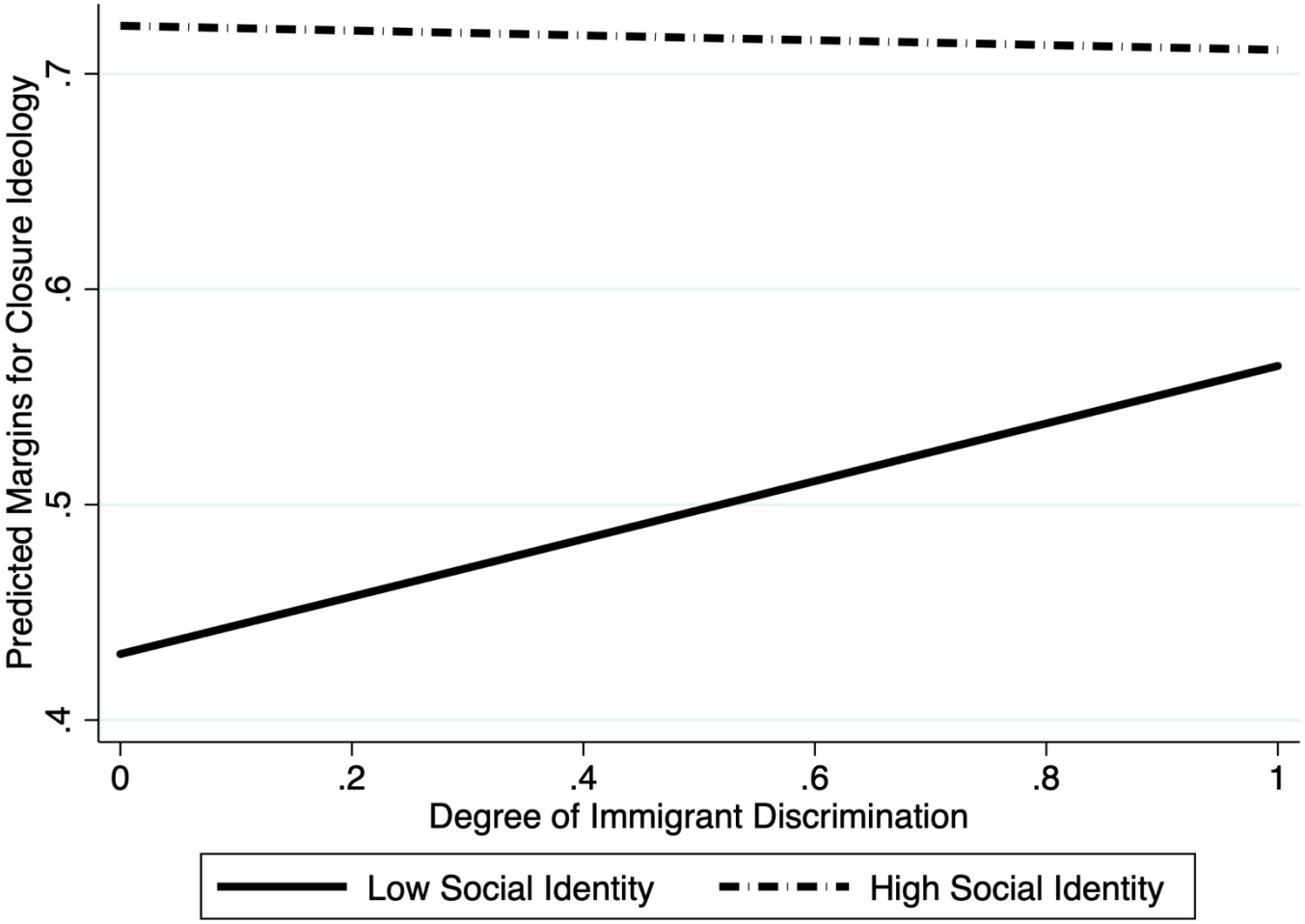
	Below Mean Income		Above Mean Income	
	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
Theoretically Relevant Variables				
Immigrant Discrimination	1.393	1.419	1.969*	1.599†
	(0.34)	(0.37)	(0.52)	(0.44)
Social Identity		1.368***		1.511***
		(0.07)		(0.08)
Controls				
Generalized Unfairness	0.893	0.956	0.834	0.919
	(0.11)	(0.13)	(0.10)	(0.12)
Age	1.007	1.010	1.017*	1.017*
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Sex	1.207	1.269	1.228	1.276
	(0.20)	(0.22)	(0.20)	(0.21)
Citizenship Status	1.092	1.159	1.242	1.261
	(0.19)	(0.21)	(0.24)	(0.25)
Education (Less than HS)				
HS Grad	1.138	1.171	0.350**	0.383*
	(0.28)	(0.30)	(0.14)	(0.16)
Some College	1.134	1.277	0.598	0.591
	(0.29)	(0.34)	(0.21)	(0.21)
College Grad or More	0.877	0.844	0.759	0.673
	(0.22)	(0.21)	(0.24)	(0.23)
Marital Status (Married)				
Separation	0.548*	0.559*	1.234	1.148
	(0.15)	(0.16)	(0.53)	(0.51)
Single	0.552*	0.568*	0.744	0.815
	(0.13)	(0.14)	(0.19)	(0.22)
Country of Origin (Other)				
Vietnam	2.042**	1.466	0.780	0.637
	(0.55)	(0.41)	(0.21)	(0.18)
Philippines	0.859	0.769	0.537**	0.459**
	(0.25)	(0.23)	(0.13)	(0.11)
China	0.815	0.824	0.445***	0.501**
	(0.21)	(0.22)	(0.10)	(0.12)
Observations	662	662	728	728
Populations Size	2,451,107	2,451,107	2,566,339	2,566,339

Exponentiated coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses

†p<0.10 * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

FIGURES

Figure 1: Predicted Marginal Effects of the Interaction between Social Identity and Discrimination on Closure Ideology



CHAPTER 3

Is Closure Ideology a Driver of Variation in Discrimination-Related Mental Illness?

A Study of Asian Immigrants

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Keywords: immigration, race, discrimination, mental illness, Asian populations, inequality

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ABSTRACT

As mental illness increasingly becomes a national crisis, many scholars link social forces like discrimination to mental illness prevalence, especially amongst racial minorities. For Asian immigrants, the fastest growing foreign-born population in America, the scholarship on what factors affect the relationship between discrimination and mental illness has yet to examine the impact an individual's ideology may have. In this study, I argue that closure ideology (CI)—beliefs about how open or closed one's social group should be towards other groups—may be a driver of variation in discrimination-related mental illness for Asian immigrants. Using a sample of 1,641 Asian immigrants living in the U.S., I first test whether CI is linked to discrimination-related mental illnesses at all, specifically looking at depression and anxiety. Then I assess whether CI moderates the impact of two types of discrimination, immigrant and everyday, on both forms of illness. Results from logistic regression analyses demonstrate that a more restrictive CI marks a marginally significant decrease in the odds of anxiety but is more robustly associated with a decrease in the odds of depression. However, evidence from models that examine the moderation hypothesis, where closure ideology and discrimination are interacted, suggest a complex relationship. Patterns show that the association between CI and discrimination is conditional on the dimension of discrimination perceived and, even then, the direction of the moderation is different by mental illness. Ultimately, these findings add to the growing literature on the social psychology of mental illness and demonstrate that Asian immigrants' beliefs about their group importantly shape the way discrimination affects their mental health.

Although the population of Asian Americans and Asian immigrants in the U.S. is increasing faster than any other ethnoracial group, theoretical and empirical understandings of mental health and well-being in Asian American communities are complicated (Pew Research 2012; Lee and Kye 2016).[1] Research about the mental health of Asians in the U.S. has increased within the past decade, in large part due to the proliferation of surveys specifically targeted at Asians in the U.S.. Yet, patterns regarding the prevalence and causes of mental illness for this group are mixed (Alegria et al. 2004; Yip 2018). Research has demonstrated that Asians in the U.S. may have higher rates of suicidal ideation, anxiety, and depression than their White counterparts (Austin and Chorpita 2004; Chen et al. 2019). Yet, there is some evidence to suggest that Asians in the U.S. have rates of mental disorders at more or less the same rates as other racial groups (National Institutes of Mental Health 2015). Additionally, these patterns are complicated by attempts to specify different mechanisms creating variation in prevalence of mental illness among Asians in the U.S. For example, some research looks at structural mechanisms, such as levels of income and education, to explain varying rates of mental illness for Asians in the U.S. (Gong et al. 2011; Kim et al. 2012; Lam et al. 2012). Such studies, however, find relatively little evidence for their effects.

Beyond structural factors, various social psychological mechanisms have been proposed to clarify varying rates of mental illness. The most oft studied is the subjective perception of discrimination (Paradies et al. 2015; Yip 2019). Perceived discrimination involves individuals' subjective assessments of the receipt of unfair treatment on the basis of some social classification. Previous research on perceived discrimination conceptualizes it as a type of social stressor that worsens mental illness in particular among racial minorities (Pearlin, Schieman, Fazio, and Meersman 2005). Perceived discrimination is typically associated with poorer mental health outcomes for Asians in the U.S. as well although the strength of the effect varies significantly (Yoo and Lee 2005; Gee et al. 2007). In seeking to account for the variation in effects of perceived

discrimination on the mental health, scholars have considered social identity, the degree to which an individual categorizes him or herself within certain social groups, to ascertain what may moderate the impact of discrimination on mental illness (Yoo and Lee 2008; Liang and Fassinger 2009; Yip 2018). Findings concerning the moderating effect of social identity on the link between perceived discrimination and mental health, however, are mixed. Some research finds that social identity has a protective effect, limiting the impact perceived discrimination (Lee 2005; Greene, Way, and Pahl 2006; Yoo and Lee 2008). In contrast, other research finds that social identity may exacerbate the impact of discrimination on mental health (Mossakowski 2003; Lee 2005) or simply have no effect (Lee 2003; Cassidy, O'Connor, Howe, and Warden 2004; Greene et al. 2006).

