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# Asians in the American mind: how Americans view Asian Americans politically

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**ASIANS IN THE AMERICAN MIND: HOW AMERICANS VIEW ASIAN  
AMERICANS POLITICALLY**

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Political Science

by  
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This manuscript is dedicated to:

Grandpa with much love and appreciation;

my family for their unfailing support and encouragement;

my three boys, Tristan, Tyler, and Kenshin, whom I am so proud to be their aunt.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study explores how the general American public thinks about Asian Americans, who are a multiethnic, immigrant-dominated, fast-growing, and understudied group. Understanding Americans' views toward Asians is important in light of the changing face of the American electorate, whose recent additions comprise largely of immigrants from Asia and Latin America, and the likelihood that Americans' beliefs or thoughts about race and ethnicity will be altered beyond the black-white divide in U.S. politics. As an attempt to gain such understanding, the purpose of this study is to provide a systematic study of Americans' attitudes toward Asians in terms of positive/negative evaluations that they have of Asians (i.e., affect-based perceptions) and their perceptions of factual attributes of Asians, such as perseverance and intelligence (i.e., cognition-based perceptions).

Americans' perceptions of Asian Americans are examined using a conceptual framework based on theories and measures that have been discussed in past studies of intergroup relations largely directed at the relationship between white and black Americans, including the personal contact, context, self-interest, and symbolic politics theoretical perspectives. The major findings of the effects of these key explanatory factors on Americans' affect- and cognition-based perceptions of Asians indicate some mixed and conflicting results. The findings confirm some aspects of the personal contact, self-interest, and symbolic politics hypotheses, but not the context hypothesis.

The major findings of this study have provided some important insights into Americans' views of Asians, suggesting that a better or fuller understanding of contemporary racial attitudes in U.S. politics requires focusing on all groups salient to politics, including Asian Americans.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Asian Americans currently make up just an estimated five percent of the U.S. population (2009 American Community Survey); yet, they are one of the fastest growing racial/ethnic populations—relative to percentage increase—and immigrant-dominated groups in America (National Research Council et al., 2001).<sup>1</sup> With this population growth, the Asian American community has received increasing scrutiny and attention from scholars, politicians, and the media in recent years, but in many ways it remains misunderstood. For example, a number of scholars (e.g., Lien et al., 2004; Said, 1978; Okihiro, 1994) have noted that many non-Asians perceived Asian Americans in general as foreigners, although only more than half of the current Asian American population is foreign-born.

This dissertation explores how Americans think about Asian Americans, specifically in terms of positive/negative evaluations that they have of Asians and their perceptions of factual attributes of Asians (such as perseverance and intelligence).<sup>2</sup> Understanding Americans' views toward Asians, a politically meaningful but understudied group, is important in light of the recent immigration-based changes in the nation that affect the changing face of the American electorate. With the introduction of a considerable number of immigrants, largely from Asia and Latin America, to the polity in recent years, it is likely that Americans' beliefs or thoughts about race and ethnicity<sup>3</sup> will be altered beyond the black-white schism in U.S. politics, signaling, for

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<sup>1</sup> The 2000 U.S. Census Bureau categorizes Asian Americans collectively as individuals from Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese, Asian Indian, and “other” Asian descents. However, Asians are greatly diverse in ethnic origin, and no individual ethnic group constitutes a majority. This dissertation is concerned with perceptions of Asians as a racial out-group and does not examine the different ethnic groups. Thus, I refer to Asian Americans as a single, broad group in spite of the two dozen groups that this term covers.

<sup>2</sup> This dissertation focuses on respondents from the four major racial/ethnic groups in the U.S., including Asians, whites, blacks, and Hispanics.

<sup>3</sup> The definitions of race and ethnicity and how they are related are still unclear. Even though some scholars use these terms alternately, ethnicity refers generally to a person's cultural background or country of origin, while race is used frequently to describe the mutually exclusive racial and politically meaningful groupings of white, black, Latino, and Asian American (Junn and Matto, 2008). The term “Hispanic” is classified by the U.S. government as

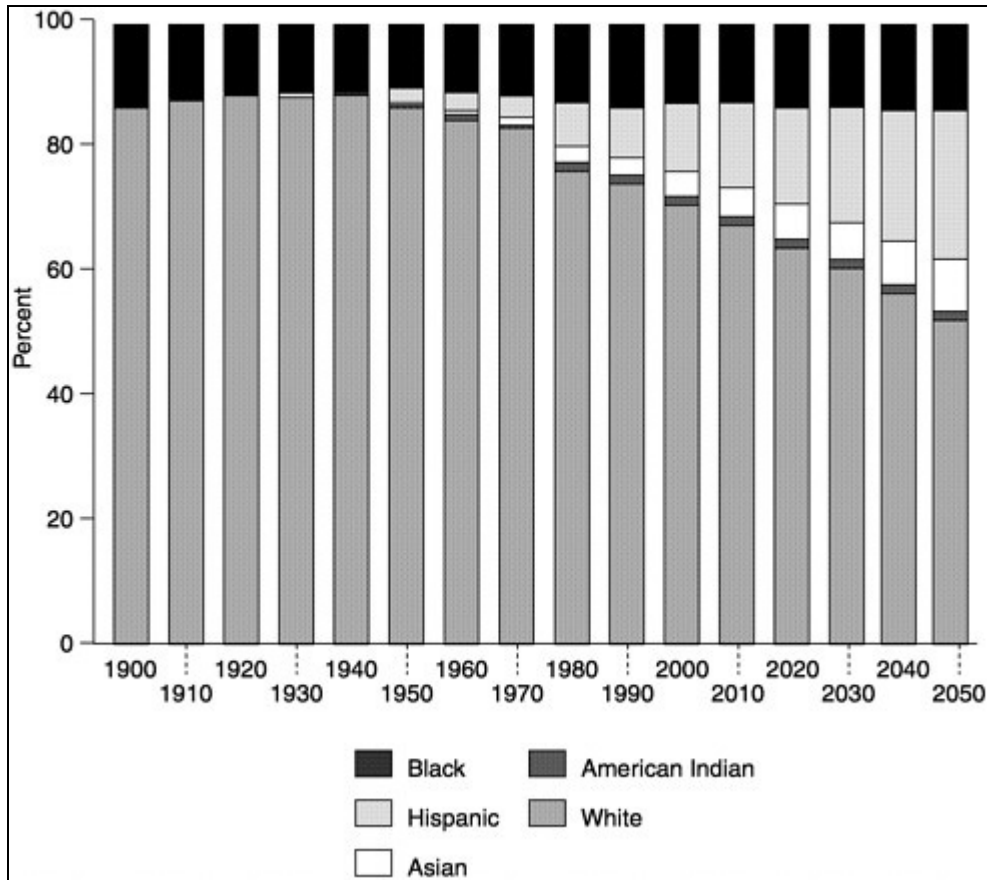
example, a potential for political coalitions founded in multiple races/ethnicities (Junn and Matto, 2008; Lien et al., 2004).

It is a fact, although some consider it a truism, that the United States is a nation of immigrants, populated from persons all over the globe. Historian Edward Countryman (1996) hails Americans as a “collision of histories” with a mixture of races, ethnicities, cultures, religions, and socioeconomic groups (see also Welch et al., 2009). Changes in the recent U.S. population mix arise largely from immigration, and today’s immigrants came overwhelmingly from Asia and Latin America and not from Europe or Africa (National Research Council et al., 2001). The 2000 Census indicates that the Asian American population has the highest proportion of legal immigrants at 61 percent (National Research Council et al., 2001), while 40 percent of Hispanic Americans are foreign-born (Suro and Passel, 2003). Findings based on the 2000 Census, as shown in Figure 1.1, give a detailed picture of how the U.S. population has changed in the past few decades, particularly in comparing the Asian, white, black, and Hispanic populations.<sup>4</sup> Figure 1.1 shows demographic trends of the racial/ethnic makeup of the U.S. population from 1900 to projections through 2050. In terms of the racial/ethnic proportion to the total U.S. population, Asian and Hispanic Americans experience the highest growth, particularly from 1980 onward. The black population has remained relatively stable and is projected to continue in this way. In contrast, Figure 1.1 reveals a downward trend in the proportion of the white population to the total U.S. population each decade, and this trend is expected to persist (National Research Council et al., 2001).

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an ethnicity rather than a race; however, a number of past studies have used “Hispanic” interchangeably with “Latino” to represent individuals of Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Central and South American, and other Hispanic origins. In this dissertation the Hispanic and Latino terms are used interchangeably.

<sup>4</sup> For the purposes of this project, I use “Asian American,” “Hispanic American,” “white American,” and “black American” interchangeably with “Asian,” “Hispanic,” “white,” and “black” to emphasize the racial/ethnic identities of these groups.



**Figure 1.1 The Changing Racial and Ethnic Composition of the U.S. Population<sup>5</sup>**

Yet, it is paradoxical that, throughout American history, a nation of immigrants perpetually has “nativist,” or anti-foreign, views or sentiments. Some native-born Americans have fears of job and economic competitions from new immigrants, and in some cases foreign-born Americans develop anti-immigration attitudes as well. A number of native-born Americans also perceive cultural threats from non-English-speaking individuals or people with different cultural traditions and religious beliefs (Welch et al., 2009). Such anti-foreign sentiments are typically most prominent when levels of immigration are elevated, and this is why strong anti-foreign sentiments have affected American politics throughout its history and today, manifested in part

<sup>5</sup> Reprinted with permission from *America Becoming: Racial Trends and Their Consequences*, 2001 by the National Academy of Sciences, Courtesy of the National Academies Press, Washington, D.C. The letter of permission is included in Appendix A.

by the ever-changing and controversial U.S. immigration policy (Welch et al., 2009; Lien et al., 2004). In particular, a number of overtly discriminatory immigration laws directly targeted the Asian population, which is still heavily immigrant today, in the early periods of American history. The Immigration Exclusion Act of 1882, the Immigration Acts of 1917 and 1924, and the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934 blocked practically all immigration from certain Asian countries, such as China, Japan, and India, and prevented citizenship to Asians already residing in the U.S. (Wong et al., 2008; Lee, 1999). It was not until the 1965 Immigration Act, which contained favorable immigration and naturalization reforms for Asians, that the Asian population started to increase sharply in the U.S., especially between 1970 and 2000. Since 1970 and the end of immigration limits initially enforced in 1924, the Asian American population has augmented from 1.5 million to almost 12 million in 2000 (including mixed race) and is predicted to increase to 20 million by 2020 (National Research Council et al., 2001). Compared with the white, black, and Hispanic populations, the Asian American population has undergone dramatic changes in growth rate. As Table 1.1 shows, the Asian American population is the fastest-

**Table 1.1 Population Growth Rate by Racial/Ethnic Group**

	<b>% Growth Rate: 1980-1990</b>	<b>% Growth Rate: 1990-2000</b>
<b>Asians</b>	96.1	72.0
<b>Hispanics</b>	53.0	39.4
<b>Blacks</b>	12.0	15.3
<b>Whites</b>	4.1	5.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2001 Statistical Abstract of the U.S.

growing of all the major racial/ethnic groups, both from 1980-1990 and 1990-2000, followed by Hispanics, blacks, and whites, respectively. In the 1980-1990 decade, the Asian population experienced a phenomenal growth rate at 96 percent, predominantly due to the resettlement of political refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. The Asian community underwent a

lower, but still exceptional, growth rate of 72 percent in 1990-2000. The Hispanic population follows with a growth rate of 53 percent in 1980-1990 and 39 percent in 1990-2000.

Nativist sentiments appear also to be in conflict with other American values. Despite the resentments they have faced, immigrants from Asia (and other countries of the world) have been noted for their important roles in building America. For example, Chinese immigrants helped to construct the transcontinental railroad that connected the eastern part of America to its western region. Japanese and Hispanic immigrants contributed to California's status as the country's chief food producer. In more recent times, Chinese and Indian immigrants have played a prominent part in U.S. high-tech industry.

The general salience of racial attitudes in the U.S. is indisputable, both in positive and negative ways. Scenes of disagreement, misunderstanding, discord, and even open bigotry in major urban areas in the U.S. are not hard to call to mind (Bobo and Johnson, 2000). For example, in a front-page *Los Angeles Times* story written before the 1992 riots (in Los Angeles), Frank Clifford conveyed a general sense of apprehension and tension with the racial divide in this manner:

Cultural collisions, often violent, occasionally fatal, are occurring every day. Hostilities between black residents and Korean shop-keepers, Latinos and blacks vying for jobs at Martin Luther King Jr./Drew Medical Center, interracial fighting at Lawndale high school, and repeated charges of police brutality against minorities--all of this is disturbing the city's racial peace in a way that has some political analysts recalling Watts. [Frank Clifford, "Tension among Minorities Upsets Old Rules of Politics." *Los Angeles Times*, August 11, 1991, p. A1]

Moreover, in a review of the movie *Crash*, Roger Ebert suggests that racial perceptions of various groups are prevalent even in a mix-race community, and everyone, no matter his/her racial/ethnic background, holds some sorts of personal prejudice of other groups in society:

"Crash" tells interlocking stories of whites, blacks, Latinos, Koreans, Iranians, cops and criminals, the rich and the poor, the powerful and powerless, all defined

in one way or another by racism. All are victims of it, and all are guilty of it. Sometimes, yes, they rise above it, although it is never that simple. Their negative impulses may be instinctive, their positive impulses may be dangerous, and who knows what the other person is thinking? [Roger Ebert, "Crash." [www.rogerebert.com](http://www.rogerebert.com), May 5, 2005]

However, racial conflict, division, and personal prejudice do not completely characterize race relations in American communities. For instance, following the 1992 riots in Los Angeles, a diverse group of black, Hispanic, and Asian community leaders drafted a call for progressive leadership on race and established the Multicultural Collaborative to develop long-term solutions to intense ethnic conflict (Bobo and Johnson, 2000).

In America, significant cleavages have formed between groups identified by racial or ethnic indicators. As Bobo (1999) notes, American society currently faces "a potentially historic turn against many of the civil rights accomplishments of the past four decades: a great chasm of misunderstanding still separates black and white Americans, and a rising tide of anti-immigrant fervor is gathering force" (446). The recent influx of immigrants from Asia and Latin America has demographically changed the racial and ethnic landscape of America, transforming it from a nation "monochromatically divided between blacks and whites into a 'prismatic' nation composed of a polychromatic range of ethnic and racial groups" (Oliver and Wong, 2003: 567). In many American cities, immigration has added rising numbers of Asians and Hispanics to the core of black and white ethnic urban neighborhoods (Jackson et al., 1994). Even as it heads toward a relative multiracial majority, the United States is still divided by color. Thus, there are many reasons that researchers continue to be committed to unraveling the nature of prejudice and hostility among racial groups.

Although the Asian American presence has been felt since the first large wave of Asian immigrants who arrived in the United States in 1848 and the current increases in the Asian



population, Americans' perceptions of Asians are still relatively unclear and often ambivalent in the scholarly literature and American society. Scholars of Asian American studies indicate that the perceived status of Asians in the U.S. has run the gamut from perpetual "yellow peril" foreigners coined in the 1800s to initially represent Chinese immigrants and later other Asian immigrants as a threat of Asiatic immigration, demeaning "coolies" to typecast Chinese immigrant workers in the mid-1900s, and "enemy race" and "yellow peril" to characterize Japanese Americans in World War II, to the esteemed "model minority" and well-educated immigrants post-1965 (Lee, 1999; Chan, 1991; Lee et al., 2008; Lin et al., 2005; Yen, 2000; Lien et al., 2004). Widely held views of the general public toward the current and future influence of Asians on American society and politics continue to be largely seen through the stereotype of Asians (1) as a "model minority" who have achieved great social and economic successes and are politically compliant and even passive, or (2) as perpetual foreigners who are not interested in blending into the larger American society and political culture (Lien et al., 2004). These complex and contradictory perceptions of Asians, however, have not been thoroughly examined because past studies typically treat racial attitudes and prejudice as if they were strictly a black-white concern (Lin et al., 2005).