Social identity, while important, is only one potential social psychological factor that may condition the discrimination-mental illness link. In this paper, I propose that an individual's ideology, as opposed to identity, may be critical in determining sensitivity to the effect of discrimination on mental illness. Specifically, I contend that an individual's closure ideology—the degree to which an individual feels their social group should be closed-off to non-group members in a society—will frame the perception of discrimination in a way that aligns their experience with their worldview. Individuals with a more restrictive closure ideology who experience discrimination see such acts as confirming their negative worldview, which should thereby limit the impact of perceived discrimination.

This paper examines two questions related to social processes involving closure ideology. First, is closure ideology related to two forms of mental illness consistently tied to discrimination, namely anxiety and depression, for Asian immigrants? Second, does closure ideology moderate the impact of discrimination on such mental illnesses for Asian immigrants? Ultimately, I hypothesize that not only is closure ideology related to mental illness, but that it moderates the relationship between discrimination and mental health for Asian immigrants such that individuals who maintain

a more restrictive closure ideology are more protected from the detrimental effects of discrimination relative to those who maintain a more permissive ideology.

To understand the importance of these questions processes, I first review recent research on the link between perceived discrimination and mental health for Asians in the U.S. Then, I detail some moderating mechanisms, especially social identity, investigated in the extant literature that delineate why a social psychological phenomenon has influence over the discrimination-mental illness relationship. Finally, I introduce the concept of closure ideology and assess why it should influence the relationship between discrimination on mental illness.

BACKGROUND

Mental Health and Asians in the U.S.

Research that examines Asian immigrant mental health and well-being has steadily increased over the past two decades. Vast and quick demographic changes in the U.S. have propelled interest into what happens to Asian Americans and immigrants in regard to mental health. Despite large upticks in Asian immigration in the 1960s through the 1990s, mental health research about this group was scarce during in the twentieth century, largely due to limitations in available data. Since the publishing of the National Latino and Asian American Study (NLAAS) in 2004 there has been a renaissance in examination of mental health and mental health services use by Asians in the U.S. with an explosion of studies after 2006 (Alegria et al. 2004; Yip et al. 2019). Studies concerning the prevalence of mental illness for this group, however, have created almost as many questions as they have answered.

For example, Kuo's (1984) early study of the mental health of Asians living in Seattle found that various Asian groups presented with higher informal (i.e., not clinically categorized) scores of depression than White Americans. Other research has confirmed Asians living in the U.S. typically

express increased prevalence of depression and anxiety when informal measures, such as the commonly used freely available self-report Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale, is used (Radloff 1977). Such studies of mental health prevalence rates for Asians in the U.S. are far from uniform. Many demonstrate the importance of how factors are conceptualized and operationalized when examining Asians living in the U.S. In contrast, research that uses more formal measures of mental illness, like the World Health Organization Composite International Diagnostic Interview, show that that Asian Americans either have lower or no differences from their white counterparts in terms of anxiety and depression (Sue et al. 1995; Takeuchi et al. 2007).

Research that solely focuses on the mental health of Asian immigrants has grown although still relatively less is known compared to other immigrant groups. To date, most studies that study the Asian immigrant mental health experience in the United States have focused on depression, a widespread form of mental illness. While immigration itself is associated with depression for Asians, the direction of the relationship remains an area of contestation (Sue et al. 1995; Surgeon General 2001). Part of the inconsistency may stem from the diverse measures of depression. For instance, studies that utilize only depression symptomology scales and find that Asian immigrants college students may have higher levels of depressive symptoms than do U.S.-born Asians (Sue et al. 1995). In contrast, community studies that use standardized diagnostic interview schedules often show that Asian immigrants have lower rates of major depression than do U.S.-born Asians (Takeuchi et al. 1998). When examined altogether, research on what drives variation in Asian immigrant mental health is certainly still needed.

One of the most standard explanations for variations in mental illness among Asians in the U.S. is socioeconomic status (SES). Yet, patterns that have emerged suggest mixed results. In general, the relationship between health status and socioeconomic status is positive. Link and Phelan's (1995) theory of fundamental causes explains that the positive association between SES and

health occurs because SES grants access to many societal resources—financial, social, educational, and cultural—that protect against illness. Nonetheless, studies have found wide variation in how SES relates to mental illness for Asian immigrants. Using data from the National Health Interview Survey, Bratter and Eschbach (2005) show that Asian respondents in their sample who at least received a high school diploma reported significantly lower levels of psychological distress than White Americans. In contrast, work by Lam et al. (2012) demonstrated no perceived effects of socioeconomic status on mental health. Similar research has established no or weak effects of SES on mental health among Asian Americans (Gong et al. 2011; Kim et al. 2012).

Discrimination-Mental Illness Link

Aside from SES, another commonly studied factor contributing to the rates of mental illness is perceived discrimination. For non-white groups in the U.S., the experience of stress related to the perception of discrimination is a part of daily life. Asians living in the U.S. are not immune to this despite their collective success financially and educationally (Chou and Feagin 2014). For much of the twentieth century, popular media described Asian Americans as a "Model Minority" community due to their apparent economic prosperity and social achievement in the United States, even though research demonstrates this is more myth than fact (Osajima 2005; Sue et al. 2009; Lee and Kye 2016). One of the lasting harmful byproducts of this myth has been the way popular media depicts Asians in the U.S. as immune to or above racial discrimination (Sue et al. 2009). In fact, many White Americans do not believe Asians in the U.S. face discrimination at all (Goto, Gee, and, Takeuchi 2002; Lee 2003). The depiction of Asians as above discrimination has masked the continued and well-documented consequences of discrimination (Kim 2007; Ancheta 2008).

Patterns of findings regarding the impact of perceived discrimination on Asian mental health are consistent. Numerous studies demonstrate that increases in perceived discrimination are almost

always associated with higher rates of mental illness among Asians living in the U.S. (Yip, Gee, and Takeuchi 2008; Yip 2018). Growing empirical evidence from large-scale, population-based investigations (Gee et al. 2007; Yip, Gee, and Takeuchi 2008), community studies (Crawley, Ahn, and Winkleby 2008), and cross-sectional (Lee 2005; Hwang and Goto 2008) and longitudinal (Greene, Way, and Pahl 2006) samples of Asians indicate that discrimination is associated with increased risk for psychological illness. The literature on Asian Americans has illustrated specific adverse effects of discrimination on psychological well-being such as suicidal ideation, psychological distress, anxiety, and depression (Noh et al. 1999; Yoo and Lee 2005; Hwang and Goto 2008; Yip, Gee, and Takeuchi 2008). Empirical studies concerning the link between perceived discrimination and mental illness for Asians show that its impact is comparable to that experienced by Black, Latinx, and other racial and ethnic minorities (Rumbaut 1994; Fisher et al. 2000).

Studies also demonstrate that this relationship is robust. Population level work has established that perceived discrimination increases the likelihood of depressive symptoms and anxiety controlling for a wide range of social characteristics including poverty, social desirability, social support, chronic physical health conditions, and self-rated health (Alegria et al 2004; Gee et al. 2007). Due to the non-experimental nature of most of the studies on perceived discrimination and health, determining causal pathways is difficult, but longitudinal studies suggest discrimination at an earlier time point is related to adverse effects at a later time point (Greene et al. 2006; Fuller-Rowell et al. 2018). Pavalko, Mossakowski, and Hamilton (2003) found that perceived discrimination was related to worse mental health status almost a full decade later, even when mental health was controlled for in the initial wave (). In a three-year study, investigators showed that increases in perceived discrimination over time were linked to increases in depressive symptomology (Greene et al. 2006). Other longitudinal research has looked at the reverse relationship, examining whether poor mental health makes individuals more sensitive to perceiving discrimination. Brown et al. (2000)

found no association indicating that mental health affects perceived discrimination a year later, thus casting doubt on the idea that poor mental health predicts perceived discrimination. In keeping with the previous literature, I thus expect to find direct effects of perceived discrimination on mental illness in the data examined here.

Moderating Effects of Social Identity

Although there is a growing body of literature about perceived discrimination and Asian mental health, factors that condition the impact of discrimination remain equivocal. One of the most commonly discussed moderating mechanisms is social identity. Social identity refers to the part of an individual defined by group memberships (Tajfel and Turner 2004). Social identity regards what individuals believe about *themselves*, and what is important for them. For Asian immigrants, social identity includes group memberships pertaining to their ethnic, national, racial, and immigrant status. Moreover, social identity is multidimensional, comprising components like a sense of pride, time spent with a specific ethnoracial group, and positive affect (Sellers et al. 1997). For Asian individuals, positive social identities, such as affirmative views of one's ethnoracial identity, are associated with feelings of higher social support, community support, and self-esteem (Tsai, Ying, and Lee 2001; Lee and Yoo 2005). Asian identity is also a significant predictor of well-being for Asians even when controlling for sex, age, SES, and self-esteem (Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, and Broadnax 1994; Tsai, Ying, and Lee 2001).

Due to the positive associations with well-being and self-esteem, researchers often consider social identity when examining potential moderators of the discrimination-mental illness relationship (Yoo and Lee 2008). There are two main theoretical arguments regarding identity's influence on the discrimination-mental health link: the buffering hypothesis and the exacerbation hypothesis. First, some scholars postulate that stronger levels of social identity may buffer the experiences of

discrimination on racialized minority groups by increasing self-esteem and bettering one's self-image, making individuals more resistant to negative interactions (Branscombe, Schmitt, and Harvey 1999). Another argument proposes that having a very salient social identity comes loaded with knowledge about one's position in society. This knowledge may help individuals contextualize their social, ultimately helping their self-esteem by allowing them to understand when negative action is targeted towards them as an individual versus when an negative action is targeted at them for no fault of their own and only the result of their belonging to some social group (Brondolo et al. 2009). As a consequence, those with weak social identity are likely to view discrimination as a personal affront and feel the effects more directly, worsening health over time (Yoo and Lee 2008).