### **Perceptions of Racial Out-Groups in the United States**

Racial attitudes have been a critical factor in studies of intergroup relations and issues of race in America. They largely take the form of a white majority's views toward a particular minority out-group, such as black Americans. In the substantial scholarly ink devoted to research on racial attitudes since Gunnar Myrdal's classic *An American Dilemma* in 1944, black Americans have been noticeable chiefly as the "objects" of racial attitudes. Racial attitudes have figured prominently in black-white relations by and large because of the strained relationship

brought about by the presence of a large black population comprised of individuals who had been unfairly degraded as slaves and then treated as second-class citizens in a country formed on democratic ideals of equal opportunity. The racial system in America is inextricably linked to our nation's history as well as to its core values and ideals (Croll, 2007; Bonilla-Silva, 1997; 2001; Gerstle, 2002; Kluegel and Smith, 1986; Lewis, 2004; Omi and Winant, 1994). This tension has troubled and preoccupied American ideas, discourse, and leaders for centuries (Schuman et al., 1985). Thomas Jefferson, a prominent figure in developing American democracy, believed that the existence of a harmonious white-black society was implausible because of whites' deep-rooted prejudices toward blacks and blacks' aggrieved resentments toward whites (Schuman et al., 1985). A century later, Alexis de Tocqueville echoed Jefferson's view that a merging of the races in U.S. society was not conceivable; moreover, he believed that blacks and whites could not live in any society as equals (Schuman et al., 1985). As Tocqueville and Jefferson predicted, racial beliefs and attitudes have long influenced Americans and American politics.

In fact, most of what is known about the roots and consequences of racial and ethnic attitudes and perceptions of minority groups in American politics stems from studies of black Americans, and the majority of these works have focused on the black-white schism in U.S. politics (e.g., Schuman et al., 1985; Sniderman and Hagen, 1985; Sniderman and Carmines, 1997; Gilens, 1996; Hurwitz and Peffley, 1998; Tate, 1994, 2003; Sniderman and Piazza, 2002). The perceptions and stereotypes of blacks have helped to shape whites' political views on racial issues, such as welfare and crime (Hurwitz and Peffley, 1998; Peffley and Hurwitz, 1998). Numerous scholars, such as Myrdal (1944), Allport (1954), Tocqueville (1956) and Takaki

(1979), have concluded that whites' derogatory views of blacks have, to a great extent, shaped the politics, social structure, economy, and culture of American society.

Racial beliefs about black Americans have assumed two particular forms in the literature. First, genetic stereotype was at the hub of the social Darwinism movement that perceived blacks as biologically and socially inferior (Schuman et al., 1985). This stereotype persuaded many whites to believe that blacks should be separated from white society, and contributed to the proliferation of the Jim Crow laws in the 1800s (Schuman et al., 1985). Yet, several studies have shown that genetic stereotyping of blacks that was popular in the 1940s has now been rejected by a majority of whites (Page and Shapiro, 1992; Schuman et al., 1985; Sigelman and Welch, 1991). Moreover, Sigelman and Welch (1991: 48) indicate that "many whites now tend to eschew overt expressions of racist sentiment, but at the same time want to keep blacks at arm's length." Second, behavioral stereotype, which supplanted genetic stereotype, has become relevant as a large number of whites today view blacks as "violent" or "undisciplined" and "lazy" (Peffley and Hurwitz, 1998). Kluegel and Smith (1986) convey that "the majority of whites believe that blacks do not face strictly racial barriers to opportunity, and attribute race differences in socioeconomic status to a lack of motivation among blacks" (191). The resulting resentments are rooted in the belief that "blacks violate such traditional American values as individualism and self-reliance, the work ethic, obedience, and discipline" (Kinder and Sears, 1981: 416; also McConahay and Hough, 1976; McConahay, 1986; Sears, 1988). These perceptions are important in the sense that they often are transformed into political and policy attitudes that tend to be unfavorable to blacks (Hurwitz and Peffley, 1998).

The recent changing face of the American electoral landscape has prompted an adjustment to the racial context of politics, shifting Americans' thinking about race and ethnicity

beyond the black-white division in politics (Junn and Matto, 2008). The country's current demographic composition has changed considerably in the last 25 years according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Unlike the black community—who once made up the largest minority group but are now experiencing only slight increases in population growth rate—the Hispanic and Asian populations have undergone tremendous growth in recent years. With Hispanics now supplanting blacks as the largest minority group in the U.S., researchers have started to focus on racial attitudes toward Hispanics and Hispanics' perceptions of other racial groups (Sanchez, 2008; McClain et al., 2006; Oliver and Wong, 2003; Dixon and Rosenbaum, 2004; Sniderman and Piazza, 2002; Fox, 2004; Stein et al., 2000). Compared with those of blacks, whites' racial attitudes toward Hispanics are much less negative. For example, Dixon and Rosenbaum (2004) find that contact between whites and Hispanics in certain settings helps to mitigate anti-Hispanic stereotypes. Similarly, Stein et al. (2000) indicate that frequent contact between Hispanics and whites enhances the majority group's affinity toward Hispanics. Blacks' perceptions of Hispanics are somewhat mixed, although they are often positive. A number of studies of black-Hispanic relations show a history of mutual support and collaboration through their common political party affiliation (Hahn et al., 1976; Munoz and Henry, 1990; Hero, 1989; Sonenshein, 1989; De Leon, 1991). However, some studies, such as Gay (2006), contend that competition for scarce resources influences blacks' anti-Latino sentiments. Hispanics' perceptions of other racial groups, however, are less straightforward. McClain et al. (2006) find that Hispanic immigrants mostly have negative stereotypical views of blacks and perceive that they have more in common with whites than with blacks. Conversely, Sanchez (2008) indicates that Hispanic group consciousness affects greater perceptions of commonality with black Americans, but concludes that Hispanic panethnic identity is not yet well defined.

Studies of Americans' racial attitudes toward Asians, in contrast, are conspicuously deficient in the political science literature. There are a few exceptions with such multi-racial studies as Oliver and Wong (2003) and Jackson, Gerber, and Cain (1994), but these studies have mixed or inconclusive results concerning Asians due, in part, to the distinct time and place of the surveys used (i.e. in Los Angeles during or after a period of great urban tension involving Asian business owners). Compared with what is known from empirical research about whites, blacks, and, more recently, Hispanics, little is known or understood about the patterns and determinants of racial perceptions and attitudes toward Asians. In fact, Asian Americans are an understudied group in the literature, particularly in comparison to blacks and Hispanics.

### **Perceptions of Asian Americans**

Some scholars of Asian American studies suggest that Americans' perceptions of Asians are seen largely through the lens of prevailing myths about this group. In particular, two contrasting and disputed stereotypes have dominated contemporary views of Asian Americans.

#### Asian Americans as a Model Minority

Asians as a group are most commonly perceived today as a "model minority." Definitions of model minority vary, but it is generally described as a racial out-group who has attained economic success and social acceptance through hard work and conservative values (Lee, 1999; Lee et al., 2008; Lien et al, 2004). This stereotype accentuates perceived competence of Asians by portraying them as diligent and successful in their educational and economic endeavors (Lin et al., 2005). In fact, public figures, the media, and educators have commended Asian Americans for their educational achievements, hard-working values, high family incomes, stable family structures, and low levels of criminal behavior (Lee et al., 2008; Lee, 1999; Yen, 2000).

The model minority term was first used in the mid-1960s by sociologist William Petersen to epitomize Asian Americans. In a *New York Times Magazine* article, entitled “Success Story, Japanese American Style,” Petersen (1966) suggests that Japanese Americans’ cultures/values/ethics of hard work and strong family bonds made it possible for them to overcome racial barriers and achieved great academic and economic success in mainstream society (see also Lee et al., 2008). During the 1980s the media perpetuated the model minority image by honoring Asian Americans in school with various praises and complimentary titles. For example, such articles as *Newsweek*’s “The Drive to Excel” (April 1984), *The New Republic*’s “America’s Greatest Success Story: The Triumph of Asian Americans” (July 1985), *Fortune*’s “America’s Super Minority” (November 1986), and *Time*’s “The New Whiz Kids” (August 1987) highlighted the Asian “success” story in which Asians were described as underprivileged Americans who persevered to achieve success by acquiring the “American Dream” (Lee et al., 2008: 70).

The formation of the model minority stereotype can be explained by various political and social factors, such as the U.S. immigration policy and the social climate of the 1960s and 1970s (Lien et al., 2004; Lee, 1999; Yen, 2000; Lee et al., 2008). The model minority stereotype has been linked to the 1965 Immigration Act that led to rapid increases in the Asian population in the U.S. (Lien et al., 2004; Yen, 2000). Even though this statute eased previous restrictions on immigration from Asia, it permitted mass entry to specific classes of Asians, including individuals with desirable occupational skills, close relatives of U.S. citizens and permanent residents, and political refugees (Lien et al., 2004). The post-1965 immigrants from Asia were composed largely of highly educated and wealthy groups in their homelands, even though a large number of political refugees of much more modest backgrounds from Vietnam, Cambodia, and

Laos resettled in the U.S. in 1975 and later (Lien et al., 2004). Under the preference of “skilled workers,” the U.S. recruited graduate students, professionals, and technicians, and policymakers sought to attract Asians for technical and scientific positions not successfully filled by American students (Lien et al., 2004; Yen, 2000). Hence, the 1965 Immigration Act regulated the quality of immigrants from Asia in ways that it did not for immigrants from non-Asian countries (Lien et al., 2004; Yen, 2000). The inundation of post-1965 immigrants altered the demographics and character of the Asian American community by bringing status, expertise, and wealth to an out-group that primarily contained mostly uneducated and poor laundry and restaurant owners, although many of the political refugees who arrived in 1975 and later became part of the working class (Yen, 2000; Lien et al., 2004).

The social atmosphere of the Civil Rights era also helped to propagate the model minority stereotype. In particular, the acknowledgment of Asian achievements, through such venues as Petersen’s (1966) article on Japanese Americans, took place during a period of social upheavals for other minority groups, especially increases in the crime and poverty rates among blacks and Hispanics that drew widespread apprehension (Yen, 2000; Lee, 1999; Lee et al., 2008). Some scholars of Asian American studies (such as Lee, 1999) suggest that the model minority image of Asians was used to challenge Civil Rights activists’ concerns about equal opportunities for all races (see also Lee et al., 2008). As Lee (1999) indicates, by the late 1960s an image of a socioeconomically successful Asian community was promoted as a model of productivity and nonpolitical, nonmilitant upward mobility for other racial minorities to emulate.

Although the model minority stereotype is seemingly positive, it actually conveys mixed feelings of respect that can be harmful to the Asian community (Lin et al. 2005; Yen, 2000; Chou and Feagin, 2008; Lee et al., 2008). This ambiguity reveals the paradox of the model

minority image. For example, many Asian Americans do not conform to model minority traits. The stereotype does not take into account the poverty among such Asian ethnic groups as the unemployed Hmong, Vietnamese refugees, and Filipino farm laborers (Lee et al., 2008; Yen, 2000). It assumes Asians to be a monolithic group comprised of exchangeable members, but, in reality, important differences are present within and between the distinct Asian ethnic groups (Junn and Masuoka, 2008; Lien et al., 2004; Chong and Kim, 2006). Yet, the image of Asians as a model minority has persisted, likely because, on average, Asians score at higher levels on various measures of socioeconomic success (e.g., education and income) than other groups, particularly other racial minority groups (Alba and Nee, 2003).

#### The Threat of the Yellow Peril or Perpetual Foreigners

Since the term was coined in the 1800s, Asians have been typecast first as the “yellow peril,” a label with more pejorative connotations than the model minority image, which came into existence decades later. The stereotype depicts Asians as perpetual foreigners with generally inferior cultural practices and lower moral standards than white Americans (Lee, 1999; Yen, 2000). Hence, as yellow peril outsiders, Asians (whether newcomers or second-plus generation) are perceived as a danger to American stability and a threat to the American national family (Lee, 1999).

The yellow peril stereotype originated with the experiences of early Chinese immigrants who came to California in the 1800s as railroad and agricultural workers (Lee, 1999; Lien et al., 2004). These immigrants were generally considered to be uneducated, corrupt, treacherous, and exotic (Lee, 1999; Yen, 2000). Although, at best, white Americans viewed the immigrants with a sense of curiosity, their perceptions became more negative when many of the Chinese shifted from being laborers in plantations owned by whites to becoming business owners in urban areas



(Lee, 1999; Yen, 2000). Anti-Chinese sentiments resulted in violence and culminated in the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which prohibited virtually all immigration from China and forbade Chinese residents in the U.S. and their American-born children from becoming citizens (Hing, 1993; Lien et al., 2004; Lee, 1999). By the dawn of the 1900s, other immigrants from Asia settled in America, and the yellow peril label was used to characterize Asian immigrants in general as a renewed threat of “Asiatic” immigration—an invasion of “yellow men” and “little brown brothers” (Lee, 1999: 10). This label, along with the “enemy race” image (Chan, 1991), was also used to portray Japanese Americans, whose loyalties to America were unjustly questioned regardless of their American citizenship and years in the U.S., during World War II (Lee, 1999; Wu, 2002).

Contemporary images of the yellow peril stereotype are less demeaning than its initial images, but Asian Americans appear to still be viewed as foreign and peculiar (Lien et al., 2004). The foreign component is especially enduring. Asians in general are perceived as foreign-born residents with black hair and almond eyes, no matter if they are U.S.-born and have many generations of U.S.-born ancestors in their family tree (Lien et al., 2004; Yen, 2000; Okihiro, 1994). Furthermore, the stereotype gives the impression that many Asians are interested more in preserving their distinct cultures and Asian homeland connections than in assimilating into mainstream American society and political system (Lien et al., 2004; Lee et al., 2008).

### **Plan of Dissertation**

Compared with black and Hispanic Americans, Asians Americans constitute a comparatively smaller proportion of the U.S. population size, are concentrated residentially in a few states, and tend to be perceived as a silent minority politically (Junn and Matto, 2008; Lien et al., 2004). Thus, it is not surprising that little scholarly attention has been given to

understanding the political attitudes and behavior of Asians. However, the 2000 U.S. Census indicates that Asians are among the fastest-growing minority groups in the country, and it is projected they will increase in population size to eight percent of the U.S. population by 2050 (Junn and Matto, 2008). This explosive growth, along with the diffusion of Asians across states in recent years, has helped to stimulate a fresh interest in studying the politics of Asians (Lien et al., 2004; Ramakrishnan, 2005; Wong et al., 2008; Junn and Matto, 2008).

So far, little is known about Americans' racial attitudes toward Asians and the potential effects of these views on political opportunities and consequences for Asians.<sup>6</sup> A major reason for this lack of knowledge is a deficiency of survey data that asks questions specifically and comprehensively about attitudes toward Asians. Although a great deal has been learned and more is still to be learned from studies of the racial perceptions and attitudes among whites, blacks, and Hispanics, understanding racial attitudes in contemporary American politics would not be complete without also exploring attitudes toward Asian Americans. Thus, in this dissertation I seek to shed some light on Americans' political views of Asians, who are often viewed as politically acquiescent and low-key actors in the political system (Lien et al., 2004). For instance, Asians tend to have lower overall voting levels than whites, blacks, and Hispanics, as noted in the last three presidential elections (File and Crissey, 2010); however, Lien et al. (2004) argue that their lower turnout rates are not due to apathy but mainly to dissatisfaction with the citizenship and voter registration requirements.

As Schuman et al. (1985) noted in their work on racial attitudes in the U.S., some may question the concern with attitudes in studying racial relations in America. Nonetheless, attitudes provide valuable guidance to understanding individuals' behavior. For example,

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<sup>6</sup> Not much is known about Asians' perceptions of non-Asian Americans, but this inquiry is not the focus of this dissertation.

attitudes toward Asians may help to determine whether non-Asian Americans would support an Asian candidate for office. Beyond their usefulness to understanding behavior, attitudes are critical components of the larger American social climate. Race relations in the U.S. involve more than such important determinants of the quality of life as education attainment, employment status, and family incomes; they also concern the interpersonal, intrapersonal, and cultural characteristics that influence the subjective experiences of Asian and non-Asian Americans (Schuman et al., 1985). Hence, attitudinal responses collected from surveys provide crucial and useful clues to the meaning of race in the U.S.