Conversely, some research suggests that having a strong social identity may worsen the impact of perceived discrimination on mental health (Yip 2018; Woo et al. 2019). Rejection Sensitivity Theory argues that when individuals strongly and emotionally invest in a group identity, they are more sensitive to being rejected because of it, causing them to feel the effects of discrimination more deeply (Downey and Feldman 1996). For instance, Mendoza-Denton et al. (2002) found that experiences of discrimination for Black Americans were exacerbated by a strong sense of social identity. Their stronger social identity led them to expect, perceive, and react to discrimination more anxiously. Asian immigrants with strong social identity may become more sensitive to discrimination because of being rejected on a dimension with which they strongly associate. Empirical results confirm that the framework of Rejection Sensitivity Theory may be useful for understanding the discrimination-mental health link for Asians in the U.S. A study looking at Asian refugees found that stronger ethnic identity worsened depressive symptomology as a result of racial discrimination (Noh et al 1999). Given empirical confirmation of hypotheses for both social identity as exerting a buffering effect and from Rejection Sensitivity Theory emphasizing an exacerbating effect, the nature of the association between social identity and the discrimination-

mental illness link remains unclear, although it is clear that they affect each other. Other social psychological notions, such as an individual's ideology, may condition the discrimination-mental health link for Asians immigrants more distinctly.

The Current Study: The Moderating Effects of Closure Ideology

As an alternative to social identity approaches, I argue that types of group ideology may potentially moderate the discrimination-mental illness relationship. Ideologies are defined here "as a set of beliefs or worldviews, whether social, political, or religious, regarding how the social world is and/or should be arranged" (Kay and Brandt 2016:110). Here I focus specifically on closure ideology (CI) as a moderator of the relationship between discrimination and mental illness. Closure ideology is a set of beliefs concerning how open or closed one's own social group should be to non-members.

The concept of closure ideology stems from the Weberian concept of social closure pertaining to open and closed social relationships (Weber 1968). Weber states that "If the participants, through the admission of outsiders expect that it will lead to an improvement of their situation…they will be interested in keeping the relationship *open*. If, conversely, they are interested in improving their position through monopolistic practices they will tend to favor a *closed* relationship" (Weber 1968:97). As augmented by Parkin (1974) and Murphy (1988), social closure processes allow individuals to create, manage, and enforce social group boundaries and membership to protect its members, resources (both material and psychological), and their sense of status. At its core, closure ideology captures the extent to which an individual believes his or her group should be open and interact with members of other social groups, marking a key feature of group beliefs. For example, the extent to which an individual believes members of their group should marry within

their own race constitutes a belief central to closure ideology, or the extent to which one believes they should spend time with their own ingroup.

Closure ideology merits study as a social psychological moderator due to its conceptual distinctiveness from social identity. For example, whereas a social identity reflects an individuals' beliefs about themselves and their own place in the world, closure ideology signifies a broader position about the way the world ought to be, and about how one's social group ought to interact with it and is more closely tied to the literature on social group boundaries (Weber 1968; Tajfel and Turner 2004; Wimmer 2013). For instance, a Black American woman with a strong racial identity may believe that Black Americans in general should interact frequently with other racial groups and intermarry—indicating a more permissive closure ideology. In contrast, she may believe that Black Americans should be more protective, separate, and distinct discouraging notions of interracial marriage—a more restrictive closure ideology.

According to the broader notion of social closure from which closure ideology stems (Weber 1968; Parkin 1979), experiences of exclusion should push minority groups to what Parkin (1979:4) calls "the power of solidarism" or solidarity (Fiel 2015). Solidarity represents the collective response of excluded and less powerful groups to the exclusion practices of the dominant group (Parkin 1979). In the face of exclusion, these groups hold on to whatever resources, opportunities, and claims to status they have even if they are only psychological and tend towards strategies of homogeneity (Parkin 1979; Stephan, Ybarra, Morrison 2009). Strategies of solidarity aim to challenge the power of out-groups and protect the status of their in-group. Additionally, research shows that perceptions of threat also lead to individuals wanting more restrictive group boundaries, indicating that such ideologies are adopted as a defense mechanism lending further credibility that there may be a protective effect (Wimmer 2013; Abascal 2020). Insofar as a restrictive closure ideology operates as a defense mechanism, it is likely to be psychologically protective in coping with

perceived discrimination. As such, it may decrease the prevalence of stress-induced mental illness. Thus:

> *Hypothesis 1*: A more restrictive closure ideology is associated with lower prevalence of mental illness.

In line with this argument addressing the first aim of this study, and since closure ideology is a belief related to social group membership like identity, the current study also assesses whether a more restrictive closure ideology moderates the relationship between discrimination and mental illness. For many of the same reasons underlying the hypothesized direct protective effect of closure ideology on the prevalence of mental illness, I argue that individuals with more restrictive closure ideologies should be protected against the negative consequences of perceived discrimination by providing a psychological framework for dealing with experiences of discrimination. Individuals who are more restrictive in their closure ideology endorse a separatist worldview, one that views other groups as hostile to their own. Perceiving discrimination confirms this view, allowing the individual to contextualize this experience within their belief system, which should potentially diminish the impact of discrimination on mental illness. Alternatively, those with a more permissive group ideologies may not cast race dynamics as competitive, and thus when faced with discrimination, they have more difficulty contextualizing it. Put simply, ideologies frame people's interactions and can either contextualize them or, when running counter to ideological expectations, create more confusion or cognitive dissonance (see Festinger 1962). Thus, I predict an interaction effect between perceived discrimination and closure ideology on mental illness such that:

> *Hypothesis 2:* The impact of perceived discrimination on mental illness is weaker when closure ideology beliefs are strong (or restrictive) than when they are weak (or permissive).

METHODS

Data

To test hypotheses regarding the direct and moderated effects of closure ideology on mental illness, I employ data from the National Latino and Asian American Study (NLAAS). The NLAAS is one of the few surveys that contains a nationally representative sample of Asian Americans and Asian immigrants in the U.S. Importantly, this dataset includes a number of key questions in terms of group beliefs and social identity (Alegria et al. 2004). It oversampled census block groups where any individual target national-origin group (Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese) represented at least 5 percent of household. The NLAAS also utilized second-respondent sampling to recruit respondents from households where someone else in the unit had already participated. The NLAAS is a component of the larger Collaborative Psychiatric Epidemiological Survey (CPES) which measures epidemiological phenomenon for minority groups in the United States. To accurately capture my target sample respondents are sorted as either "Vietnamese," "Chinese," "Filipino," or "All Other Asian" on the Race/Ancestry measure for a sample of 2,095. As the arguments in this paper focus on how immigrants respond to discrimination, only those who were born outside the U.S. were included in the final sample of 1,641 immigrants of Asian descent. Weighting corrections are applied take into account the probabilities for selection giving me a final weighted sample of 5,010,271.

Measures

Dependent Variables: I operationalize mental illness through the measurement of two illnesses strongly related to discrimination in the literature on Asian mental health, depression and anxiety (Noh and Kaspar 2003; Hwang and Goto 2008). I establish depression prevalence through the World Health Organization Composite International Diagnostic Interview (WHO-CIDI). All respondents who report having major depressive disorder, a condition with severe and medium-term depressive symptomology, or dysthymia, a condition with continuous but less severe long-form

depressive symptomology, are coded as "1" all others were "0." Anxiety disorders are also assessed using WHO-CIDI. Respondents indicating generalized anxiety disorder, panic attacks, or social phobia were sorted as "1" and while all other respondents were sorted as "0."

Independent Variable: I operationalize perceived discrimination in two ways, consistent with others who note the importance of different forms of discrimination against Asian immigrants (Yoo, Gee, and Takeuchi 2009). The first form of discrimination I conceptualize is the everyday discrimination racial minorities face in the U.S. This is operationalized through the Everyday Discrimination Scale (EDS) (Williams and Williams-Morris 2000) consisting of 9 items. Sample items include "You are treated with less courtesy than other people," "You receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores," "People act as if they are afraid of you," and "You are called names or insulted." Questions measured a categorical frequency of perceived experiences of unfair treatment. Response values range from 0 = "Never to 5 = "Almost Every Day," with items being summed then averaged resulting in a final range of scores from 0-5. This scale had an extremely high alpha reliability (α=0.90).

Second, to assess more specific effects related to their migration status, I conceptualize immigrant discrimination as the psychological, social, and legal othering associated with immigrant or foreign-born status. I operationalize this concept via an adaptation of a 9-item acculturative stress scale from the Mexican American Prevalence and Services Survey (Vega et al. 1998). I shrink this scale to three items that most accurately relate to the conceptualization of discrimination. Respondents who identified with one of the measures were coded as 1= "Yes" and others coded as 0="No." Items include: "difficulty finding work due to Asian descent," being "treated badly due to poor/accented English," and "interaction hard due to difficulty with English language" (Alegria et al. 2004). Scores were summed then averaged resulting in a scale which ranges from 0-1 and has an acceptable alpha reliability (α=0.69).

Moderating Variable: The focal moderating variable of interest is what I term closure ideology. I use a question about beliefs about interracial marriage. The question appears as: "How important do you think it is for people who are in your racial group to marry other people who are the same race?" Potential original responses were four Likert-type values coded as: 1= "Not at all important" 2= "Not very important" 3= "Somewhat important" 4= "Very important." High numbers suggest more of a restrictive ideology whereas low numbers suggest a permissive ideology.

Controls: Standard sociodemographic controls include age, sex, income, education, citizenship, and marital status. Age was measured in years. Sex was coded as "Female" =1 "Male" =0. Income is in the form of self-reported dollars of yearly income. A four-attribute categorical variable captures education: "0-11 years" =1, "12 years" =2, "13-15" =3 years, and "greater than 15 years" =4. Citizenship status was coded as either "No" =0 or "Yes" =1. Codes for marital status include: "Married" =1, "Separated" =2 and "Single" =3.

In addition, I include social identity control as well. Social identity is assessed using three items measuring social group identification. Respondents reported how important each notion was on a scale ranging from 0 = "Not at all, None, or Not important at all," to 4 "Very closely, A lot, or Very important." The first item asks how closely the respondent identified with others of the same racial/ethnic background. The second asks how much time they spend with others of the same racial/ethnic group. And, third, respondents indicated their emotional commitment to their racial/ethnic group. The three items were summed generating a "Social Identity" variable that ranged from 0 to 12 with an acceptable alpha reliability (α =0.74). Higher scores indicate a stronger social identity.

Analysis Strategy

Descriptive analyses establish baseline distribution of the sample characteristics including Ns, means, standard deviations, percentages for categorical variables, and ranges. Bivariate correlational analyses then check theorized relationships between variables. I use a series logistic regression models fit with the aforementioned variables to assess the hypotheses concerning 1) whether more restrictive closure ideology is related to a decrease in the prevalence of certain mental illnesses and 2) whether closure ideology moderates the impact of discrimination on those illnesses. Logistic regression estimates the probability of an outcome and is ideal for estimating binary dependent variables where zero represents the absence of a mental illness. All results related to these models are reported in odds ratios (OR) with standard errors reported. Graphs show predicted probabilities. Survey weights were applied to account for selection and differential response probabilities.

Analyses are separated by the two forms of operationalized mental illness. Table 3 includes analyses as they relate to depression. Models 1-3 establish predicted patterns of discrimination and depression. *Hypothesis* 1 is tested for depression explicitly by Model 4. *Hypothesis 2* is tested by Models 5 and 6 for immigrant discrimination and everyday discrimination respectively. Table 4 includes analyses as they relate to anxiety. Again, Models 7-9 establish predicted patterns of discrimination but now examining anxiety. *Hypothesis* 1, in regard to anxiety, is tested in Model 10. *Hypothesis 2* is tested by Models 11 and 12 for immigrant discrimination and everyday discrimination respectively. Graphs for significant interaction effects are then displayed and interpreted.

RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 displays descriptive statistics. For my dependent variable depression is present in about 8 percent of the sample, while anxiety is present in about 14 percent of the sample. These

percentages are in line with previous literature suggesting that anxiety disorders are more prevalent than mood disorders and both are represented in less than 20 percent of the population (Asnaani 2010). The average perception of immigrant discrimination reported in the sample (M=0.29) indicates that Asian immigrants are unlikely perceive discrimination. In terms of moderating factors, the mean closure ideology leaned slightly more towards restrictiveness than openness (M=2.65). Based on the mean and standard deviation (SD=1.09), responses to this question are well distributed, with nearly half the sample seeing interracial marriage as not very important. In contrast, levels of social identity are very high for this sample (M=10.03 for the 12-point index). The previously identified conceptual differences between social identity and closure ideology appear to be borne out in the descriptive results. Whereas support for the closure ideology measure is more dispersed, the strength of social identity is clear.

[Table 1 about here]

In terms demographics of this sample, ages range from 18-95 with an average age of 42.47. About 53 percent of the sample identify as female and about 61 percent of the sample are citizens of the United States. Average income was about $71,91.33 which is substantially higher than the national average but in line with the average incomes of Asian immigrants nationally. More than 75 percent of the sample is married and nearly 79 percent lives on the West coast. Bivariate correlations, displayed in Table 2, establish baseline relationships between the theoretically relevant variables. Anxiety and depression have a roughly 25 percent correlation, suggesting some comorbidity between the two. Closure ideology and social identity are each negatively correlated with the prevalence of both depression and anxiety. Such correlations seem to confirm the face value notion of a buffering effect for both social psychological concepts. Also, as anticipated, immigrant discrimination is associated with increases in both anxiety disorders (R^2=.03) and mood disorders (R^2=.10).

[Table 2 about here]

Re-establishing the Link between Discrimination and Mental Illness.

To test the hypothesis related to moderation, it is important first to empirically re-establish the link between discrimination and mental illness. Although not explicitly hypothesized due to its overwhelming establishment in the literature (see Williams 2018), I still examine the relationship between mental illness and discrimination in this sample (Models 1-3 for depression in Table 3; Models 7-9 for anxiety in Table 4). Beginning with depression, both everyday discrimination and immigrant discrimination are significantly associated with increased reports of depression. Model 1 found an association with everyday discrimination (OR=1.71, $p<.001$) and Model 2 established this association for immigrant discrimination (OR=3.43, $p<.001$) on its own. Model 3 examined their combined effect demonstrating that both forms are predictive even when the other is included in the model. However, by comparison immigrant discrimination (OR=2.71, $p<.001$) has a stronger association than everyday discrimination (OR=1.56, $p<.01$) on depression in Model 3. The measure of social identity was at no point in any of the three models predictive of the likelihood of depression in any direction. The only standard demographic control that was significant in these models was that of marital status where being married is related to a significant decrease in reports of depression relative to those who are single (Model 3; OR=2.43, $p<.01$) or separated/divorced/widowed (Model 3; OR=2.40, $p<.05$).

[Table 3 about here]

The results for the discrimination-anxiety relationship in Table 4 offer a slightly different pattern than those for depression. While everyday discrimination (Model 7; OR=1.65, $p<.001$) and immigrant discrimination (Model 8; OR=1.93, $p<.01$) on their own are associated with increased reports of anxiety respectively, when combined, only everyday discrimination (Model 9; OR=1.57,

p<.001) is significant. In all three models relating to anxiety, social identity as a control is associated with a decrease in reports of anxiety (Model 9; OR=0.893, p<.01).

[Table 4 about here]

Hypothesis 1: Is Closure Ideology Related To Lower Mental Illness Prevalence?

Model 4 and Model 10 test the hypothesis regarding the association between a more restrictive closure ideology and mental illness, represented by depression and anxiety. Model 4 assesses *Hypothesis 1* for depression and finds that closure ideology does significantly reduce the odds of reporting of depression by 20 percent (OR=0.80, p<.05). Additionally, in Model 4, both everyday (OR=1.54, p<.01) and immigrant discrimination (OR=2.96, p<.001) remain significant with a slight decrease in the coefficient for everyday discrimination and a slight increase in immigrant discrimination relative to Model 3. Marital status retained its significance as control in Model 4 as well.

Model 10, which tests *Hypothesis 1* for anxiety, finds a marginally significant effect closure ideology on anxiety (OR=0.86, p<.054); given that the effect is in the expected direction, a one-tailed test would signal a significant relationship. Everyday discrimination, which was the only form of discrimination statistically associated with anxiety in Model 9, retained its significant relationship with anxiety when closure ideology is included in Model 10 (OR=1.56, p<.001) with only a slight reduction in its effect. Also important in Model 10 is that the once significant impact of social identity on anxiety, noted in Models 7-9, is fully mediated once closure ideology is included. Taken together, the results from Model 4, on depression, and Model 10, on anxiety, provide empirical support for *Hypothesis 1*.

Hypothesis 2: Does Closure Ideology Moderate the Effect of Discrimination?

Results from Models 5 and 6 in Table 3 for depression and from Models 11 and 12 in Table 4 for anxiety assess *Hypothesis 2*, examining whether closure ideology moderates the relationship between discrimination and mental illness such that a more restrictive ideology decreases reports of mental illness at higher levels of discrimination relative to those that adopt more permissive beliefs. To test this hypothesis, interaction terms for both immigrant discrimination, in Models 5 and 11, and everyday discrimination, in Models 6 and 12, with closure ideology are included in the analyses of mental illness. For clarity, results in this section are discussed by mental illness.

For depression, results in Table 3 Model 5 indicate support for moderation between closure ideology and immigrant discrimination but not in the predicted pattern. The direct effect of closure ideology on depression not only remains, but its association is made more pronounced between Models 4 and 5. Whereas in Model 4, the direct effect of closure ideology led to a 20 percent reduction in the odds of reporting depression, when the interaction term is included, this direct effect shows nearly 34 percent reduction in the odds (OR=0.67, $p<.01$). However, the significance of the direct effect of immigrant discrimination disappears (OR=0.81, $p=.772$). The interaction term between the two is significant in a one-tailed test (OR=1.65, $p=.051$). When an interaction term is significant, but a main effect loses its statistical significance, this suggests what is called a crossover interaction effect. A crossover interaction (also referred to as ordinal nonindependence) exists when the slopes of the interacted independent variable and moderator crossover each other in the different conditions (Loftus 1978). Interpreting crossover interactions with words in this scenario is difficult, but graphically, crossover interactions are confirmed when the curves touch each other (Loftus 1978). Figure 1 depicts this crossover interaction in Model 5. For clarity, Figure 1 presents the interaction term with the sample divided into two groups, those with a very restrictive ideology and those with a not at all restrictive closure ideology. The results in Figure 1 suggest that having a

very restrictive ideology decreases reports of depression at low levels of immigrant discrimination relative to those who are open-minded but increases reports of depression at very high levels of immigrant discrimination relative to those who are more permissive.

[Figure 1 about here]

In Table 3 Model 6, I test the interaction between closure ideology and everyday discrimination on depression. Results again show support for the moderation hypothesis which, similar to Model 5, also has a crossover interaction. Again, while the interaction term itself (OR=0.75, p<.05) and the effect of everyday discrimination (OR=3.19, p=.001) are significant the direct effect of closure ideology falls away (OR=1.04, p=.814). The results are again best represented graphically in Figure 2. Figure 2 illustrates that at low levels of everyday discrimination both restrictive and permissive respondents had very similar probabilities of reporting depression. However, at high levels of everyday discrimination, permissive individuals are significantly more likely to report depression than those with more restrictive closure ideologies. The pattern of this moderating relationship is precisely what is predicted in *Hypothesis 2*.

[Figure 2 about here]

Turning to the results relevant to anxiety (Table 4), similar patterns of findings emerge regarding the effects of immigrant discrimination and everyday discrimination. Similar to Model 5, in Model 11 both the interaction term between closure ideology and immigrant discrimination (OR=1.58, p<.05) and the main effect of closure ideology (OR=0.75, p<.01) are significant whereas the main effect of immigrant discrimination is not (OR=0.47, p<.226). Since the direction and size of each of the odds ratios in Model 11 are similar to those for depression in Model 5, there is little need for a figure here to illustrate the relationship. Respondents who endorse a more restrictive closure ideology are less likely to report anxiety at low levels of immigrant discrimination relative to their open-minded peers but are significantly more likely to report anxiety than them at high levels

of immigrant discrimination. This again demonstrates that a more restrictive closure ideology can be either buffering or exacerbating conditional on the level of perceived immigrant discrimination by the respondent, but, in this case, is inconsistent with my explicit hypothesizing.