The fundamental research question of this dissertation focuses on Americans' perceptions of Asian Americans. Two aspects of perceptions toward Asians are explored: (1) affect-based perceptions, which address the positive and negative evaluations that Americans have about Asian Americans; and (2) cognition-based perceptions, which are concerned with Americans' perceptions of factual attributes of Asian Americans (e.g., how hard-working or intelligent Asian Americans are perceived to be). The main objective of this dissertation is to develop and test a series of models to determine the patterns and sources of racial attitudes toward Asians in terms of context, contact, self-interest, symbolic politics, and socio-demographic correlates. This analysis uses different national surveys to test competing theories of racial attitudes toward Asians.

In this analysis the views of Asian respondents are included for group comparison purposes to the views of white, black, and Hispanic respondents. Examining how Asian Americans see themselves provides an important comparison point for estimating how whites, blacks, and Hispanics view Asian Americans. For instance, to what extent (if at all) do Asian Americans perceive themselves as "hardworking"? If Asians, blacks, whites, and Hispanics all

see Asians as hardworking, this leads to a different interpretation compared with if blacks, whites, and Hispanics see Asians as hardworking but Asians do not. For the purposes of this dissertation, I focus on the general Asian American population, both U.S.-born and foreign-born, even though the current Asian population in the U.S. is predominantly immigrant. The choice is based on data limitations. It is also impractical to distinguish among the major Asian American groups (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino) because social interaction and discourse frequently depend on stereotypes associated with the broad “Asian” category.

The analysis proceeds in a simple progression. I begin in Chapter 2 with a descriptive overview of the current status of Asian Americans and their politics. The goals of this chapter are (1) to shed light on this fast-growing minority group whose status in popular accounts tends to be unclear and ambivalent and dogged by prevailing myths, and (2) to ascertain the factual basis (or lack thereof) of persistent stereotypes about Asian Americans. This chapter is constructed to impart a context for the ensuing analyses of the affect- and cognition-based perceptions of Asians in Chapters 4 and 5, respectively.

In Chapter 3, I conduct a literature review of the competing theories of racial attitudes toward Asians in terms of contact, context, self-interest, and symbolic politics. These theories have largely been directed at studies of black-white relations; however, they provide a useful framework in which to study the affect- and cognition-based perceptions of Asians in Chapters 4 and 5, respectively.

In Chapter 4, I explore Americans’ affect-based perceptions of Asian Americans. The term *affect* has been commonly described as positive and/or negative feelings, emotions, or drives that an individual links with an attitude “object” (Edwards, 1990; Edwards and von Hippel, 1995). In this chapter I develop and test two models that estimate the impact of context,

contact, self-interest, symbolic politics, and socio-demographic factors on Americans' affect-based perceptions of Asians. The first model uses as the dependent variable evaluations of individual favorability toward Asians. The second model uses assessments of closeness to Asians in terms of ideas, interests and feelings. Data for these models are drawn from the 2004 American National Election Study (ANES) and the 2004 National Politics Survey (NPS).

Chapter 5 follows a similar pattern to that of Chapter 4, but with an analysis of a series of models that estimate the effects of the independent variables on cognition-based perceptions of Asian Americans. The *cognition* term has been commonly used to express beliefs, judgments, or thoughts about positive and/or negative attributes of an attitude "object" (McGuire, 1969; Fabrigar and Petty, 1999; Edwards, 1990). Researchers in social psychology argue that cognition can contribute to the structure of attitudes in conjunction with or separate from affect. For example, whites might feel warmly toward Asians and view Asians as hardworking and intelligent. Conversely, whites might have no or neutral feelings toward Asians but regard Asians as hardworking and intelligent. Thus, to understand Americans' attitudes toward Asians, it is important not only to explore their positive and/or negative evaluations of Asians, but also to examine their beliefs of positive and/or negative traits attributed to Asians. In Chapter 5, I focus on stereotypes or generalizations about the traits of Asian Americans by examining people's beliefs about specific personal attributes of Asians and their general stereotypes of Asians. Data for these models are drawn from the 2004 ANES and 2004 NPS.

Chapter 6 concludes with a review of the major findings and a discussion of possible future research on attitudes toward Asian Americans. This chapter will also discuss some implications of the findings in terms of how Americans' perceptions of Asian Americans might

affect political opportunities or empowerment for Asians, such as in coalition building with other racial/ethnic groups and increasing Asian political representation.

## CHAPTER 2: WHO ARE ASIAN AMERICANS?

While the Asian American population is generally a fairly recent addition to the nation's ethnic mix, comparatively large waves of Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese immigration took place in the mid-to-late 19th century, with the first large-scale immigration from Asia to America happening in 1848. Although the Asian presence in the country is more than a century and a half old, little is known or understood about the Asian community. Who are Asian Americans?

Asian Americans today represent an immensely diversified and rich combination of languages, cultures, beliefs, and practices, many of which differ extensively from those of European Americans (Lin and Cheung, 1999; Lee, 1998). The Asian American community comprises 24 distinct Asian ethnic groups (Barnes and Bennett, 2002), each with its distinct language, culture, religious beliefs, dietary practices, physical and social characteristics, and immigration history (Lin and Cheung, 1999; Lee, 1998). Moreover, each ethnic group, such as Chinese, Korean, or Vietnamese, encompasses broad disparities in levels of education, English proficiency, family income, residential preferences, exposure to war trauma, and levels of acculturation (Lin and Cheung, 1999; Lien et al., 2004; Lee, 1998). In spite of the diversity of the Asian American population, the "Asian" label is used by most non-Asian Americans to describe members of this population and is officially recognized by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget in 1977 as a separate racial category in federal statistics to represent all the members (Lee, 1998). However, most Asians, particularly those who are immigrants, are more likely to identify themselves in ethnic-specific terms rather than as "Asian American" (Lien et al., 2004). This discrepancy indicates the importance of understanding who Asian Americans are, since the use of the Asian American label is likely to affect how Asian Americans are viewed both by themselves and by other racial/ethnic groups. Hence, to better

comprehend the patterns and sources of Americans' attitudes toward Asians—the objective of this dissertation—requires first having an understanding of the meaning of “Asian American” in contemporary America.

In this chapter, I conduct a descriptive overview of the Asian population to shed light on what it means to be “Asian American” in today's society and politics by highlighting its diversity and community. First, I explore how the Asian American population has evolved in terms of ethnic diversification, population growth, and geographic concentration using data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau and findings from other studies. Second, I confront popular myths and perceptions of Asians by assessing the factual sources, or lack thereof, of these perceptions using data also from the U.S. Census Bureau and findings from other studies.

## **An Evolving Asian Population**

### Ethnic Diversification

Who is “Asian” American? An Asian American is commonly any Asian who is a U.S. citizen or has permanent or long-term residency in the United States, regardless of the person's citizenship or other legal status (Lien et al., 2004; Lee, 1998). However, what it means to be Asian has significantly changed over the last century and a half because of alterations in the racial and ethnic composition of the U.S. population and shifts in the political concerns and social attitudes about racial and ethnic minorities (Lien et al., 2004). Also, the changing needs of the federal government for demographic data to deal with the increasing diversity within minority groups and across individuals with multiple racial/ethnic identities have brought about important modifications in the collection, classification, and tabulation of race and ethnicity in the U.S. Census (Lien et al., 2004; Espiritu and Omi, 2000; Lee, 1998).

The changing definitions of “Asian” in American society and politics can be illustrated



by the historical evolution of the U.S. Census categories for the Asian population (see also Lien et. al, 2004). The first U.S. decennial census in 1790 collected data on race, but no distinction was made for individuals of Asian descent. Since the first large and persistent influx of immigrants to the U.S. was from China, “Chinese” became the initial Asian category, and data have been collected on the Chinese population since the 1860 Census. Japanese immigrants entered in sizeable numbers around the turn of the twentieth century, and a “Japanese” category was added later. Data on the Japanese population have been accumulated since the 1870 Census.

The racial classification was extended in the 1910 Census to get separate figures on other groups, including Filipinos, Asian Indians, and Koreans who all arrived in America in large numbers in the early twentieth century. However, only Filipinos, along with Chinese and Japanese, were listed in the Asian group in the 1950 Census. Data on Filipinos, Asian Indians, and Koreans, moreover, were collected on an intermittent basis through the 1970 Census. The “Hawaiian” category debuted under the Asian classification in the 1960 Census.

The Vietnamese are the only major Asian American group that does not have a considerable presence and long history in the U.S. before 1965, and they are also the only major group that came to the U.S en masse as political refugees in 1975, following the end of the Vietnam War (Lien et al., 2004). Hence, in the 1970 Census, the Vietnamese population was included in the “Other” race category. The 1970 Census also included “Korean” as a separate Asian category, while, interestingly, Asian Indians were classified as white. In the 1980 Census, there were six separate categories for Asians: Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese. These six categories also appeared on both the 1990 and 2000 Census questionnaires. In addition, for the 2000 Census, a separate “Other Asian” category was added

with a write-in area for respondents to indicate specific Asian groups not included on the questionnaire.

According to the 2000 Census, an “Asian” refers to “people having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent, including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam” (Office of Management and Budget, 1997). Asian groups are not restricted to nationalities, but also encompass ethnic terms, such as the Hmong who are an Asian ethnic group from the mountainous regions of China, Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand. The 2000 Census is the first U.S. census that allows people to report more than one race. It also separated the “Asian and Pacific Islander” category found in the 1990 Census into distinct “Asian” and “Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander” categories. As the current census categories for Asian Americans show, the Asian population is diverse with a myriad of national origins (and languages). No one Asian ethnic group is dominant, and more than six ethnic groups are classified collectively as Asian American in the 2000 Census, including Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, and an “other Asian” category.

### Population Growth

Various scholars (e.g., Lee, 1998; Lien et al., 2004) have indicated that population growth and ethnic diversification play essential roles in the evolving meaning of “Asian American.” Today, the Asian American community is increasing at an awe-inspiring pace. The U.S. Census Bureau recently estimated that the Asian population (alone or in combination with another race) in 2009 to be 15.7 million or 5.1 percent of the U.S. household population, compared with 236.4

million or 77 percent for whites, 48.5 million or 15.8 percent for Hispanics, and 40.8 million or 13.3 percent for blacks.<sup>7</sup>

Although Asians still constitute a comparatively small proportion of the population, the 2000 Census indicates that Asians are among the fastest-growing minority groups in the country. With a 72 percent growth rate in 1990-2000, they have the highest growth rate among the four major U.S. racial/ethnic groups (see Table 1.1). Moreover, Table 2.1 shows that all of the major Asian ethnic groups, except Japanese Americans, have fairly substantial growth rates in 1980-1990 and 1990-2000. For example, in 1980-1990 Koreans (134.8 percent) were the fastest growing group, followed closely by Asian Indians (125.6 percent), Vietnamese (125.3 percent), and Chinese (104.1 percent). In 1990-2000 Asian Indians (113.4 percent) and Vietnamese (80.7 percent), in particular, continued to grow at a healthy rate.

It is projected that Asian Americans will increase in population size to six percent of the U.S. population by 2025 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010) and to eight percent of the population by 2050 (Junn and Matto, 2008). These projections extend the demographic

**Table 2.1 Population Growth Rates of the Largest Asian Ethnic Groups**

<b>Asian Ethnic Group</b>	<b>% Growth Rate: 1980-1990</b>	<b>% Growth Rate: 1990-2000</b>
Asian Indian	125.6	113.4
Chinese	104.1	39.8
Filipino	81.6	32.5
Japanese	20.9	-9.4
Korean	134.8	34.3
Vietnamese	125.3	80.7

Source: Le, C.N. 2010. "Population Statistics & Demographics" Asian-Nation: The Landscape of Asian America.

<sup>7</sup> The population data for the four major racial/ethnic groups was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 American Community Survey 1-Year Demographic and Housing Estimates. The population data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau on race is divided into two broad categories: the race alone population and the race in combination population, which encompasses respondents who reported more than one of the six races included in the 2000 Census. The race in combination population is often used to report the population characteristics of a racial/ethnic group to include all respondents who reported the respective race/ethnicity.

trend that has been noted since the 1965 Immigration Act, which liberalized prior restrictions on immigration from Asian countries (Lien et al., 2004).

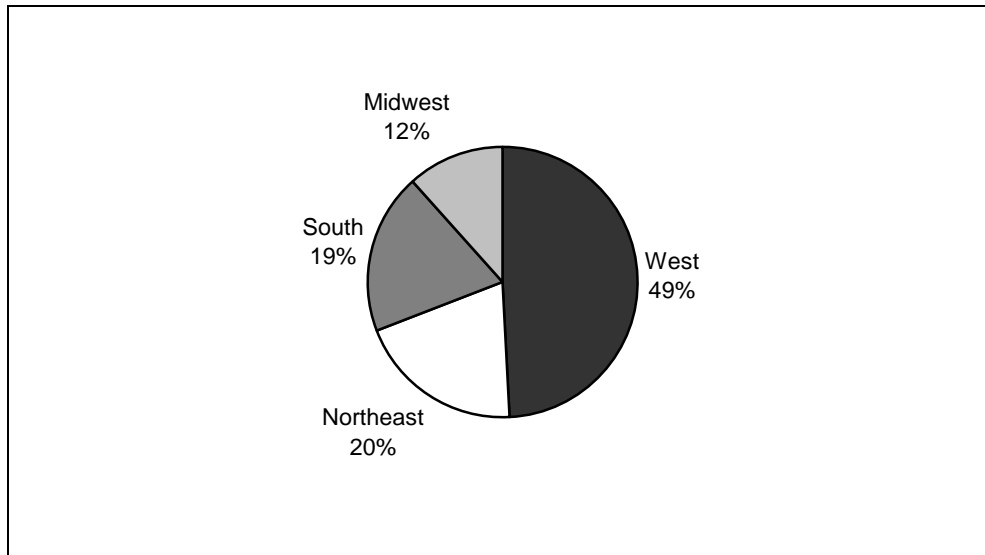
### Geographic Concentration

In the early history of Asians in the United States, Asian Americans lived predominantly in the western part of the country. In 1860, 100 percent of Asians resided in the West, and by 1940 about 90 percent lived in this region (Lee, 1998). Today, however, they are less concentrated geographically than ever before. The tendency of new immigrants to settle in a number of nonwestern states, refugee resettlement programs, and the gradual diffusion of U.S.-born Asians and longer-term residents have widened the geographic distribution of Asian Americans (Lee, 1998). This dispersion also affects the changing meaning of “Asian American,” since the residences of Asians in different parts of the country will likely have a cultural, economical, and political impact beyond the western region.

According to the 2000 Census, the geographic distribution of the Asian population differs from regions, states, and counties in the U.S. In terms of regions, Figure 2.1 shows that most Asian Americans still reside in the West, likely reflecting the closeness of the western states to Asia. Of all respondents who reported Asian, 49 percent lived in the West, 20 percent resided in the Northeast, 19 percent lived in the South, and 12 percent resided in the Midwest.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, as Table 2.2 reveals, the West region has the highest proportion of Asians in its total population in addition to the largest total Asian population. About nine percent of all respondents in the

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<sup>8</sup> The West region includes the states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. The Northeast region includes the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The South region includes the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia, a state equivalent. The Midwest region includes the states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.