On the other hand, Model 12, which looked at the interaction between closure ideology and everyday discrimination found no significant interaction term (OR=0.84, p<.106) and no significant main effect for closure ideology (OR=0.99, p<.954). The main effect of everyday discrimination, however, remained (OR=2.38, p<.01). Since I used an ordinal variable to measure closure ideology, I considered whether the insignificance of the interaction term may be an artifact of the measurement and the two categories between the ideological extremes. So, I nonetheless graphed the interaction effect of Model 12 using the very restrictive and not at all restrictive groupings as in my previous graphic illustrations and represented the interaction for Model 12 in Figure 3 to see if the relationship is analogous to what I observed with depression. The pattern revealed a stark similarity to the analyses of depression in Model 6. Such that those with a very restrictive ideology saw a relatively little increase in rates of anxiety as everyday discrimination increased, whereas for those with a more permissive ideology, rates of anxiety increased linearly as everyday discrimination increased. In the end, results from Model 12 do not confirm *Hypothesis 2* outright but graphic analysis certainly demonstrate the predicted relationship exists but may be hindered by the measurement.

[Figure 3 about here]

DISCUSSION

The first question this study sought to answer is whether closure ideology is relevant for discerning variation in mental illness for Asian immigrants—*Hypothesis 1*. Previous research on "buffering" variables such as social identity for Asians immigrants indicates that their robustness is often called into question and conditional on a number of factors (Yip, Gee and Takeuchi 2008). In the current study, I specifically consider closure ideology as a factor that may provide some protective benefits to Asian immigrants, relying on arguments that individuals adopt more restrictive ideologies as a stress reducing mechanism. Results from Model 4 and Model 10 confirm that a more restrictive ideology does indeed appear to reduce the prevalence of depression and anxiety. In terms of depression, Model 4 indicates that endorsing more restrictive closure ideologies is linked to a roughly 20 percent decrease in the odds of reporting depression. In terms of anxiety, Model 10 demonstrated a roughly 14 percent decrease in the odds of reporting anxiety as a direct effect of endorsing a more restrictive closure ideology. While ratio for Model 10 is only marginally significant, it is significant for a one-tailed test and is in the expected direction. The consistent pattern between both models provide empirical support for *Hypothesis 1* and demonstrate an important contribution to the growing literature on ideology and mental illness that has thus far mostly focused on only political ideology and health (Kirkegaard 2020).

Importantly, both models control for the effect of social identity, which is commonly considered to be a protective factor for minorities, but for which recent empirical investigations suggest inconclusive results (Stein et al. 2014; Ai et al. 2015). The results in this study, as they pertain to social identity and mental illness, continue to bear this out. Social identity is not significant in any of the models pertaining to depression. While the effect of social identity is significant in some models for anxiety, the effect is fully mediated by the inclusion of the measure of closure ideology. This was not an anticipated finding but, nonetheless, establishes the importance of considering the

ideology of respondents in studies that look at social identity, as ideology appears to have a more robust association with mental illness for Asian immigrants.

Additionally, the second question that the current study set out to investigate regarded the role of ideology in the often-studied relationship between discrimination and mental illness for Asian immigrants. The current study hypothesized that as Asian immigrants endorse more restrictive closure ideologies, the prevalence of mental illness reporting should decrease relative to those with a more permissive ideology as discrimination increases, hypothesizing a protective effect of restrictive closure ideology—*Hypothesis 2*. The results, however, show that any moderation effect of closure ideology on the relationship between discrimination and mental illness depends completely on the type of discrimination experienced. Turning first to everyday discrimination, the results in Model 6, for depression, and Model 12, for anxiety, indicate that for this type of discrimination *Hypothesis 2* is confirmed. Results graphed in Figures 2 and 3 bear this out. Those respondents with a more restrictive closure ideology have increased resilience to the effects of everyday discrimination relative to respondents with more permissive ideologies across both forms of illness, strongly indicating that closure ideology is a protective factor against everyday discrimination. This finding contributes to the growing literature on social psychological moderators of the discrimination-mental illness relationship in a substantial way as many studies continue to utilize this measure of discrimination as a strong predictor of worsening health outcomes (Yip et al. 2019).

In contrast, the results as they relate to immigrant discrimination paint a different picture. In the models where immigrant discrimination is interacted with closure ideology, the complex relationship with mental illness emerging diverges from the one hypothesized. Illustrated in Figure 1, when immigrant discrimination is low there is a substantial protective effect for those with a more restrictive closure ideology relative to those who are permissive. At higher levels of immigrant discrimination, conversely, those with a more restrictive closure ideology are more likely to report

mental illness than their permissive counterparts. Since it is at high levels of immigrant discrimination that reports of mental illness are more likely to occur, this pattern suggests that more close-minded beliefs exacerbate mental illness at high levels of this form of discrimination. This pattern implies that for those individuals with a very restrictive closure ideology the experience of immigrant discrimination grows more salient and more painful, increasing stress and increasing the odds of onset of mental illness. While these results indicate the near opposite of what is hypothesized, they still offer important insights. For instance, closure ideology may exacerbate the effect of immigrant discrimination because there are unique circumstances around group boundaries and the "perpetual foreigner" stereotype frequently seen in research on the racism that Asians in the U.S. face (Xu and Lee 2013). Future qualitative research that probes individuals' reactions to immigrant discrimination may explain this distinctive relationship.

Overall, the current study clearly reveals that closure ideology is a critical component of the Asian immigrant experience in the U.S. especially as it relates to discrimination and mental illness. To summarize the contributions of the empirical analyses, the first contribution of the current study is that a more restrictive closure ideology, a set of beliefs related to group boundaries and interactions suggesting racial separatism, decrease reports of mental illness among Asian immigrants. Second, a more restrictive closure ideology is a protective influence against worsening mental health in the face of everyday discrimination. Third, a more restrictive closure ideology may exacerbate worsening mental health at high levels of immigrant discrimination. Fourth, in models where closure ideology is included, the effects of social identity on mental illness are diminished implying that, at least for Asian immigrants, closure ideology may be a more salient predictor than identity.

There are a few limitations in this study that are important to note. First, this paper is cross-sectional and, therefore, can only identify correlational evidence for these hypotheses. Future investigations should examine these patterns longitudinally in an effort to disentangle whether

closure ideology at an earlier time, or in youth, is connected to changes in mental health later in time or vice versa. Second, while the association between discrimination, closure ideology, and mental illness is made clearer through these analyses, the question as to "why" remains unanswered. Qualitative research might uncover the specific reasons as to why closure ideology, more than social identity, may protect Asian immigrants against the negative health consequences of everyday discrimination and worsen the effects of immigrant discrimination. Third, this study utilizes just one measure for closure ideology. While interracial marriage beliefs are strongly linked to group boundaries and social distance, future work should use other measures of group boundary policing and/or maintenance.

While there is certainly more to do, this study sets a foundation for future theoretical work in regard to of race, health, nativity, and social psychology in powerful ways by assessing a novel conceptualization regarding the effects of group-based ideologies. The insights garnered from this study provide useful information to both scholars and those actually engaging with Asian immigrants. For example, the current study may reorient some counselors and social workers to move beyond considerations of a client's social identity to include facets of their ideological beliefs (including closure ideology, ingroup favoritism, or network homophily) as a means to understand how their social psychological environments affect their health. In world where all forms of ideology are becoming increasingly salient in American discourse, the intent of this research is to inspire more exploration into how these ideological beliefs affect the well-being of minds which hold them.

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ENDNOTES

1. For the purposes of this paper, when I refer to Asians in the U.S. or Asian Americans, I am referring to work that examines both native born and immigrant Asians, as much of the mental health literature has traditionally examined these groups together. Literature that specifically focuses on Asian immigrants is specified as such.

TABLES

Table 1. Summary Statistics including Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranges

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Anxiety	1,641	14.20%	0.35	0	1
Depression	1,641	7.98%	0.27	0	1
Closure Ideology	1,632	2.65	1.09	1	4
Immigrant Discrimination	1,436	0.29	0.35	0	1
Social Identity	1,641	10.03	1.82	0	12
Everyday Discrimination	1,572	0.69	0.69	0	5
Age	1,641	42.47	14.27	18	95
Income	1,641	$ 71,917.33	$ 59,081.81	$ -	$ 200,000.00
Sex	1,641	52.96%		0	1
Citizenship	1,641	61.85%		0	1
Education					
0-11 Years	1,641	18.28%		0	1
HS Grad	1,641	16.76%		0	1
Some College	1,641	22.55%		0	1
College Grad or More	1,641	42.41%		0	1
Marital Status					
Married	1,641	75.56%		0	1
Separation	1,641	7.92%		0	1
Single	1,641	16.51%		0	1
Region					
Northeast	1,641	8.53%		0	1
Midwest	1,641	4.57%		0	1
South	1,641	7.86%		0	1
West	1,641	79.04%		0	1
Country of Origin					
Other	1,641	19.20%		0	1
Vietnamese	1,641	30.59%		0	1
Filipino	1,641	21.27%		0	1
Chinese	1,641	28.95%		0	1

Table 2. Correlations Matrix for Selected Variables[1]

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Anxiety	-									
2	Depression	0.25	-								
3	Social Identity	-0.09	-0.04	-							
4	Immigrant Discrimination	0.03	0.10	0.04	-						
5	Closure Ideology	-0.10	-0.07	0.35	0.14	-					
6	Everyday Discrimination	0.15	0.11	-0.12	0.06	-0.16	-				
7	Age	-0.03	-0.05	0.02	0.09	0.14	-0.14	-			
8	Education	0.03	0.02	-0.01	-0.17	-0.10	0.17	-0.19	-		
9	Sex	0.03	0.01	-0.02	0.00	0.00	-0.09	-0.03	-0.08	-	
10	Citizenship	-0.04	0.01	0.00	-0.08	0.04	0.02	0.25	0.00	0.00	-
11	Income	0.03	-0.03	0.01	-0.14	-0.04	0.15	-0.07	0.35	-0.05	0.09

[1]Excluded from here are the variables Marital, Region, Country due to their status as nominal variables.

Table 3: Logistic Regression Odds Ratios (Standard Errors) for Effects of Discrimination and Closure Ideology on Depression Prevalence

Depression	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Immigrant Discrimination		3.426***	2.712***	2.962***	0.807	3.078***
		(0.99)	(0.81)	(0.90)	(0.60)	(0.95)
Everyday Discrimination	1.710***		1.564**	1.544**	1.546**	3.186**
	(0.22)		(0.23)	(0.23)	(0.23)	(1.16)
Closure Ideology				0.801*	0.665**	1.038
				(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.17)
Closure Ideology X Immigrant Discrimination					1.648†	
					(0.42)	
Closure Ideology X Everyday Discrimination						0.750*
						(0.10)
Social Identity	0.969	0.936	0.939	0.981	0.983	0.988
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Marital Status (Married)						
Separation	2.448**	2.393*	2.403*	2.255*	2.335*	2.367*
	(0.77)	(0.87)	(0.89)	(0.84)	(0.87)	(0.89)
Single	2.282**	2.717***	2.433**	2.440**	2.457**	2.503**
	(0.59)	(0.73)	(0.68)	(0.69)	(0.69)	(0.71)
Observations	1572	1436	1386	1386	1386	1386
Number of Strata	57	56	56	56	56	56
Number of PSU's	99	99	98	98	98	98
Population Size	5,743,340	5,212,192	5,010,271	5,010,271	5,010,271	5,010,271

Exponentiated coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses; Only significant controls are included in this table

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Table 4: Logistic Regression Odds Ratios (Standard Errors) for Effects of Discrimination and Closure Ideology on Anxiety

Anxiety	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10	Model 11	Model 12
Immigrant Discrimination		1.930**	1.550	1.595	0.473	1.624
		(0.45)	(0.38)	(0.39)	(0.29)	(0.40)
Everyday Discrimination	1.653***		1.566***	1.559***	1.555***	2.384**
	(0.17)		(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.18)	(0.68)
Closure Ideology				0.856†	0.748**	0.993
				(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.12)
Closure Ideology X Immigrant Discrimination					1.578*	
					(0.33)	
Closure Ideology X Everyday Discrimination						0.847
						(0.09)
Social Identity	0.893**	0.889**	0.893**	0.918	0.920	0.921
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Marital Status (Married)						
Separation	1.689*	2.040*	1.922*	1.867*	1.927*	1.913*
	(0.44)	(0.58)	(0.56)	(0.55)	(0.57)	(0.56)
Single	1.421	1.661*	1.463	1.471	1.466	1.486
	(0.31)	(0.37)	(0.34)	(0.34)	(0.34)	(0.34)
Observations	1572	1436	1386	1386	1386	1386
Number of Strata	56	56	56	56	56	56
Number of PSU's	99	99	98	98	98	98
Population Size	5,743,340	5,212,192	5,010,271	5,010,271	5,010,271	5,010,271

Exponentiated coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses; Only significant controls are included in this table

* p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Figure 1: Predicted Probability of Depression when Closure Ideology and Immigrant Discrimination are Interacted

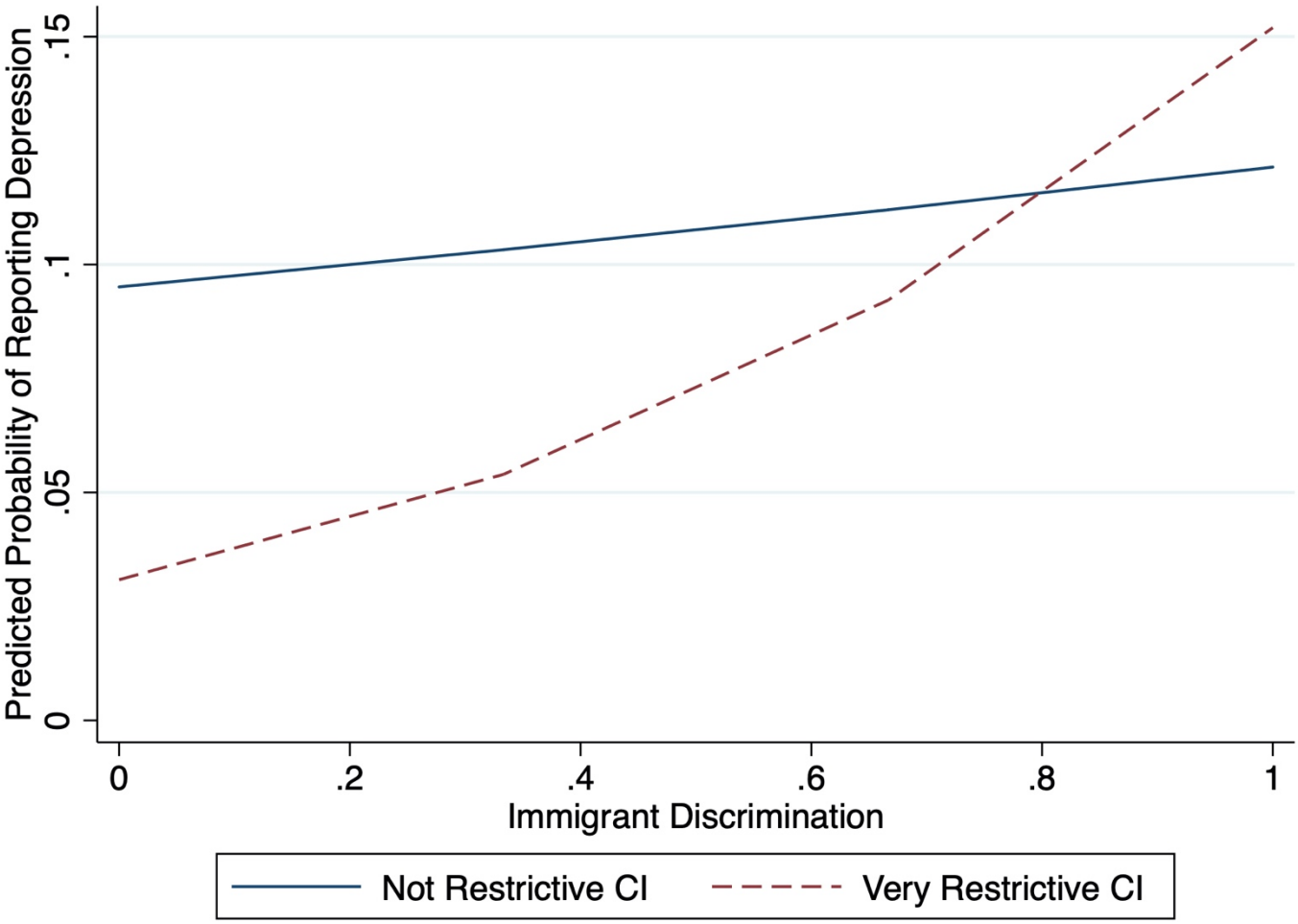


Figure 2: Predicted Probability of Depression when Closure Ideology and Everyday Discrimination are Interacted