**Figure 2.1 Percent Distribution of the Asian American Population by Region, 2000**

Note: The population data is based on the Asian alone or in combination population category from the Census 2000 Summary File 1 that represents the total number of people who identified entirely or partially as Asian. This category also describes people who reported Asian, whether or not they reported any other races.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

**Table 2.2 Asian Population for the United States, Regions, and Selected States, 2000**

Area	Asian population	% of Total Population
United States	11,898,828	4.2
Region		
Northeast	2,368,297	4.4
Midwest	1,392,938	2.2
South	2,267,094	2.3
West	5,870,499	9.3
State		
California	4,155,685	12.3
Florida	333,013	2.1
Hawaii	703,232	58.0
Illinois	473,649	3.8
Massachusetts	264,814	4.2
New Jersey	524,356	6.2
New York	1,169,200	6.2
Texas	644,193	3.1
Virginia	304,559	4.3
Washington	395,741	6.7

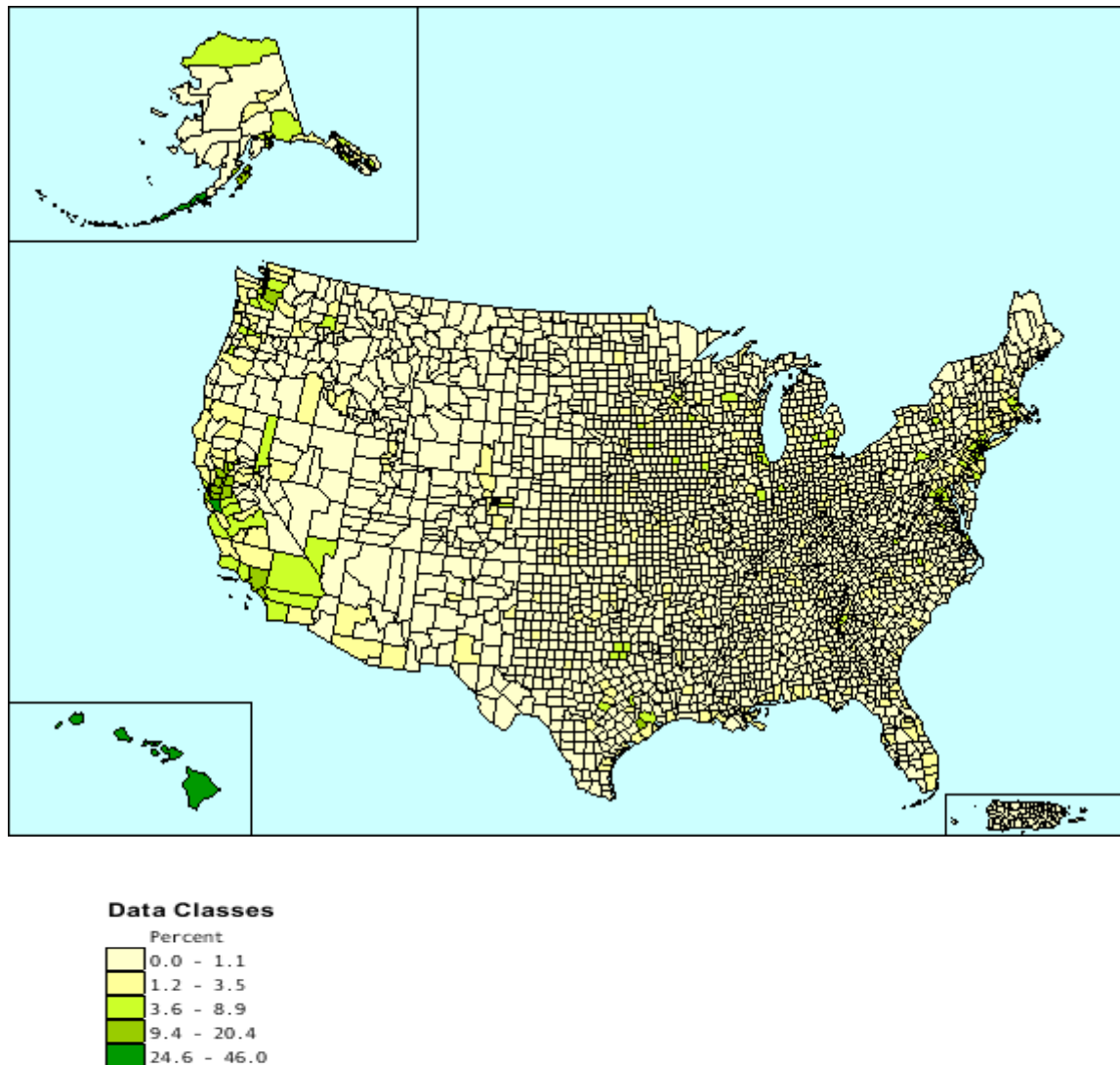
Source and Note: See Figure 2.1.

West reported Asian, compared with 4.4 percent in the Northeast, 2.3 percent in the South, and 2.2 percent in the Midwest.

Table 2.2 also shows the 10 states with the largest Asian populations in 2000. They include, from highest to lowest: California (4.2 million), New York (1.2 million), Hawaii (0.70 million), Texas (0.64 million), New Jersey (0.52 million), Illinois (0.47 million), Washington (0.40 million), Florida (0.33 million), Virginia (0.30 million), and Massachusetts (0.26 million). According to the 2000 Census, over half (51 percent) of Asians reside in only three states, including California, New York, and Hawaii (Barnes and Bennett, 2002). Together, these states represent 75 percent of the Asian population, but only 47 percent of the total population in the U.S. (Barnes and Bennett, 2002). Furthermore, in terms of region, the 2000 Census indicates that California, Hawaii, and Washington have the highest concentrations of Asians in the West; New York, New Jersey, and Massachusetts in the Northeast; Texas, Florida, and Virginia in the South; and Illinois in the Midwest.

Figure 2.2 displays the distribution of the Asian American population in 2000 at the county level. Unsurprisingly, the counties in the U.S. with the highest percentage of Asians (25 percent or higher) are in Hawaii, including Honolulu county (62 percent) and three other counties that are more than 47 percent Asian, followed by two counties each in Alaska and in the San Francisco Bay area in California (Barnes and Bennett, 2002). Asian Americans live in a range of counties, as Figure 2.2 shows; however, the largest concentrations of Asians are more likely to be found in coastal and/or urban counties, while smaller concentrations tend to be scattered throughout the U.S. (Barnes and Bennett, 2002).

Most of the counties with Asian populations more than twice the national average are primarily concentrated in suburbs of large metropolitan areas, such as Seattle, Washington; Los



**Figure 2.2 Percent Asian American Population by County, 2000**

Note: See Figure 2.1. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, American FactFinder at [factfinder.census.gov](http://factfinder.census.gov).

**Table 2.3 Largest Metropolitan Areas in Asian American Population, 2000**

Metropolitan Area	Asian American Population	% of Total Population
New York, NY	872,777	10.9
Los Angeles, CA	407,444	11.9
San Jose, CA	257,571	28.8
San Francisco, CA	253,477	32.6
Honolulu, HI	251,686	67.7
San Diego, CA	189,413	15.5
Chicago, IL	140,517	4.9
Houston, TX	114,140	5.8
Seattle, WA	84,649	15.0
Fremont, CA	80,979	39.8

Source and Note: See Figure 2.1.

Angeles and the San Francisco Bay area of California; New York, New York; Honolulu, Hawaii; Chicago, Illinois; and Houston, Texas (Barnes and Bennett, 2002). Table 2.3 displays the 10 metropolitan areas with the largest Asian populations in 2000. The results in Table 2.3 indicate that New York, NY has the largest Asian population (872,777), followed next by Los Angeles (407,444). Eight places have Asian populations over 100,000: five in the West (Los Angeles; San Jose; San Francisco; Honolulu; and San Diego) and one each in the Northeast (New York, NY), the Midwest (Chicago), and the South (Houston).

What is the political impact of the evolving Asian population in the racial landscape of the United States? Compared with the white, Hispanic, and black populations, the Asian American population may appear, on the surface, small on a national level. Nonetheless, in many of the most dynamic and important states and metropolitan areas, the demographic numbers in Tables 2.2 and 2.3, respectively, suggest that Asians are a culturally, economically, and politically vital and integral part of that respective population. Moreover, competitive elections in the 2008 presidential primaries emphasized the political significance of Asian voters in states with large numbers of delegates, such as New York and California (Junn and Masuoka, 2008). Discussion of a possible “Asian American” vote has permeated the national discourse and rekindled speculation about how political preferences of Asians compare to those of whites, blacks, and Hispanics (Junn and Masuoka, 2008). Yet, answers to this broad question are incomplete because political scholars have given little notice to Asians until recently. Attention to the politics of Asians is a recent phenomenon because of the relatively small Asian population size, the residential concentrations of Asians in a few states, and the perception of Asians as politically compliant and inactive (Junn and Masuoka, 2008; Wong et al., 2008).



## **Confronting Popular Myths and Perceptions of Asian Americans**

A number of scholars have noted that there are some particularly persistent stereotypes which popular accounts typically attribute to today's Asians Americans. Two of those prevailing myths were introduced in the previous chapter, including the image of all Asian Americans as a model minority and the assumption that all Asian Americans are perpetual foreigners. One other persistent stereotype assumes that all Asian Americans are the same. In other words, many people are unable or unwilling to differentiate between distinctive Asian ethnic groups, such as a Korean American from a Chinese American or a Filipino American from a Japanese American. Many of these scholars, however, argue that the prevailing myths do not describe today's diverse Asian American community; in other words, they contend that the Asian community is neither a model minority, nor perpetual foreigners, nor one-and-the-same Orientals.

In this section I examine the three myths to ascertain the factual basis, or lack thereof, of these stereotypes by presenting summary findings from various sources. I start with an assessment of the perception that all Asian Americans are the same by comparing the population, socioeconomic, and political characteristics of the six largest Asian ethnic groups. An examination of the perception of Asians as perpetual foreigners follows with comparisons of Asian Americans with the other major racial/ethnic groups in terms of English language ability, naturalization rate, racial intermarriage rate, and residential segregation index. Finally, I assess the model minority perception by evaluating Asians and other major racial/ethnic groups relative to their socioeconomic characteristics and SAT<sup>9</sup> mean scores.

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<sup>9</sup> The SAT is formerly known as the Scholastic Assessment Test and the Scholastic Aptitude Test and is designed to help predict how well students will perform in college rather than to be used as an indicator of student achievement.

## Perception of Asian Americans as One-and-the-Same Orientals

Interethnic differences are present across the Asian groups, but they share a common perceived origin as “the Orient” (Said, 1978; Lien et al., 2004). They also have common experiences of being viewed as one and the same, under the umbrella “Asian” label in both negative and positive ways. Asian Americans have increasingly complained about blanket stereotyping of them by other Americans (Bobo and Hutchings, 1996). For instance, in the 1992 Los Angeles riots anti-Asian anger was primarily directed toward Korean Americans; yet, many Asian shopkeepers, particularly those of Vietnamese, Chinese, and Japanese origins, whose stores were looted by the rioters—who were mostly blacks and Hispanics—believed that they were targeted because the rioters assumed they were Korean Americans. In a *Los Angeles Times* article about the Los Angeles riots and Asian Americans, journalist Susan Moffat conveyed this wholesale stereotyping as follows:

For many Asian Americans, the Los Angeles riots brought home a sobering truth: The one thing they all have in common is that many other Americans cannot tell them apart. The fear that joined the wealthy fourth-generation Japanese-American in Bel Air to the war-scarred, welfare dependent Cambodian refugee in Long Beach was a wake-up call to anyone with black hair and almond eyes: No one is safe from anti-Asian anger.... Many Chinese, Japanese, and Vietnamese Americans say their shops were damaged because rioters thought they were Korean. And some have accused Korean immigrants of making trouble for all Asian Americans by treating blacks badly. (Susan Moffat, "Splintered Society: U.S. Asians," *Los Angeles Times*, July 31, 1992, p. A1)

As the article suggests, the perception that all Asian Americans are one and the same has been debunked by Asians themselves. Further, this clash between Asians and blacks and Hispanics suggests that Asians are likely to be stereotyped by other racial/ethnic groups besides whites, and presents a key reason to expand the study of Asian stereotypes to cover groups other than whites.

Many non-Asian Americans describe the Asian term in different ways but generally with a supposition that they all mean the same thing. For example, most non-Asian Americans interpret

“Asian” as Chinese, Japanese, or “oriental” (Lee, 1998), assuming that each of these labels, particularly the Chinese or Japanese label, applies to all Asian Americans (even if they are not Chinese or Japanese). A possible reason for the Chinese and Japanese labels is that Chinese and Japanese Americans have the longest and more familiar presence in the U.S., so some non-Asian Americans are more likely to identify Asian individuals, particularly newcomers like Vietnamese, as Chinese or Japanese. The one-and-the-same perception of Asians has been perpetuated, though inadvertently, also by researchers, since researchers often combine Asian Americans under one category (as they also do for European and Hispanic Americans). Part of the reason for this grouping is due to data limitations in surveys; for example, the American National Election Study (ANES) tends not to include much information about different Asian groups, and even if there were such data the sample sizes would be relatively small. Hence, scholars typically create a dichotomous variable for Asians to include in their models.

Results from the 2000 Census and other sources (Tables 2.1, 2.4 and 2.5 and Figure 2.3), however, highlight the diversity among Asian Americans, challenging the view that Asian Americans are all the same. Table 2.1 reports the growth rates of the six largest Asian ethnic groups from 1980 to 2000. The results of Table 2.1 indicate that the Asian groups differ considerably in population growth both in 1980-1990 and 1990-2000. For example, between 1980 and 1990, Koreans (134.8 percent) have a higher growth rate than do Asian Indians (125.6 percent), Vietnamese (125.3 percent), Chinese (104.1 percent), Filipino (81.6 percent), and Japanese (20.9 percent). In 1990-2000 most of the Asian groups experience growth, although at a very different pace. Between 1990 and 2000, Asian Indians (113.4 percent) grew faster than Vietnamese (80.7 percent), Chinese (39.8 percent), Korean (34.3 percent), and Filipino (32.5 percent). The Japanese are the only Asian group that lacked growth in 1990-2000. The Japanese

population plunged by almost 10 percent in this decade as Table 2.1 reveals, and this decline is likely due in part to a gradual decrease in immigration from Japan (Lee, 1998).

The results of Table 2.4 also showcase the diversity among the Asian groups relative to their populations at the national level. Table 2.4 presents demographic data of the six largest Asian ethnic groups whose “Asian alone” population in 2000 was at least 500,000. Table 2.4 shows that Chinese is the most populous Asian group in the U.S., both in the “Asian alone” (2.3 million) and “Asian in combination with one or more other races or Asian groups” (0.4 million) categories. A total of 2.7 million people disclosed Chinese alone or in any combination with at least one other race (such as white) or Asian group (such as Japanese). Filipino and Asian Indian are the next two largest Asian groups. A total of 2.4 million people reported Filipino alone or in any combination, and a total of 1.9 million people reported Asian Indian alone or in any combination. Collectively, Chinese, Filipinos, and Asian Indians comprise approximately 58 percent of all respondents who reported a single Asian group; in addition, of all Asian groups in race/ethnic combinations, these three groups represent about 57 percent of all responses.<sup>10</sup>

**Table 2.4 Asian American Population by Detailed Group, 2000**

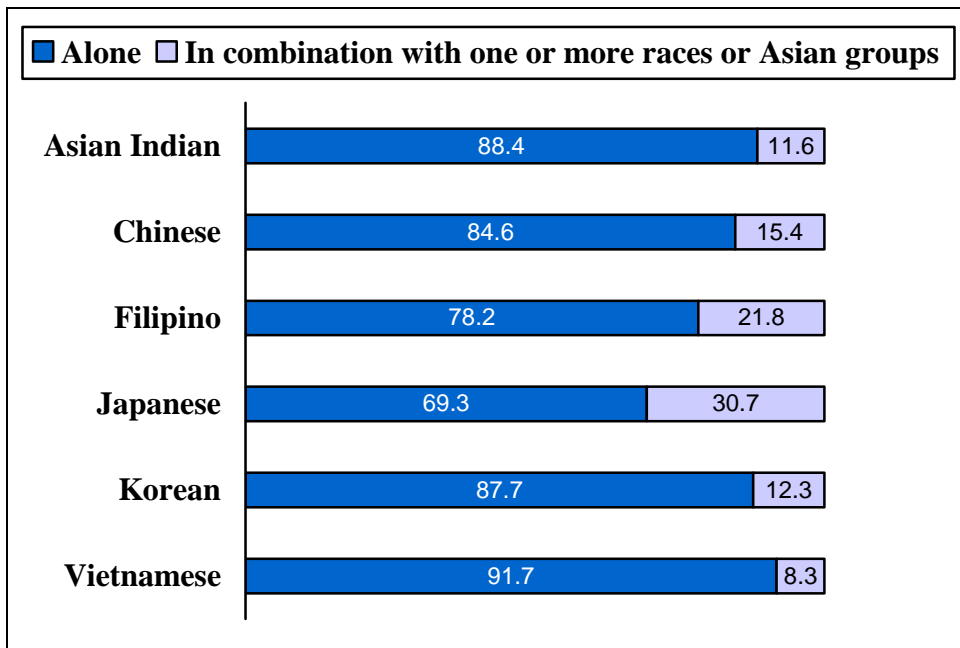
<b>Detailed Group</b>	<b>Asian Alone</b>	<b>Asian in Combination with One or More Other Races or Asian Groups</b>	<b>Asian Group Alone or in Any Combination</b>
Asian Indian	1,678,765	220,834	1,899,599
Chinese	2,314,537	420,304	2,734,841
Filipino	1,850,314	514,501	2,364,815
Japanese	796,700	352,232	1,148,932
Korean	1,076,872	151,555	1,228,427
Vietnamese	1,122,528	101,208	1,223,736

Source: See Figure 2.1.