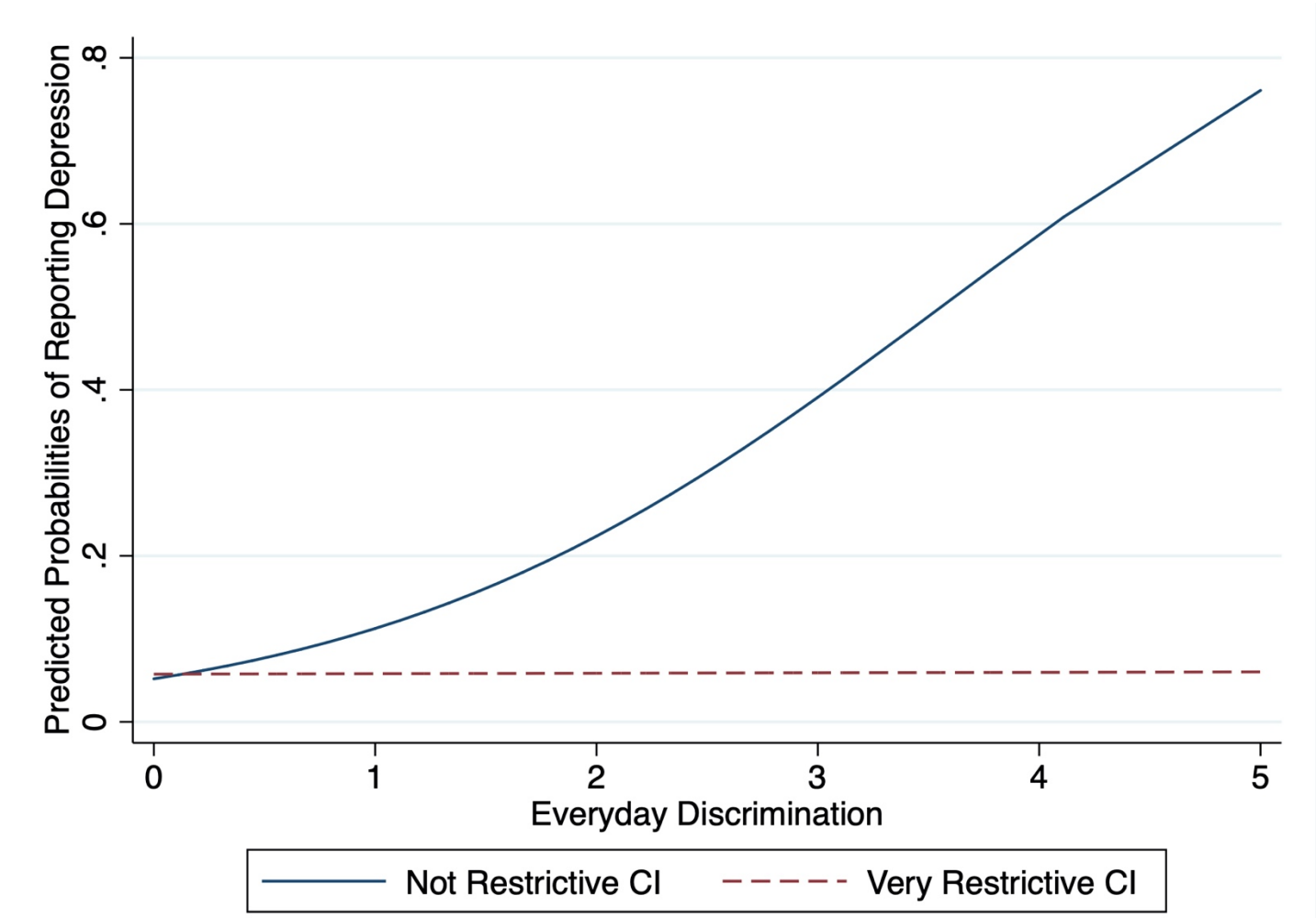
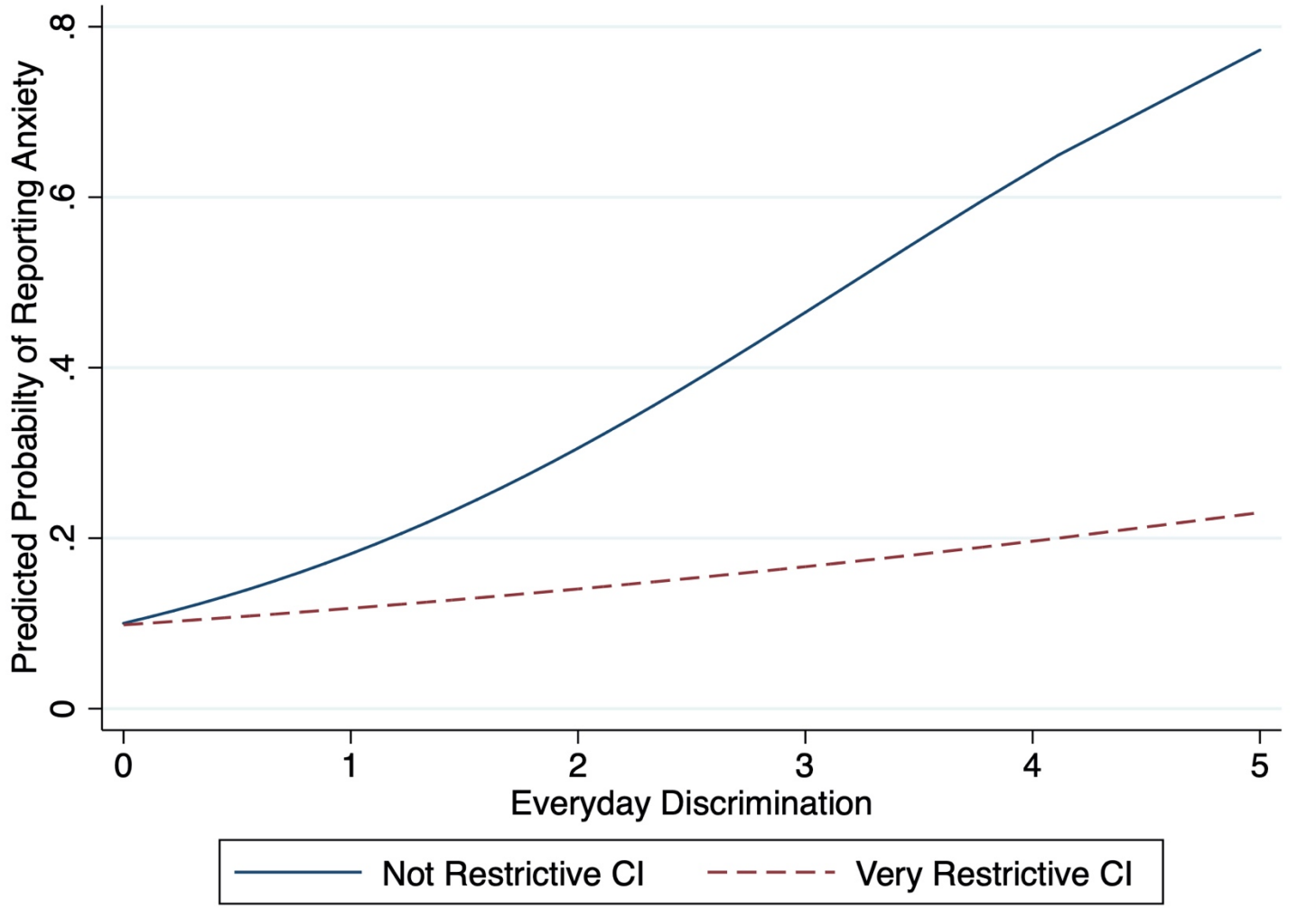


Figure 3: Predicted Probability of Anxiety when Closure Ideology and Everyday Discrimination are Interacted



CONCLUSION

When Asian Americans feel threatened, how does that threat affect their group beliefs? Do perceptions of being cast as "other" spur Asian Americans to build psychological walls against their "competition?" Moreover, might an exploration about the associations between intergroup beliefs and mental health suggest strategies that help Asian Americans navigate racialized society more effectively? Answering all facets of these questions would take the corpus of an entire career, but this dissertation makes significant headway in exploring how Asian Americans, both native and foreign born, construct the field of their intergroup relations and the implications of their ideologies on their social and psychological lives.

Through a number of empirical analyses using two population-level datasets, I explored the relationships between threat and social boundaries for Asian Americans, a fast-growing racialized group within the United States, whose status within the American racial hierarchy raises absorbing sociological questions in regard to the future of race, migration, and social stratification. My theorizing concerning Asian American group boundaries, and in particular arguments concerning individuals' closure ideology, provide novel insights about boundaries at the individual level that draw on both recent quantitative work and classical sociological theory. Ultimately, through a combination of theory and methods, this dissertation makes contributions to three major literatures regarding Asian Americans: group boundaries, assimilation, and mental health.

Contributions to the Boundary Literature

The first set of contributions pertain to the literature on social group boundaries. In general, this dissertation responds to the call by Lamont and Molnár (2002) for more work on symbolic and social boundaries and, in particular, to highlight the psychological mechanisms involved in the process of boundary construction. I do this by relying on Weberian (1968) notions of social closure,

which suggest that groups in competition police their boundaries to gain and maintain access to resources, and by addressing the psychological beliefs that underlie the policing of symbolic boundaries, i.e., conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize people and groups. By focusing on symbolic boundaries and the ideologies that support them, researchers can reveal the role of social psychological mechanisms in boundary-work.

Additionally, the work in this dissertation owes much to the Barthian (1969) perspective that stresses a more relational approach to understanding group boundaries. In this approach, boundaries are defined by oppositional perceptions and interactions in a field of group relations. As such, the approach resonates with social identity theory, which emphasizes social comparison as critical for forming the oft discussed "us" versus "them" paradigms in societies (Tajfel and Turner 2004). The same line of thought undergirds theorizing on group perceptions as part of a "sense of group position," and likewise utilizes an oppositional approach in understanding intergroup beliefs (Blumer 1958; Bobo and Hutchings 1996). In all these perspectives, the perception of threat features prominently in determining group boundary formation and boundary shifts as it provides critical information about the oppositional nature of group relations.

There are a number of strategies that groups, and their members, may pursue in an oppositional field of group relations (Stephan, Ybarra, Morrison 2009). Perhaps the most exhaustive discussion of boundary strategies comes from Wimmer (2013). Wimmer notes that individuals may pursue positional strategies that highlight individual or collective movement within categories, such as a light-skinned Black American "passing" as White. The strategies at the center of this dissertation, however, are what he describes as group contraction and group expansion. In these strategies, individuals attempt to revise a boundary to be more restrictive or more inclusive. These strategies evoke conceptual synergy with perspectives like that of Weber's that suggest that groups open or close their boundaries based on group competition. To contract or expand boundaries,

group members use a number of tactics including discrimination, political mobilization, or coercion all of which emerge from shared group ideologies about their boundaries (see Wimmer 2013, Chapter 3).

For example, Muhammad (2019), in his book on race and policing, describes how in the Northeastern United States, native-born White Americans in the late 19th and early 20th centuries engaged in numerous boundary-making strategies in an attempt to exclude new Irish and Eastern European immigrants from accessing political and economic resources. Eventually boundaries shifted to exclude Black Americans who migrated north. While this involved political and institutional shifts in policy to structurally delineate these boundaries, especially via crime and policing, individual-level ideological shifts relating to these boundaries also occurred. The psychological "us versus them" categories were altered in a fundamental way, in large part due to the demographic threat posed by Black Americans and led to boundary expansion for White Americans. Alternatively, Abascal (2020) recently found that White Americans who are reminded that Whites will soon become a racial minority group in the U.S. were less likely to categorize racially ambiguous pictures of Hispanics as White than Whites who were not primed with demographic threat. Her findings provide evidence that perceptions of group threat can also elicit strategies of contraction or restrictiveness.

In this dissertation, I consider the association between perceptions of threat and explicitly identify the ideologies that form the basis of boundary transformations. To do this, I conceptualize closure ideology, which I define as beliefs individuals have about their group boundaries, specifically, how individuals perceive who can and should be considered members of their social group. Throughout the chapters in this dissertation, I embed this conceptualization within traditional sociological theory and operationalize it in a number of ways. I examine antecedents to formation of closure ideology and to its consequences, revealing its analytic and predictive value. This

encapsulation of the social psychological aspect of group boundaries is one contribution to the literature on group boundaries.

In addition to highlighting the role of closure ideology, my second contribution addresses a question that remains in the literature on group boundaries: How do individuals in groups in the middle of status hierarchies react to the perception of threat? If White Americans are the highest status group in the U.S. and Black Americans the lowest, then Asian and Latino/a Americans fall somewhere in the middle of the racial group hierarchy (Bonilla-Siva 2004). Some researchers examined the ways perception of threat affect social identification with intermediate social groups. In terms of early work on threat and intermediate racial groups, Golash-Boza (2006) found that perceptions of discrimination among Hispanic Americans, were associated with increases in the likelihood that respondents would identify as Latino/a Americans as opposed to American. However, this analysis emphasizes what Wimmer (2013) would define as positional strategies, meaning that threat shaped the likelihood of locating oneself within a particular category. More threat led to identification within a racialized category, whereas members who perceived less threat were more likely to position themselves in a dominant category.

My analyses from Chapters 1 and 2 of this dissertation emphasize ideological associations that indicate preferences for group strategies of contraction or expansion, as opposed to the individual positional strategies emphasizing social identity that others have examined. In Chapter 1, I found that when Asian Americans perceive that their group status is threatened there is an increase in the restrictiveness in their closure ideology borne out in an association with more restrictive marriage attitudes, increased homophily, and amplified discomfort towards White and Black Americans. In Chapter 2, I assess the effects of individual threat on closure ideology among Asian American immigrants and similarly find that perceptions of stronger interpersonal threat are associated with more restrictive closure ideologies, specifically showing an increase in the discomfort

with group members marrying outside of their group. Revisiting the significance of these outcomes and demonstrating how they come together to illustrate more restrictive closure ideologies in the face of threat offers a number of empirical starting points for future research into Asian Americans and their boundaries.

Turning first to interracial marriage, which is a key dependent variable in both Chapters 1 and 2, many theoretical arguments suggest that intermarriage beliefs comprise a principal gauge of social boundaries between groups including Asian Americans (Biernat et al. 1996; Alba and Nee 2003; Qian and Lichter 2011; Shiao 2017). More restrictive attitudes about interracial marriage indicate a tightening of group boundaries because maintaining restrictive intermarriage beliefs diminishes a central means by which outgroup members may join their ingroup. Additionally, the analyses from Chapter 1 build on notions of group boundaries as oppositional by exploring the association between group status threat and perceptions of cooperation with outgroups. Perceiving generalized group threat led to decreases in the perception of cooperation with White and Black Americans but not Hispanics. The finding that perceptions changed regarding White and Black but not Hispanic Americans is consistent with theories that postulate Hispanic and Asian Americans as being both part of an American racial middle class of "honorary whites" (Bonilla-Silva 2004; Lee and Bean 2010). Seen as similarly situated others, the unsupported hypothesis regarding Asian-Hispanic cooperation indicates that Asian Americans perceive group competition between themselves and Hispanic Americans as fundamentally different than with White and Black Americans. However, the fact that group threat predicted more antagonism towards both White and Black Americans indicate that contraction is still a generalized tightening of the social boundary, and not simply oriented, for instance, towards the dominant racial group. Taken together, these findings support the argument that the threat response strategy of Asian Americans is boundary contraction as opposed to expansion.

The dissertation builds off these central findings by identifying important patterns relating to the conditions under which threat predicts closure ideology. Socioeconomic status plays an important role in determining an Asian American's closure ideology. In Chapter 1, income and education are associated with a more permissive closure ideology to a meaningful degree in every model. For example, both increases in income and education level were associated with more cooperative beliefs towards White Americans but not for Black or Hispanic Americans. This suggests that Asian Americans may sense more economic competition with White Americans and that access to economic capital assuages this sense of competition with them to an extent not seen with Hispanic and Black Americans. In Chapter 2, a different association arises when only examining the beliefs of Asian immigrants. When I stratified the models by high and low income in that study, I show that the relationship between interpersonal threat and closure ideology emerges at high incomes for Asian immigrants.

The contradiction between the findings in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 in this regard raise interesting theoretical questions. The most likely explanation for this divergence in outcomes by income level relates to the difference in the type of threat I examined. Whereas in Chapter 1 I utilize group status threat, regarding the general status of Asian Americans, and find higher class status related to permissiveness, in Chapter 2 I utilize interpersonal threat, personal experiences with discrimination, and reveal that higher class status is related to restrictiveness. The latter may indicate that when the threat directly affects the respondent the threat is realized as hurting *them*. Ultimately, such personalized hurt may be associated with a more restrictive closure ideology, especially for those with higher salaries who have more to lose if they feel their race directly limits their success. In contrast, group status threat, while through the process of linked fate is associated with closure ideology, is more abstract and, absent any perceived direct threat, highly educated and salaried respondents may be more likely to endorse the socially desirable permissive beliefs. Beyond this

possible clarification, examination as to why these threats are associated with class so differently would necessitate time-order analysis or qualitative exploration.

Another factor that strongly impacts the relationship between threat and closure ideology is social identity. Findings from Chapters 1 and 2 demonstrate the relevance of social identity in understanding when a more restrictive closure ideology may be "activated" for Asian Americans. In Chapter 1, social identity was measured using a similar item to Golash-Boza and Darity (2008) that assessed a delineation between those who identify as Asian American and those who chose to identify as simply American. Identifying as Asian American was significantly associated with more restrictiveness, supporting arguments that link identity and ingroup ideology, such as the literature on linked fate (Masuoka 2006). In Chapter 2, I measure social identity through an additive scale of social identity items that includes dimensions of identification with the group, feelings of closeness with the group, and the amount of time one prefers to spend with their group. Despite using different measurements, I find a similar pattern to Chapter 1 in that social identity is robustly related to closure ideology, where higher levels of identification predict a more restrictive closure ideology.

Contributions to the Assimilation Literature

In Chapter 2, I focus on questions concerning assimilation by exclusively centering my analysis on Asian immigrants. Traditional markers of assimilation are income and education, which offer a rough determination of structural integration (Gordon 1964). Lee and Kye (2016) suggest that while Asian immigrants may be structurally integrating, they may also be simultaneously differentiating themselves into a new racial categorization, that of Asian Americans. This is substantively different from Segmented Assimilation Theory that suggests immigrants are likely to either assimilate into a poorer stratum, assimilate into the middle class and adopt mainstream culture, or assimilate structurally while adhering to their home culture (Portes and Zhou 1993). The

racialized assimilation approach proposes a fourth route, that immigrants are structurally integrating but adopting new racial boundaries that more closely reflect the racial power dynamics and interests in the U.S. To empirically assess this hypothesis, I utilize closure ideology as an indicator of racialization since closure ideology deals explicitly with racial group boundaries. I compare the impact of perceived individual threat on closure ideology at different levels of income, a mainstay in traditional assimilationist studies. Findings from Chapter 2 greatly contribute to the racialized assimilation hypothesis by demonstrating that at higher levels of income, discrimination predicts more restrictive closure ideology, i.e. a tightening of racial boundaries, that is not present at lower incomes. This finding supports the idea that structural assimilation via class status is a co-occurring phenomenon alongside more restrictive beliefs about racial group boundaries, i.e. racialized assimilation.

Contributions to the Mental Health Literature

Finally, this dissertation contributes to the mental health literature by inserting analyses about ideological beliefs into studies that seek to explain variation in the impact of discrimination on mental illness. For decades, scholars of mental health have understood the direct, powerful, and detrimental effect that discrimination has on mental health, especially for racial minorities (Williams et al. 2019). Social psychologists of mental health over the years have sought to understand why some individuals are more influenced by discrimination than others to understand more clearly what forces may be protective against its effects. While scholars have utilized identity as a possible reason for the variation in the discrimination and mental health literature, findings in regard to Asian Americans are equivocal (Yip 2018). In Chapter 3, I argue that closure ideology should be protective of mental health because such beliefs provide a framework for understanding social group competition, thus decreasing uncertainty and anxiety. Additionally, I argue closure ideology will

protect against the consequences of discrimination because it provides a mental schema for knowing why discriminatory experiences are occurring.

Results from Chapter 3 demonstrate that a more restrictive ideology does indeed appear to reduce the prevalence of depression and anxiety. However, the relationships between closure ideology, discrimination, and mental illness are more complicated than anticipated. The results show that the moderation effect of closure ideology on the relationship between discrimination and mental illness depends on the type of discrimination experienced. For everyday discrimination, a common measure of racial discrimination, the results confirm my hypothesis. Those respondents with a more restrictive closure ideology have increased resilience to the effects of everyday discrimination compared to respondents with more permissive ideologies across both forms of illness. This finding strongly indicates that closure ideology is a protective factor against everyday discrimination. Additionally, this finding contributes to the growing literature on social psychological moderators of the discrimination-mental illness relationship in a substantial way as many studies continue to utilize this measure of discrimination as a strong predictor of worsening health outcomes (Yip et al. 2019).

However, the results involving immigrant discrimination paint a different picture. In the models where immigrant discrimination is interacted with closure ideology there is a complex relationship with mental illness that suggests a different pattern from that hypothesized. When immigrant discrimination is low, there is a substantial protective effect for those with a more restrictive closure ideology relative to those who are permissive. At higher levels of immigrant discrimination, conversely, those with a more restrictive closure ideology are more likely to report mental illness than their permissive counterparts. Since it is at high levels of immigrant discrimination that reports of mental illness are more likely to occur, this pattern suggests that more close-minded beliefs exacerbate mental illness at high levels of immigrant discrimination. This

pattern denotes that for those individuals with a very restrictive closure ideology the experience of immigrant discrimination grows more salient and more painful, increasing stress and increasing the odds of the onset of mental illness. While these results specify the near opposite of what is hypothesized, they still offer important insights. For instance, closure ideology may exacerbate the effect of immigrant discrimination because there are unique circumstances around racial group boundaries and the "perpetual foreigner" stereotype frequently seen in research on the racism that Asians in the U.S. face (Xu and Lee 2013). Only future qualitative and experimental research can seek to explain this distinctive relationship.

In conclusion, this dissertation provides a number of significant findings that are relevant to understanding the Asian American experience while simultaneously introducing a new theoretical concept applicable to broad social questions. It is unfortunate that racialized experiences continue to comprise so much of social life for groups of people who want the same goals as all people: to live a free, happy, and meaningful life unrestrained by unnecessarily oppressive forces. But, until such a time that racist forces become an artifact of history, it is imperative that sociologists continue to study the way racial ideas form, are perpetuated, and impact people's lives. I find this especially true for millions of Asian Americans who continue to navigate the rocky trails of the American racial landscape. The least social science can do is continue to better understand the forces that shape their experiences.

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