<sup>10</sup> The calculations for the single Asian group and Asian in race/ethnic combination categories are based on the population data of all 25 Asian detailed groups (including the “other Asian, not specified” category) in the Census 2000 Brief (2002). Table 2.4 lists the six largest of these Asian detailed groups.

Conversely, Japanese is the least populous group among the Asian groups in Table 2.4, with 0.8 million people reported Japanese alone and an additional 0.35 million people who disclosed Japanese with at least one other race or Asian group.

Moreover, the Asian groups tend to vary in their likelihood of reporting a single race/ethnicity or multiple races/ethnicities. Figure 2.3 displays the percent distribution of the six largest Asian groups based on the “Asian alone” and “Asian in combination with one or more other races or Asian groups” populations of each group in Table 2.4. Of the Asian groups in Figure 2.3, the Japanese are most likely to affirm belonging to more than one population group, i.e., being multiracial or multiethnic. Of all respondents who reported Japanese, either alone or in combination, about 31 percent reported one or more other races or Asian groups. In contrast,



**Figure 2.3 Percent Distribution of the Largest Asian Groups by Alone or in Combination Population, 2000**

Source: See Figure 2.1.

Vietnamese are least likely to be multiracial or multiethnic. Of all respondents who reported Vietnamese, only about eight percent revealed one or more other races or Asian groups.

Besides population differences, the results of Table 2.5 indicate that socioeconomic disparities exist among the largest Asian ethnic groups. Table 2.5 presents the socioeconomic characteristics from the 2000 Census of the six largest (in population size) Asian ethnic groups in the U.S. In terms of education attainment, Asian Indians have the highest rate of obtaining a college degree and an advanced degree, with an astonishing 64.4 percent possessing a college degree and 12.5 percent holding an advanced degree. Japanese Americans (9.5 percent) are least likely to have less than a high school education. In contrast, Vietnamese Americans are most likely to have less than a high school education (37.8 percent) and least likely to have college (13.8 percent) and advanced degrees (2.5 percent).

The results in Table 2.5 also show that only seven percent of Filipinos are more likely to lack English proficiency. Conversely, a very high 40 percent of Vietnamese have a greater likelihood of being unskilled in the English language. A possible reason for this language deficiency is that a large proportion of Vietnamese came to the U.S. as political refugees and not

**Table 2.5 Socioeconomic Characteristics by Asian Ethnic Group, 2000**

	Less than High School	College Degree	Advanced Degree	Married	Home-owner	High Skill Occupation	Median Family Income	Living in Poverty	Public Assistance	Lacking English Proficiency
<b>Chinese</b>	23.6	46.3	8.5	67.1	65.7	41.9	\$58,300	13.1	1.8	31.3
<b>Filipino</b>	13.1	42.8	4.3	62.7	67.6	29.7	\$65,400	6.9	1.6	7.0
<b>Asian Indian</b>	12.6	64.4	12.5	74.9	56.8	51.6	\$69,470	8.2	0.9	8.4
<b>Korean</b>	13.8	43.6	5.6	69.0	51.9	27.0	\$48,500	15.5	1.6	32.9
<b>Vietnamese</b>	37.8	13.8	2.5	61.2	60.0	22.6	\$51,500	13.8	4.8	40.4
<b>Japanese</b>	9.5	40.8	4.6	60.7	70.8	32.0	\$61,630	8.6	0.9	10.0

Note: Entries in the columns are in percentages, except for median family income.

Source: Le, C.N. 2010. "Socioeconomic Statistics & Demographics" Asian-Nation: The Landscape of Asian America; based on Census 2000.

as voluntary immigrants, most of whom entered the U.S after 1965 with a degree of English proficiency, such as Filipinos and Asian Indians (Lien et al., 2004). Voluntary immigrants tend to self-select relative to English-language proficiency, whereas for refugees immigrating to a new country is more likely a concern for personal survival (Borjas, 1991).

Of the Asian groups in Table 2.5, Asian Indians have the highest median family income (\$69,470), while Koreans have the lowest median family income (\$48,500). Over half of Asian Indians (51.6 percent) are more likely to work in a high-skill profession, such as engineering and management. Conversely, only 23 percent of Vietnamese are more likely to have a high-skill job. Asian Indians also have the highest rate of being married (74.9 percent), while Japanese have the lowest marriage rate (60.7 percent). Japanese (70.8 percent) are most likely to be homeowners, whereas Koreans (51.9 percent) are least likely to own a home. Filipinos (6.9 percent) possess the lowest poverty rate, while Koreans (15.5 percent) have the highest poverty rate. In terms of public assistance, both Asian Indians (0.9 percent) and Japanese (0.9 percent) are least likely to receive government help. In contrast, Vietnamese (4.8 percent) are most likely to accept public assistance.

The Asian groups also differ significantly in their political orientations as Tables 2.6 and 2.7 reveal. Tables 2.6 and 2.7 present the percent distributions of partisanship and political ideology, respectively, of the Asian groups using data from the 2000-2001 Pilot National Asian American Political Survey (PNAAPS).<sup>11</sup>

The results in Table 2.6 show that in each Asian group, except Vietnamese, the percentage of Democratic identifiers is higher than that of Republican and Independent

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<sup>11</sup> The “no party” and “not sure” categories in Table 2.5 and the “not sure” category in Table 2.6 are included for each Asian group because a relatively high percentage of PNAAPS respondents reported a “no party” or a “not sure” response to the partisanship question and a “not sure” response to the political ideology question.

**Table 2.6 Percent Distribution of Partisanship by Ethnic Origin**

	<b>Strong D</b>	<b>Weak D</b>	<b>Leaning D</b>	<b>INDEP</b>	<b>Leaning R</b>	<b>Weak R</b>	<b>Strong R</b>	<b>No Party</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>Row Total</b>
Chinese	8	24	1	1	1	7	2	33	23	308
Filipino	22	18	6	5	3	16	7	13	10	266
Japanese	12	28	9	8	3	11	1	18	11	198
Korean	8	35	3	8	1	20	2	8	15	168
South Asian	23	21	5	10	9	11	6	6	10	141
Vietnamese	4	7	1	12	1	5	11	31	27	137

Note: The South Asian group includes Asian Indians and Pakistanis. D = Democrat, R = Republican, INDEP = Pure Independent. Some row totals do not equal to 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: Pilot National Asian American Political Survey, 2000-2001.

identifiers. Nonetheless, the Asian groups tend to differ in the direction or strength of partisanship. The results also reveal differences among the Asian groups relative to no-partisanship (the unaffiliated and the undecided).

Starting with the Democratic partisanship categories in Table 2.6, South Asians (23 percent), which include Asian Indians and Pakistanis, are more likely than the other Asian groups to identify as strong Democrats. Compared with the other groups, Koreans (35 percent) have a greater tendency of identifying as weak Democrats. Japanese (nine percent) are more likely to consider themselves leaning Democrats than are the other groups. In contrast, Vietnamese are less likely among the Asian groups to identify with any of the Democratic partisanship categories. Relative to the Republican partisanship categories, Vietnamese (11 percent) are most likely, while Japanese (one percent) are least likely, to identify as strong Republicans. Koreans (20 percent) have the strongest likelihood, whereas Vietnamese (five percent) have the weakest likelihood, of considering themselves weak Republicans. South Asians (nine percent) are most likely to identify as leaning Republicans, while Chinese (one percent), Koreans (one percent), and Vietnamese (one percent) are least likely to be leaning Republicans. In terms of the pure Independent category, Vietnamese (12 percent) are most likely



to adopt the Independent identification, while Chinese (one percent) are least likely to classify themselves as Independents.

Across all the partisanship categories of each group in Table 2.6, Filipinos (22 percent) and South Asians (23 percent) have greater odds of identifying as strong Democrats, whereas Chinese (24 percent), Japanese (28 percent), and Koreans (35 percent) are more likely to identify as weak Democrats. Vietnamese (12 percent) are more likely to be pure Independents than are any of the other Asian groups. Relative to the no-partisanship categories, Chinese (33 percent) are most likely, while South Asians (six percent) are least likely, to report no affiliation with any of the traditional party categories of Democratic, Republican, and Independent; and Vietnamese (27 percent) are most likely, while both Filipinos (10 percent) and South Asians (10 percent) are least likely, to disclose uncertainty about their partisanship.

In terms of political ideology, Table 2.7 shows that the Asian groups tend to vary in their ideological self-placements, although in each group the proportion of liberals is higher than that of conservatives. South Asians (61 percent) are more likely to identify themselves as very liberal or somewhat liberal than are Filipinos (40 percent), Japanese (34 percent), Koreans (33 percent), Chinese (30 percent), and Vietnamese (22 percent). Filipinos (34 percent) have a higher

**Table 2.7 Percent Distribution of Political Ideology by Ethnic Origin**

	Chinese	Filipino	Japanese	Korean	South Asian	Vietnamese
Very liberal	4	8	9	4	18	12
Somewhat liberal	26	32	25	29	43	10
Middle-of-the-road	42	18	37	28	16	47
Somewhat conservative	11	29	20	27	14	5
Very conservative	2	5	4	4	3	4
Not sure	15	6	4	8	6	21

Note: Column totals may not equal to 100 percent due to rounding and omitted categories. The South Asian group includes Asian Indians and Pakistanis.

Source: See Table 2.6.

likelihood of placing themselves in one of the conservative categories than do Koreans (31 percent), Japanese (24 percent), South Asians (17 percent), Chinese (13 percent), and Vietnamese (nine percent). Relative to the “not sure” category, Vietnamese (21 percent) are most likely, whereas Japanese (four percent) are least likely, to be undecided about their ideological identity.

In sum, the findings of Figure 2.3 and Tables 2.1, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, and 2.7 indicate that significant Asian ethnic group differences exist across population, socioeconomic, and political characteristics, hence disputing the perception of contemporary Asian Americans as one and the same. For example, Asian Indians have the highest growth rate in 1990-2000, while Japanese Americans experience an almost 10 percent decline in their population in the same period (Table 2.1). The Asian groups tend to differ also in other population characteristics (Table 2.4 and Figure 2.3). For instance, according to the 2000 Census, Chinese is the most heavily populated Asian group in the U.S, while Japanese is the least populous Asian group. Moreover, Japanese Americans are most likely to disclose having multiple races or ethnicities, while Vietnamese Americans are most likely to report a single race or ethnicity. Comparisons of the Asian groups using various socioeconomic measures in Table 2.5 show a number of disparities. For instance, Asian Indians have the highest median family income, whereas Koreans have the lowest median family income. Filipinos are most likely, while Vietnamese are least likely, to be proficient in English. The Asian groups also differ in their political orientations (Tables 2.6 and 2.7). For example, South Asians are more likely to identify themselves as strong Democrats, while Vietnamese are less likely to affiliate with a Democratic identification. South Asians also have a greater likelihood of considering themselves liberal, while Vietnamese are less likely to identify themselves as liberal. Overall, these differences suggest that, while it is useful to consider the

Asian American community as a group, especially for research purposes, it is also important to recognize the diversity among Asian Americans and between various Asian ethnic groups in order to better understand the meaning of “Asian American” in today’s society and politics.

### Perception of Asian Americans as Perpetual Foreigners

Asians have been collectively perceived as eternally alien “Orientals” who are interchangeably and sometimes concurrently stereotyped as “the coolie, the deviant, the yellow peril, the model minority, and the gook” (Lee, 1999: 8). As foreign “Orientals,” Asian Americans have a common heritage of ethnic mistreatment in Asia and segregation from mainstream American society (Lien et al., 2004). Political scholars have given credence to the notion that Asians are racially triangulated between white and black Americans (Kim, 1999, 2000; Kim, 2002; Junn and Masuoka, 2008). For example, Asians are more likely to be viewed as foreigners, whereas whites and blacks are seen as insiders in mainstream U.S. society (Kim, 2002). This stereotype of Asian Americans may have some plausibility because once largely U.S.-born and composing mainly of Japanese and Chinese Americans, the Asian American population today is predominantly foreign-born and spread across a number of different nationalities and ethnicities (National Research Council et al., 2001; Junn and Masuoka, 2008; Lien et al., 2004). However, the stereotype fails to recognize the fact that many Asian American families have been U.S. citizens for a number of generations.

Moreover, as noted in the previous chapter, stereotyping Asians in this fashion suggests that many Asians, especially those who are foreign-born, are interested more in holding on to their unique cultures and Asian homeland ties than in becoming part of mainstream U.S. society and integrating into the American political culture. To substantiate the perceived deficiency of Asians’ interest in assimilating into mainstream America and its political system, several

researchers (e.g., Junn and Masuoka, 2008; Lien et al., 2004) suggest that English language ability and naturalization connect Asians to the broader American society and political culture. The results of Table 2.8, which compares the rates of English proficiency and naturalization among immigrants from Asia, Latin America, and Europe/Canada, generally support these researchers' suggestion. For instance, immigrants from Asia (23.4 percent) are less likely than those from Latin America (44 percent) to lack English proficiency, although immigrants from Europe/Canada (11.5 percent) have a higher proportion of English proficiency than do those from Asia. Moreover, immigrants from Asia are more likely to become American citizens once they enter the U.S. than are immigrants from Europe/Canada and Latin America. By 2001, 67 percent of Asian immigrants are naturalized citizens compared with 65 percent of European/Canadian immigrants and 58 percent of Hispanic immigrants.

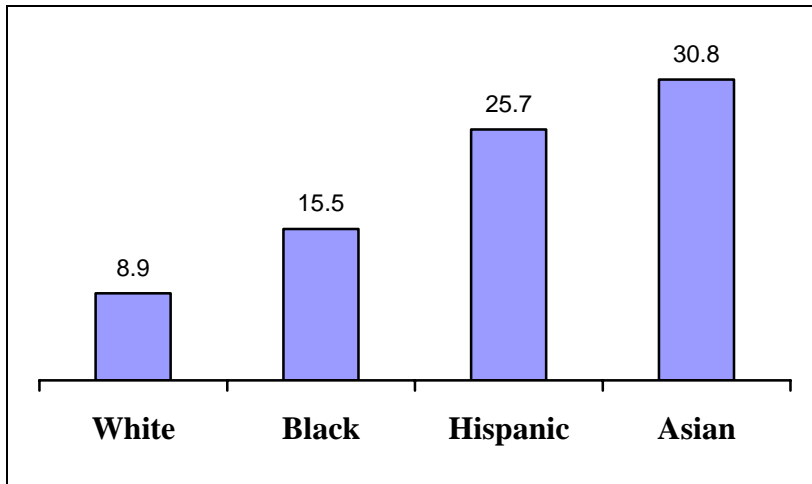
**Table 2.8 Socio-political Characteristics of Immigrant Groups by Region of Birth**

	<b>% Lacking English Proficiency<sup>a</sup> (2000)</b>	<b>% U.S. Citizenship<sup>b</sup> (2001)</b>
<b>Asia</b>	23.4	67
<b>Europe/Canada</b>	11.5	65
<b>Latin America</b>	44.0	58

<sup>a</sup> Source: Le, C.N. 2010. "Demographic Characteristics of Immigrants" Asian-Nation: The Landscape of Asian America; based on Census 2000.

<sup>b</sup> Note: Entries are percentages of respondents obtaining American citizenship by 2001. Source: Fix, Michael, Jeffrey S. Passel, and Kenneth Sucher. 2003b. "Trends in Naturalization." Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

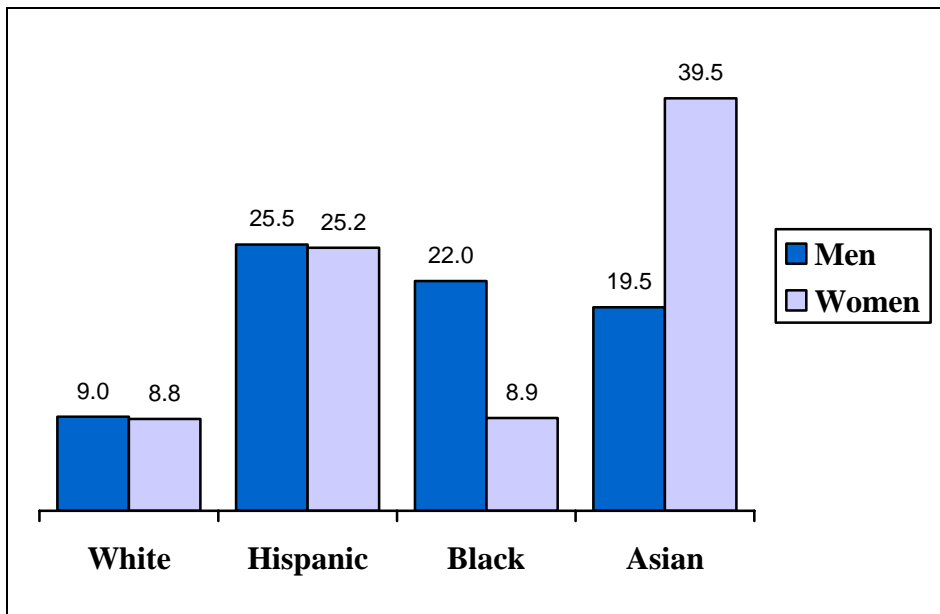
Some scholars (such as Lien et al., 2004) also suggest that the experiences of racial interaction may link Asians to mainstream U.S. society, such as interracial marriage and residential integration. Figure 2.4 displays the intermarriage rates of newlyweds from major racial/ethnic groups in 2008. Of the four groups in Figure 2.4, Asians (30.8 percent) are most



**Figure 2.4 Intermarriage Rates by Race and Ethnicity, 2008**

Note: The chart shows the percentage of newlyweds in 2008 who married someone of a different race/ethnicity. “Newlyweds” refers to people who got married in the 12 months before the survey. All groups (other than Hispanic) are non-Hispanic single races.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 2008 American Community Survey (ACS), based on Integrated Public-Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) samples.



**Figure 2.5 Intermarriage Rates among Newlyweds by Gender, 2008**

Source and Note: See Figure 2.4.

likely to marry someone whose race or ethnicity is different from their own. Hispanics (25.7 percent) are the next group with the highest intermarriage rate, followed by blacks (15.5 percent) and whites (8.9 percent).

There are also gender differences among the major racial/ethnic groups in the tendency to wed outside their own racial group, as Figure 2.5 shows. Among whites and Hispanics in Figure 2.5, there are no gender differences in intermarriage rates. About nine percent of both male and female white newlyweds in 2008 married a nonwhite spouse, and about 25 percent of both male and female Hispanic newlyweds married someone who is not Hispanic. In contrast, there are significant gender differences among blacks and Asians. Twenty-two percent of black male newlyweds married outside their race, compared with only nine percent of black female newlyweds. Among Asians the gender pattern is reversed. Forty percent of Asian female newlyweds married a non-Asian spouse, compared with only 20 percent of Asian male newlyweds. Across the four racial/ethnic groups in Figure 2.5, Asian females are most likely to marry outside their race.

To compare the levels of residential integration between Asian Americans and other racial groups, a commonly used segregation index (index of dissimilarity) is reported in Table 2.9 for the 10 U.S. cities with the largest Asian populations in 2000.<sup>12</sup> The results in the first column of Table 2.9 show that the dissimilarity index between Asians and whites ranges from a low of 29 percent in Fremont, California to a high of 50 percent in San Diego. A dissimilarity index of 29 percent indicates that either 29 percent of Asians or 29 percent of whites in Fremont would need to move to different census tracts for the two groups to attain equal distributions across all census tracts. In other words, Asians are likely to have a higher level of residential

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<sup>12</sup> The segregation index measures residential segregation between two population groups, such as Asians and whites. The measurement of segregation is at the level of census tracts. It would be informative to also include a segregation index between Asians and Hispanics for comparison purposes, but no such measure was reported.

**Table 2.9 Residential Segregation Indices in the 10 U.S. Cities with the Largest Asian Populations, 2000**

City	Asian and White	Asian and Black	White and Black
New York	42	63	63
Los Angeles, CA	47	69	73
San Jose, CA	48	31	41
San Francisco, CA	41	58	59
Honolulu, HI	36	58	47
San Diego, CA	50	50	62
Chicago, IL	48	87	86
Houston, TX	45	68	72
Seattle, WA	48	34	60
Fremont, CA	29	26	24

Note: The segregation index measures the percentage of a racial group that would have to move to a different census tract to reach equal distribution across all census tracts. The last column reports the dissimilarity index between whites and blacks for comparison purposes. Source: [www.psc.isr.umich.edu/residentialegregation](http://www.psc.isr.umich.edu/residentialegregation), accessed January 10, 2011.

integration with whites in Fremont than are they with whites, say, in San Diego. The results in the second column of Table 2.9 reveal that the dissimilarity index between Asians and blacks varies from a low of 26 percent in Fremont to a high of 87 percent in Chicago. These results indicate that segregations between Asians and whites and between Asians and blacks are still significant. For example, in Los Angeles the dissimilarity index is 47 percent between Asians and whites and 69 percent between Asians and blacks, although the index between whites and blacks is even higher at 73 percent. These numbers suggest that residential segregation is moderately high between Asians and whites, while residential segregation is very high between Asians and blacks and between whites and blacks. With the exception of Fremont and San Jose, the level of residential segregation between Asians and whites is much lower than that between whites and blacks. For six of the 10 cities, including New York, NY, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Honolulu, Chicago, and Houston, the segregation between Asians and whites is much lower than that between Asians and blacks. Yet, for the remaining cities, the segregation

between Asians and blacks is either comparable to that between Asians and whites (Fremont and San Diego) or smaller than that between Asians and whites (San Jose and Seattle). The overall results in Table 2.9 suggest that Asian Americans do not wholly live a segregated social life, separated from other racial groups. Moreover, Asians are likely to have a higher level of residential integration with whites nationwide compared with that of Asians with blacks and that of whites with blacks.

In sum, the results of Tables 2.8 and 2.9 and Figures 2.4 and 2.5 generally disconfirm the perception of Asian Americans as perpetual foreigners who are not interested in becoming part of mainstream American society and political culture. For example, compared with Hispanic Americans, who are another immigrant-dominated group, Asian Americans are more likely to be proficient in English and become U.S. citizens, and, thus, have qualities that, for instance, make active political participation likely. Moreover, the results of Figures 2.4 and 2.5 and Table 2.9 suggest that Asians do not lack racial interaction experiences. For instance, Asians are more likely to marry outside their race than are whites, blacks, and Hispanics. Compared with that of blacks with whites, Asians tend to hold a higher level of residential integration with whites throughout the country.

#### Perception of Asian Americans as a Model Minority

The most contemporary view of Asians is that they are a “model minority” who have overcome disadvantages and achieved “success” through hard work, strong family values and structures, and emphasis on the education of children (Lin et al., 2005; Lee, 1999; Lien et al., 2004). The model minority stereotype presumes that Asians’ comparatively high socioeconomic status emanates from inherent cultural attributes and group beliefs about the importance of work ethic and perseverance, family, and education (Lien et al., 2004; Lee, 1999). The Asian success



is viewed as a product of innate group characteristics and values that are attained without group-based political demands (Lien et al., 2004: 7).

In many ways Asian Americans have been remarkably successful in achieving the American Dream both socially and economically—to the extent that the perception of Asians as a model minority is not completely groundless. In fact, the results of Table 2.10 largely support this perception, especially in comparing Asians with other racial minorities, such as blacks and Hispanics. Based on the 2000 Census, Table 2.10 evaluates the four major racial/ethnic groups using various measures that sociologists called “socioeconomic achievement.”

In every category in Table 2.10, Asians outperform both blacks and Hispanics. Asians (19.5 percent) are less likely than blacks (29.1 percent) and Hispanics (48.5 percent) to have less than a high school education. Asians (42.9 percent) have a much higher proportion of college graduates than do blacks (13.6 percent) and Hispanics (9.9 percent). Asians (6.5 percent) are also more likely to have advanced degrees than are Hispanics (1.6 percent) and blacks (1.2 percent). Asians have the highest median family income (\$59,000), while blacks have the lowest median family income (\$33,300). Asians (34.6 percent) are more likely to work in a high-skill profession (e.g., management and engineering), whereas Hispanics (9.6 percent) are less likely to have a high-skill occupation. Seventy-five percent of Asians are married compared with 56

**Table 2.10 Socioeconomic Characteristics by Racial/Ethnic Group, 2000**

	Less than High School	College Degree	Advanced Degree	Married	Homeowner	High Skill Occupation	Median Family Income	Living in Poverty	Public Assistance
<b>Asians</b>	19.5	42.9	6.5	74.9	68.2	34.6	\$59,000	11.5	2.2
<b>Whites</b>	15.3	25.3	3.0	64.5	78.2	21.4	\$48,500	9.4	1.3
<b>Blacks</b>	29.1	13.6	1.2	38.0	54.4	12.3	\$33,300	24.9	4.5
<b>Hispanics</b>	48.5	9.9	1.6	56.3	52.4	9.6	\$36,000	21.4	3.5

Source and Note: See Table 2.5.

percent of Hispanics and 38 percent of blacks. Asians (68.2 percent) are more likely to own a home compared with blacks (54.4 percent) and Hispanics (52.4 percent). Asians (11.5 percent) are less likely to be living in poverty than are Hispanics (21.4 percent) and blacks (24.9 percent). Asians (2.2 percent) are also less likely to receive public assistance than are Hispanics (3.5 percent) and blacks (4.5 percent).

Asians also score better than whites on many of the socioeconomic measures in Table 2.10. Asians (42.9 percent) have a greater likelihood of graduating from college than do whites (25.3 percent). Asians (6.5 percent) are more likely to have advanced degrees than are whites (three percent). Asians (74.9 percent) are more likely than whites (64.5 percent) to be married. Asians have a higher median family income (\$59,000) compared with whites whose median family income is \$48,500. Asians (34.6 percent) are more likely, while whites (21.4 percent) are less likely, to be employed in a high-skill profession.

Conversely, whites are more likely to outdo Asians on measures of homeownership, poverty state, public assistance acceptance, and secondary education underachievement. Whites (78.2 percent) have a greater likelihood of owning a home than do Asians (68.2 percent). Whites (9.4 percent) are less likely to be living in poverty compared with Asians (11.5 percent). Whites (1.3 percent) are less likely than Asians (2.2 percent) to accept public assistance. Whites (15.3 percent) are less likely than Asians (19.5 percent) to have less than a high school education.

Comparisons between Asians and other major racial/ethnic groups relative to SAT mean scores in Table 2.11 generally support the model minority perception of Asians as well. Table 2.11 presents the SAT mean scores of college-bound seniors from major racial/ethnic groups in recent annual school periods (2004-05 through 2008-09). Across all school periods in Table 2.11, Asian students perform much better than black and Hispanic (Mexican American)

**Table 2.11 SAT Mean Scores of College-Bound Seniors by Race/Ethnicity: Selected Years, 2004-05 through 2008-09**

Race/Ethnicity	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
<b>SAT-Critical Reading</b>					
Asian	511	510	514	513	516
White	532	527	527	528	528
Black	433	434	433	430	429
Mexican American	453	454	455	454	453
<b>SAT-Mathematics</b>					
Asian	580	578	578	581	587
White	536	536	534	537	536
Black	431	429	429	426	426
Mexican American	463	465	466	463	463

Note: Relative to Hispanic students, the SAT mean scores were reported for college-bound seniors from different Hispanic groups, including Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and other Hispanics. Because the mean scores of the students from these Hispanic groups are comparable, only the scores of Mexican American students are used to compare with those of students from other racial groups.

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2010. *Digest of Education Statistics*, 2009 (NCES 2010-013), Chapter 2.

students in both the critical reading and mathematics sections. In the critical reading section Asian students tend to score in the low-500s, while black and Mexican American students have a tendency of scoring in the low- and mid-400s, respectively. In the mathematics section, on average, Asian students (with scores in the upper-500s) have the highest mean scores among the four groups of students across all school periods, followed by white (with scores in the lower-500s), Mexican American (with scores in the upper-400s), and black (with scores in the low-400s) students. Asian students are also competitive with white students in the critical reading section across all school periods, with Asian students having mean scores in the 510s and white students mostly in the 520s.

The overall results of Tables 2.10 and 2.11 indicate that the perception of Asian Americans as a model minority is not altogether baseless. For example, Asians are more likely to perform better than blacks and Hispanics not only in every socioeconomic achievement measure in Table 2.10, but also in both sections of the SAT across every school period in Table

2.11. Asians also tend to outdo whites in many of the socioeconomic categories in Table 2.10 as well as in the mathematics section of the SAT across all school periods in Table 2.11. Yet, this stereotype overlooks external factors that contribute to the socioeconomic achievement of Asians, such as favorable U.S. immigration policies that seek to attract largely wealthy and educated immigrants from Asia (Lien et al., 2004). It also ignores the socioeconomic division among Asian Americans and between different Asian ethnic groups, as shown in Table 2.5.

### **Conclusion**

What it means to be “Asian” has changed a great deal throughout American history, as illustrated by the many alterations to the term in the U.S. Census that call attention to the ethnic diversification of Asian Americans. Changes in the population growth and geographic concentration of Asians also influence the evolving meaning of “Asian American” in today’s society and politics.

Contemporary Asian Americans cannot be easily understood as a cohesive population with common history, identity, culture, and politics. The Asian American population today is diverse in terms of such attributes as national origins and multiple concerns unique to each ethnic community, such as English proficiency, naturalization, and progress in socioeconomic mobility (Lien et al., 2004; Junn and Masuoka, 2008; Lee, 1998). In fact, Asian Americans currently represent over 20 Asian ethnic groups, each with its own distinct features, such as language, culture, religious beliefs, and immigration history.

Despite these differences, the Asian community shares experiences of being dogged by several prevailing stereotypes, including the perceptions of Asians as one-and-the-same Orientals, perpetual foreigners, and a model minority. The summary findings in this chapter call into question the validity of particularly the first two stereotypes and point to the danger of

stereotyping Asians en masse, since a consequence of such stereotyping is that important differences among Asian Americans and between the Asian ethnic groups are minimized or ignored completely. For example, some Asian ethnic groups, such as Vietnamese Americans, are more likely to be low achievers in many of the socioeconomic measures in Table 2.5 than are other Asian ethnic groups, such as Asian Indians; thus, stereotyping Asian Americans inclusively, for instance, as a model minority may be problematic since this stereotype masks the underachievement of such Asian ethnic groups as Vietnamese Americans.

However, as noted in the previous chapter, it is not practical to distinguish among the Asian ethnic groups, especially in the forthcoming analyses of Americans' affect- and cognition-based perceptions of Asians in Chapters 4 and 5, respectively, because social interaction and discourse often depend on concepts, such as favorability evaluations and stereotypes, associated with the broad "Asian" American category. Moreover, data limitations also prevent such differentiation. Most surveys with samples containing multiple racial/ethnic groups like the American National Election Study often place respondents in respective common racial/ethnic categories, such as "Asian," "white," "black," and "Hispanic/Latino," and, hence, do not usually include categories for specific ethnic groups, such as "Chinese" and "Mexican," or have questions pertaining to these ethnic groups. Even if these surveys include such data about particular ethnic groups, the sample sizes would likely be comparatively small.

### **CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES OF RACIAL ATTITUDES**

A number of scholars have considered racial perceptions that people have about members of different racial and ethnic groups to be essential in shaping intergroup relations (Allport, 1954; Jackman and Crane, 1986; Schuman et al., 1985; Sigelman and Welch, 1993; Welch and Sigelman, 2000; Massey et al., 2003). Societal accounts about the assumed dominance or lowliness of racial or ethnic groups affect our perceptions of others and ourselves (Fiske and Taylor, 1991; Massey et al., 2003).

What individuals learn from society about various racial and ethnic groups underlies their perceptions of how individuals like themselves are viewed by others and the type of treatment they may expect to get as a consequence (Massey et al., 2003; Fiske et al., 2002). Perceptions of Asian Americans have ranged from the pejorative (e.g., perpetual foreigner, yellow peril) to the esteemed (e.g., model minority, “America’s success story”). The nature of these perceptions of Asians, however, has not been systematically examined because previous studies on intergroup relations tend to focus mostly on whites’ attitudes toward blacks, although recently there have been some studies of whites’ as well as blacks’ attitudes toward Hispanics. Such an approach provokes questions about whether theories and measures founded on whites’ stereotypes (of blacks) can best predict the response tendencies of multiracial groups when Asians are the racial target. However, these theories and measures provide a useful framework from which to explore systematically attitudes toward Asians.

Contemporary research in racial relations suggests that various factors influence the racial attitudes and perceptions of groups in American society. Previous studies on determinants of racial attitudes have proposed such theoretical perspectives as personal contact, context, self-interest, and symbolic politics to play a role in shaping the social, political, and policy attitudes

of groups in society and in influencing race relations in the U.S. In this chapter these theoretical perspectives are presented to provide a framework for the examination of Americans' affect- and cognition-based perceptions of Asian Americans in the ensuing chapters.

### **Personal Contact Perspective**

A widely accepted explanation for a majority group's perceptions and attitudes toward minorities is the personal contact perspective, initially proposed by Allport (1954). The contact perspective suggests that close, positive interpersonal contact between individuals of different races promotes constructive or favorable racial attitudes and perceptions and that the absence of such contact advances racial prejudice and hostility (Sigelman and Welch, 1991; Sigelman and Welch, 1993; Allport, 1954). Personal contact largely represents individual interaction between members of the majority group and those of a particular minority group (Stein et al., 2000), although recent studies also focus on personal contact between minority groups, such as blacks and Hispanics, and between multiracial groups. The perspective also argues that increased contact between two segregated groups who perceive each other in a negative manner will bring about a reduction in negative attitudes (Hood and Morris, 1998).

Advocates of the contact perspective regard isolation as a source of ignorance that acts as a breeding ground for offensive and adverse stereotypes and racial hostility (Sigelman and Welch, 1991). They argue that if stronger social connections can be formed between a majority group and a minority out-group racial attitudes would dramatically become more positive (Sigelman and Welch, 1993). Hence, personal contact, such as friendships between different racial/ethnic groups, can enhance a particular group's affect-based perceptions of another group such that the former group would have more favorable or positive evaluations of the latter group. Stronger social bonds between groups may also help to disconfirm what Allport (1954, 1979)

terms “rationalizers” of prejudice—negative stereotypes—of minority out-groups (Dixon and Rosenbaum, 2004). Thus, friendships between two different racial/ethnic groups can also promote a given group’s cognition-based perceptions—or beliefs about traits attributed to a certain group—of another group in a positive way. Affect- and cognition-based perceptions are discussed in more details in Chapters 4 and 5, respectively.

Allport (1954) and other researchers, such as Pettigrew (1971, 1998), identify several particular attributes of contact that foster positive attitudes of members of the majority group toward minority groups. These attributes include such conditions as the frequency of contact, the nature of contact (i.e., whether it occurs in a cooperative or competitive milieu), status characteristics of participants (i.e., the degree to which the interaction is between the majority group and minority group with “equal” race or socioeconomic status), the social context of contact (e.g., real, artificial, or segregated), and the interactive areas of contact, such as work and school (Stein et al., 2000: 288; Dixon and Rosenbaum, 2004). Each condition may increase the likelihood that shared values and beliefs will be perceived and expressed, and thus will provide the source for interpersonal connection between members of different racial groups, and, under optimal conditions, lead to favorable racial perceptions and attitudes toward out-group members (Stein et al., 2000).

A number of previous studies of race relations, mostly focusing on whites’ racial attitudes toward blacks, have found that positive personal interactions between members of different races encourage auspicious racial perceptions and attitudes toward out-groups (Key, 1949; Allport, 1954; Sigelman and Welch, 1993; Dixon and Rosenbaum, 2004). For example, Sigelman and Welch (1993) find that positive personal contact between blacks and whites contributes to favorable white attitudes toward blacks. They also find that interracial friendships with whites



mitigate blacks' perceptions of racial hostility (Sigelman and Welch, 1993: 13). Other studies find that racial prejudice is less frequently observed among young whites who sustain closer relationships or contacts with blacks (Deutsch and Collins, 1951; Meer and Freedman, 1966; Aberbach and Walker, 1973; Nieto, 2000; Orfield, 2001).

Furthermore, a number of scholars have found augmented contact under certain conditions proposed by Allport (1954) (e.g., interdependence, common goals, equal status, and encouragement by authorities) promotes tolerance (or even amity) and mitigates prejudice (Jackman and Crane, 1986; Sigelman and Welch, 1993; Amir, 1969, 1976; Ellison and Powers, 1994; Kinder and Mendelberg, 1995; Powers and Ellison 1994; Stephan and Stephan, 1985; Welch et al., 2001). For instance, Jackman and Crane (1986) find that whites who report having black friends tend to have more favorable views of blacks. Some studies also report that white-Hispanic acquaintanceships promote positive views of Hispanics (Stein et al., 2000; Dixon and Rosenbaum, 2004).

Yet, as Stein et al. (2000) note, past studies show mixed results for the notion that these optimal conditions are required for contact to influence the perceptions and attitudes of a majority group in a positive way. For example, friendships or acquaintanceships or even comparatively superficial contact are found to foster more positive attitudes among blacks, whites, and Hispanics (Ellison and Powers, 1994; Powers and Ellison, 1995; Dixon and Rosenbaum, 2004; Sigelman and Welch, 1993; Welch and Sigelman, 2000; Stein et al., 2000). Jackman and Crane (1986) also report that whites who have black friends with higher socioeconomic status are more likely to have favorable racial attitudes toward blacks. Forbes (1997), however, contends that equal status between majority and subordinate groups is not a

significant condition for contact to positively affect the majority's racial attitudes toward the out-groups.

Overall, the contact literature suggests that personal contacts, such as friendships and acquaintanceships, lessen unfavorable affect- and cognition-based perceptions between members of different racial/ethnic groups. The contact perspective has largely been tested with whites, blacks, and, more recently, Hispanics, while research on the effect of contact on Americans' perceptions and attitudes toward Asians is practically nonexistent. There is also a lack of studies that estimates the effect of contact on a given racial/ethnic group's affect- and cognition-based perceptions of its own members. It is plausible that positive contact might promote Asians' favorable affect-based and/or cognition-based perceptions of fellow Asians. For example, friendships among Asians might foster the perception of fellow Asians as "trustworthy." Further, as Allport (1954) suggests, socioeconomic status among fellow Asians or between Asians and a non-Asian group is likely to be an important condition for contact to affect perceptions of Asians. In Chapter 2 socioeconomic comparisons among the four racial/ethnic groups (Table 2.4) indicate that Asians are more likely to do better than blacks and Hispanics and, to a certain extent, whites, while socioeconomic comparisons among the Asian ethnic groups (Table 2.3) emphasize the diversity among these ethnic groups. Hence, contact among Asians or between Asians and a non-Asian group with different socioeconomic statuses is likely to enhance less favorable evaluations of Asians and more negative stereotyping of them.

### **Context Perspective**

The context perspective suggests that the size of the out-group or minority group in a specific geographic location, such as county, neighborhood, state or region, affects racial relations with a majority group (Key, 1949; Stein et al., 2000; Giles and Evans 1985; Taylor

1998). For example, the geographic proximity of whites to large populations of racial/ethnic minorities, such as blacks, brings about perceptions of competition and threat from these minorities. In contrast to the contact literature, the context literature finds that members of the majority group who live in areas highly populated with minorities have much stronger unfavorable attitudes toward minority out-groups than members of the majority group who reside in areas less densely populated with minorities (Oliver and Wong, 2003; Stein et al., 2000). Supporters of the context perspective contend that the geographic nearness of a majority group to residents of racial and ethnic minority groups generate perceptions of competition and threat with these minorities, particularly in terms of economic and political threats (Key, 1949; Oliver and Wong, 2003; Blalock, 1967). This perceived group competition becomes apparent in the majority group's negative attitudes toward minorities and policies that have an impact on them, as the presence of the minority population increases (Stein et al., 2000).

Stein et al. (2000) indicate that past studies have failed to explore the relationship between context and contact, especially the interaction between them. The authors argue that since social contact is likely to take place within a particular milieu, context—in terms of the proportion of members of an out-group that live in a specific area—determines the frequency and likelihood of intergroup contact (Stein et al., 2000: 289). In other words, where individuals reside, work, and spend their free time affects the opportunities for personal contact. Stein et al. (2000) indicate that even though context and contact are linked, it is not understood how context functions to promote personal contact or how these concepts interact to structure the attitudes of a majority group toward minority groups. Part of the reason for this deficiency is that past studies of racial attitudes tend to examine the effect of context and personal contact separately. One exception, however, provides some evidence that context and contact are related. Sigelman

and Welch (1993) find that both personal contact (measured as white respondents' reported contact with blacks) and context (measured as white respondents' perception of the racial makeup of their neighborhood) are positively related to whites' racial attitudes toward blacks. This finding suggests that members of a majority group are less likely to have personal contact with members of a minority group without the presence of the minority group within a particular venue. It is likely that personal contact (e.g., friendship) among Asian Americans or between Asians and another racial/ethnic group in a neighborhood with a high concentration of Asians would enhance more favorable views of Asians.

The context perspective has been largely used to explain whites' anti-black prejudice in the intergroup relation literature and has been predominantly tested separately from personal contact (e.g., Wright, 1977; Giles and Evans, 1985; Key, 1949; Allport, 1954). For instance, a number of past studies have convincingly linked the size of the black population to whites' racial animosity toward blacks (Giles and Evans, 1985; Wright, 1977; Glaser, 1994; Quillian, 1996; Oliver and Mendelberg, 2000) and to sentiments of in-group solidarity among whites (Giles and Evans, 1985). Key (1949) finds that voting for white conservative candidates among Southern whites is related to a high number of blacks residing in southern localities. Huckfeldt and Kohfeld (1989) find similar results for areas outside the South, such as urban localities in the Northeast and Midwest. In fact, across numerous diverse research data and time periods, many studies find that racial hostility increases among whites as the black population increases in size, particularly in counties and cities (Giles and Evans, 1985; Oliver and Mendelberg, 2000).

Studies of the effect of context on whites' racial attitudes toward other minority groups in the United States, such as Hispanics and Asians, have not been carried out as extensively as those involving white-black relations. There is also a lack of studies that estimates the effect of

context on a racial/ethnic group's perceptions of fellow members. Further, the findings of the few studies on Hispanics and particularly on Asians have been inconclusive or mixed, or have been found to contradict the context perspective's central arguments. For example, Hood and Morris (1997) find that the impact of context on the attitudes of whites toward Hispanics depends on whether a state has a high proportion of Hispanic residents and not on whether whites live in close proximity to Hispanics in the state. In a multiracial study Oliver and Wong (2003) find that whites who live in largely white neighborhoods harbor more unfavorable views of blacks, Hispanics, and Asians.

Moreover, Oliver and Wong (2003) contend that in multiethnic contexts, the relationship between racial environments and attitudes resists simple formulations. Hostility toward another group is based not simply on that group's size, but on its relative economic position, the historical period, and the contextual unit being measured (Oliver and Wong, 2003: 579). Gay (2006) also argues that although previous studies of intergroup relations largely based their analyses on racial environments, it is more the relative economic status of racial groups—and less the relative size of racial groups—that influences blacks' attitudes toward Latinos. For example, Gay (2006) finds that in neighborhoods where Latinos have more economic advantages than do their black neighbors, blacks are more likely to hold negative perceptions of Latinos. Hence, the applicability of the context perspective to other racial/ethnic out-groups is uncertain, especially Asians. This is because the perspective was developed to explain largely black-white relations, and Asians do not share similar historical relationships with whites as blacks do.

The perception of Asians as passive political actors would hardly present a political threat to the majority population. However, the perceived socioeconomic success of Asians may foster unfavorable evaluations and stereotyping of Asians from whites and other minority groups, such

as Hispanics and blacks. How can we understand context and racial attitudes with respect to Asians? As the context perspective suggests, the challenge which Asians present to a majority group or to other minority out-groups may depend on their group size in a given geographic region (Oliver and Wong, 2003; Dixon and Rosenbaum, 2004; Oliver and Mendelberg, 2000). Hence, the context perspective would predict that less favorable affect- and cognition-based views of Asian Americans from other groups will be enhanced as the size of the Asian population increases in a specified venue. However, since the Asian population tends to be concentrated in a few states and metropolitan areas rather than spread across the country, as noted in Chapter 2, Asians' perceptions of fellow Asians are more likely to be positive in an area with a high concentration of Asians.

### **Self-Interest Perspective**

Theorists (Hobbes, 1651 [1950]; Smith, 1776; Downs, 1957) have long argued that self-interest plays an important or even major role in forming and maintaining social and political attitudes. For example, Hobbes (1651 [1950]) believed that human beings are motivated first and foremost by self-interest or that human behavior is selfishly motivated (see also Sears and Funk, 1991; Miller 1999). Downs (1957), moreover, assumes that citizens embrace policy preferences that advance their private interests and vote for political candidates who back such policy positions, suggesting that decision-making is rational within the limits of available information (see also Sears et al., 1979; Sears, 1993).

Sears et al. (1979: 369) indicate that a self-interested attitude, as employed in ordinary discourse and by public opinion researchers, is generally defined rather restrictively as “one which is directed toward maximizing gains or minimizing losses to the individual's tangible private well-being,” and among these costs and benefits are chiefly economic ones. Miller

(1999) further indicates that the self-interest motive affects individuals' actions and opinions in addition to the explanations they provide for their actions and opinions; in particular, it leads individuals to act and speak as if they are more concerned about their material self-interest than they do. For example, Miller and Ratner (1996, 1998) find that individuals, who will benefit materially from a social policy's implementation, are more likely to have favorable attitudes toward the policy than are those who will not.

In studies of intergroup relations, the self-interest perspective posits a simple, objective pocketbook rationale to explain prejudice and stereotypes among diverse groups. It contends that resentment between members of two different groups signals a fundamental collision of material interests, primarily economic interests but, to a smaller degree, political interests as well (Kluegel and Smith, 1986; Blalock, 1967; Bonacich, 1972; Lieberson, 1980; Olzak, 1992; Fetzer, 2000; Gay, 2006). Objective individual susceptibility to largely economic deprivation presents the direct source for intergroup prejudice and animosity (Bobo and Hutchings, 1996; Gay, 2006; Simon, 1987; Simon and Alexander, 1993; Fetzer, 2000).

As with most studies of context and personal contact, studies of self-interest have largely involved black-white relations. Many of these studies suggest that racial animosity is affected by perceived higher levels of competition for scarce economic resources and jobs between the white majority and black minority group, threatening the economic and social advantages of the majority group (Bonacich, 1972; Blalock, 1967); yet, other studies, notably Sears and Kinder (1971), find that racially based threats to whites' personal lives, such as personal economic competition with blacks, do not influence whites' prejudice toward blacks. Some recent studies, however, have started to focus on Hispanics. For instance, in an examination of black-Hispanic relation, Gay (2006) finds that the relative economic status of Hispanic Americans strongly

influences black Americans' attitudes toward them, such that as Hispanics' wealth and education advantages increase, blacks' anti-Hispanic sentiments are more likely to escalate.

There are a small number of self-interest studies that involve Asians either implicitly in immigrant/immigration research or explicitly in multiracial research. Relative to immigrant/immigration research, some proponents of the self-interest perspective contend that economic concerns are likely a significant reason for negative attitudes toward immigrant groups, such as Hispanics and Asians (Simon, 1987; Simon and Alexander, 1993; Fetzer, 2000). For example, Simon (1987) argues that immigrants pose a larger threat to the livelihoods and living standards of lower-status (mainly native-born) individuals than they do to individuals with better education and more skills; therefore, the poorer the individual, the greater the fear and anxiety that more immigrants will signify, for example, fewer jobs, fewer chances for upward mobility, and lower pay rates. Burns and Gimpel (2000) also indicate that for some individuals prejudice of immigrants originates in economic insecurity, although such prejudice also has roots that are fairly autonomous of economic anxiety (as Citrin et al. [1990] find). Kessler (2001) suggests that individuals at the lower end of the country's occupational and/or educational distribution are more likely to have negative views toward immigrants and increased immigration. Fetzer (2000) finds that being unemployed heightens anti-immigrant sentiments, while having a high income and working in a high-status occupation reduce negative perceptions of immigrants; yet, Burns and Gimpel (2000) indicate that anti-immigrant sentiments are not likely to vanish just because individuals' economic conditions improve. These studies suggest that Americans, especially those who are underprivileged, are more likely to hold negative perceptions of Asians, an immigrant-dominated population.



Relative to multiracial research, the few studies (such as Bobo and Hutchings, 1996) that include Asians along with the other major racial/ethnic groups indicate that the relationship between racial hostility and economic competition tends to vary among these groups. For instance, Bobo and Hutchings (1996) find that blacks are more likely to perceive greater job competition with Asians than with Hispanics, while Hispanics tend to perceive more competition with Asians than with blacks. Conversely, whites are most likely to feel threatened economically by Asians and least likely by blacks, with Hispanics typically sandwiched between the other two minority groups (Bobo and Hutchings, 1996). These findings support the notion that perceived socioeconomic successes of Asian Americans might threaten particularly disadvantaged members of non-Asian American groups, such as whites, Hispanics, and blacks.

Other studies, however, claim that political factors, rather than only economic ones, affect intergroup relations, although these studies tend to be inconclusive about the relationship between racial hostility and political interests (Blalock, 1967; Parker et al., 2001; Sears and McConahay, 1973). For example, one study (Parker et al., 2001: 124) reports that blacks indicate overall levels of distrust and suspicion of whites' intentions as well as increasing distrust in political and legal institutions that are predominantly white (see also Sears and McConahay, 1973).

The self-interest perspective provides relatively clear and straightforward assertions about the determinants of intergroup animosity. In particular, members of a racial/ethnic group who are confronted with unemployment, have low incomes, or are in low-skill occupations are more likely to feel vulnerable to or threatened by perceived competition from members of other racial/ethnic groups (Bobo and Hutchings, 1996). The findings in Chapter 2 reveal that some Asian ethnic groups tend to have higher levels of socioeconomic achievement than other Asian

ethnic groups and that Asians are more likely to be successful socioeconomically than blacks, Hispanics, and, to a smaller degree, whites. Thus, this perspective suggests that self-interest measures, especially those of economic self-interest, contribute to less favorable views and evaluations of Asians from lower-status fellow Asians and members of non-Asian groups, while they are expected to play a role in more privileged Americans' positive perceptions of Asians.

### **Symbolic Politics Perspective**

In contrast to the context, personal contact, and, in particular, self-interest analyses of intergroup relations and attitude formation, the symbolic politics analysis engenders fairly different predictions about attitudes toward various racial/ethnic groups. According to this perspective, individuals obtain in childhood enduring, stable predispositions or affective preferences, with little forethought to future benefits and costs of these attitudes, that influence their adult perceptions and attitudes (Sears et al., 1979; Sears et al., 1980; Sears, 1993). This theory further contends that the symbols personified in an attitude object stimulate long-standing attitudinal predispositions, which in turn affect responses to the attitude object (Sears et al., 1980: 492). For example, the significance of political symbols, such as the American flag, the national anthem, or the U.S. Constitution, is likely to evoke fundamental predispositions, such as nationalism (feelings of national or American identity). The importance of other political symbols, such as “busing,” “blacks,” “integration,” or “segregation,” is likely to elicit such predispositions as an individual's racial tolerance or prejudice (Sears et al., 1979). The most important of these long-standing predispositions are typically rather general preferences, such as party identification, political ideology, nationalism, or racial prejudice (Sears et al., 1980; Sears, 1993).

The symbolic politics model is supported by three fundamental areas of research. First, studies on political socialization have shown that many important social and political attitudes are initially acquired during childhood (Campbell et al., 1960; Sears, 1993; Sears et al., 1979). For example, the development of adult partisanship is believed to start in childhood and is by and large influenced by the political orientations of one's parents (Beck and Jennings 1975; Clarke 1973; Niemi and Jennings 1991). The continuity of these pre-adult attitudes into adulthood has been unavoidably more difficult to document; nonetheless, many of such attitudes have demonstrated remarkable persistence and are impressively resistant to change in adulthood as well (Klapper, 1960; Sears, 1975; Sears et al., 1979). Second, responses to political events in adulthood are influenced to a great extent by attitudes stemmed from socialization in pre-adult years. A large number of studies (e.g., Sears and Chaffee, 1979; Becker and Heaton, 1967; Campbell et al., 1960) have shown the strong impact of such residues of socialization as party identification and racial prejudice on adults' responses to the flood of information that they encountered in their later lives. Lastly, the cognitive consistency theories have strongly argued for the consistency of attitudes (Abelson et al., 1968); following these theories, adults' attitudes toward current political events would emerge as coherent with their predispositions (Sears et al., 1979).

Earlier versions of symbolic politics place more importance on people's personal interests rather than their standing predispositions relative to their responses to political symbols. For example, Gusfield (1963) suggests that the debate over prohibition in the U.S. was more likely a symbolic struggle for power and prestige between social groups, particularly between Protestant and Catholic immigrants (see also Sears, 1993). Edelman (1971), moreover, highlights attitudinal reactions of the general public, who, as Edelman indicates, is driven more

by emotion than by cognition, to political symbols because of its anxiety about a threatening, complex world (see also Sears, 1993). Edelman (1971) suggests that individuals endorse political beliefs or myths, such as the 19th century American belief (the Manifest Destiny) that the U.S. was destined to expand across the North American continent or the continuing belief in an American mission to promote and defend democracy throughout the world, because these beliefs assure security from future threats and meet their needs for status (see also Sears et al., 1979). Thus, according to Edelman (1971), people will more likely accept a political myth to the extent that it fulfills their personal interests. However, more recent studies argue that people accept political beliefs to the extent that they are harmonious with long-standing attitudinal predispositions, whose pre-adult roots are not of much relevance to their adult material well-being (e.g., Sears et al., 1979; Sears et al., 1980; Sears, 1993). In a large number of studies that compare self-interest and symbolic politics as contending motives in mass politics (such as Sears and Funk, 1991; Sears et al., 1979; Sears et al., 1980; Sears and Allen, 1984), self-interest is found to be less influential on, for example, policy opinions and candidate preferences than long-standing predispositions.

Much research has documented the effects of long-standing predispositions, such as party identification, political ideology, nationalism, or racial prejudice, on political attitudes toward the major racial/ethnic groups.<sup>13</sup> For example, some studies find that racial prejudice is an important determinant of whites' opposition to black electoral candidates (e.g., Kinder and Sears, 1981; Sears and Kosterman, 1991). Other studies, such as Sears et al. (1979), find that racial intolerance and political conservatism strongly influence whites' resistance to busing school children for racial integration of the public schools. Moreover, studies that explore the

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<sup>13</sup> This dissertation focuses on only party identification, political ideology, and nationalism as measures of symbolic politics in the forthcoming analyses of Asians in Chapters 4 and 5.

relationship between nationalism (sense of American national identity) and racial attitudes reveal a significant linkage. For instance, Citrin et al. (1990) find that nationalism has a strong and negative effect on general attitudes toward immigrant-dominated groups (Hispanics and Asians). Stein et al. (2000) also find that nationalism is negatively related to whites' affect toward Hispanics. The effects of party identification and political ideology on racial attitudes, however, are mixed. For example, in their study of whites' stereotypes of blacks, Peffley and Hurwitz (1998) find that neither political ideology nor party identification has an effect on anti-black stereotypes. In their study of whites' attitudes toward Hispanics, Stein et al. (2000) find that political ideology has a significant impact, while party identification has no influence, on whites' affect toward Hispanics. Citrin et al. (1990) also find that having a conservative ideology is significantly related to negative attitudes toward Hispanics, while ideology has no effects on attitudes toward Asians. Based on findings from previous research, symbolic politics measures, particularly nationalism, are expected to influence Americans' perceptions of Asians.

## **Conclusion**

Focusing largely on the relationship between whites and blacks, researchers seek to determine whether personal contact, context, self-interest, and symbolic politics affect intergroup animosity. The contact literature by and large finds that personal or direct contact between members of different racial/ethnic groups is likely to mitigate negative views of members of the specified out-group. The context literature indicates that a high concentration of a minority group in a given area is more likely to foster a majority group's unfavorable perceptions of the minority group. Studies of self-interest contend that perceived economic threats (and to a lesser extent political threats as well) account for a racial/ethnic group's unfavorable perceptions of another racial/ethnic group, although some researchers (such as Citrin et al., 1990) indicate a

weaker impact of self-interest compared with that of symbolic politics relative to intergroup relations. Symbolic politics research has demonstrated the effects of long-standing predispositions, such as party identification, political ideology, and nationalism, on political attitudes toward racial/ethnic groups.

The nation's rapidly expanding Asian population, however, has been largely ignored in these studies. In Chapters 4 and 5, I examine how affect- and cognition- based perceptions of Asians, respectively, are influenced by contact, context, self-interest, and symbolic politics—theoretical perspectives which are often explored separately from each other. Although these perspectives have been directed primarily at studies of black-white relations, they provide a constructive framework and guidance to study Americans' perceptions of Asians.

## **CHAPTER 4: AFFECT-BASED PERCEPTIONS OF ASIAN AMERICANS**

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, Americans' perceptions toward Asians are unclear and often ambivalent. The idea that Asians are less hampered by unfavorable racial stereotypes, compared with black Americans, suggest a reduction in the group identity and consciousness of being "Asian" and a "gradual assimilation into mainstream, white America" (Junn and Masuoka, 2008: 730). Simultaneously, however, there also are views that Asians remain a distinct, politically meaningful racial group which is crucial, in some situations, to the result of an election (Junn and Masuoka, 2008; Lien et al., 2004). In light of these contrasting perspectives on the Asian racial identity, how will the general American public view Asian Americans in comparison with the other major racial/ethnic groups (i.e., whites, blacks, and Hispanics)? Do Americans hold favorable views of Asians? Do Americans feel close to Asians in terms of ideas, interests and feelings? Do the evaluations of Asians differ across racial and ethnic groups? To seek answers to these questions, this chapter examines affect-based perceptions of Asians and the other major groups in terms of the context, contact, self-interest, and symbolic politics perspectives outlined in the previous chapter and also socio-demographic indicators.

### **Affect-Based Responses in Groups**

Researchers in social psychology have for quite some time considered that the fundamental formation of attitudes can stem from affect (Fabrigar and Petty, 1999; Edwards, 1990; Edwards and von Hippel, 1995; Katz and Stotland, 1959; Breckler, 1984; Zajonc and Markus, 1982). In the modern literature, the term *affect* has been typically referred to as an emotional response that expresses an individual's degree of preference for an entity (Breckler, 1984; Edwards and von Hippel, 1995). It has also been commonly described as positive and/or negative feelings, emotions, or drives that an individual links with an attitude object (Edwards, 1990; Edwards and

von Hippel, 1995; Fabrigar and Petty, 1999). In terms of attitude acquisition, affective responses are surmised to exercise a crucial and powerful effect on the individual, and the affect-based attitude is first obtained with little cognitive appraisal (Edwards, 1990). Relevant information that is obtained following these affective responses helps to support or confirm the initial attitude (Edwards, 1990).

In studies of groups, the affective response is an integral dimension of the classical prejudice model, associated with Allport (1954). The study of prejudice and stereotypes has a long history in the social sciences. The distinction between prejudice and stereotypes is rather unclear, since definitions of prejudice that are generally used in social science research are likely to integrate notions of stereotypes (Dixon and Rosenbaum, 2004). For instance, Allport ([1954], 1979: 9) defines prejudice as “an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization” of a group. Blumer (1958: 4) suggests a more general definition of prejudice as a “cultural product consisting of feelings that the out-group is alien, different, and inferior” relative to one’s own racial/ethnic group. Dixon and Rosenbaum (2004: 259) further indicate that stereotypes are “faulty and inflexible generalizations that lack the affective component of prejudice.”

Stereotypes are discussed in more details in the next chapter.

The prejudice model emphasizes individual psychological dispositions and a substantially irrational calculus of racial conflict rather than objective reality and a largely rational calculus of group hostility (Bobo and Hutchings, 1996; Allport, 1954; Jackman, 1994). Allport’s prejudice model strongly suggests that group hostility is irrational and that part of this irrationality is based on ignorance of members of a particular out-group (Bobo and Hutchings, 1996; Katz, 1991). In recent studies of the in-group/out-group dichotomy, the affect responses to groups have been largely examined as a function of various contexts, such as racial group competition (Bobo and



Hutchings, 1996), intergroup hostility (Giles and Evans, 1986); residential integration (Bobo and Zubrinsky, 1996; Taylor et al., 1978), school busing (Bobo, 1983; Sears and Kinder, 1985); and sexual prejudice and gender (Herek, 2000). Most of these studies, however, do not include Asians in their evaluation of affect responses to groups.

To determine Americans' views of Asians, in this study I examine attitude-relevant responses to Asians as dependent variables. I construct two models to determine affect-based perceptions of Americans toward Asians. The first model uses as the dependent variable evaluations of individual favorability toward Asians, and the second model uses assessments of closeness to Asians in terms of ideas, interests and feelings. I estimate these models as functions of context, personal contact, self-interest, symbolic politics, and socio-demographic measures, with the general Asian American population as the target population.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, because perceptions of Asians necessitate a comparison of how people view Asians relative to how they see other racial/ethnic groups, particularly whites, blacks, and Hispanics, each model is estimated separately for each of the four racial/ethnic groups so that there are four models evaluating favorability toward each group and four models assessing closeness to each group. This allows an evaluation of the extent to which the coefficients for the independent variables vary across the groups.

## **Data and Measures**

The data for the favorability models are from the 2004 American National Election Study (ANES). This survey contains a national sample of Americans and is conducted by the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan. The 2004

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<sup>14</sup> Although it would be useful to examine Asian immigrants separately from the general Asian American population, some issues arising from the survey data used in this study make it difficult to evaluate Asians in this way. The survey data used in this project, including the 2004 ANES and the 2004 NPS, tend to have smaller samples of Asians, compared with the other distinct racial groups. Also, both surveys do not specifically ask Asian respondents (or any other racial group) immigrant-related questions.

ANES reports a sample of respondents from the four racial/ethnic groups, including 876 whites, 180 blacks, 81 Hispanics, and 28 Asians.<sup>15</sup> Data for the closeness models come from the 2004 National Politics Survey (NPS), which is spearheaded by the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research at the University of Michigan. This survey asked 3,339 adult Americans on the national level about individuals' political attitudes, beliefs, aspirations, and behaviors at the beginning of the 21st century, with the primary goal of advancing the study and knowledge of racial and ethnic involvement in politics. For the major racial/ethnic groups of interest in this analysis, the sample of respondents in the 2004 NPS contains 919 Whites, 756 Blacks, 757 Hispanics, and 503 Asians. The 2004 NPS uses a non-random sampling frame, so it does not account for differing selection probabilities in which different members of the population have different chances of being selected into the study. To compensate for these unequal probabilities of selection, the survey includes a “centered weight” variable for each NPS respondent that is a rescaled version of the population weight for each NPS respondent.<sup>16</sup> The centered weight for each respondent is equal to that respondent’s population weight \* 3339 / total sum of population weights. The centered weight values range from a minimum value of 0.0614 to a maximum value of 8.750. The mean of this centered weight is 1.0 with a standard deviation of 1.29. The centered weight variable is used to estimate all models of closeness.

### Dependent Variables

I analyze two dependent measures of affect-based perceptions of Asians, whites, blacks, and Hispanics. First, the favorability measure assesses how Americans feel about each group,

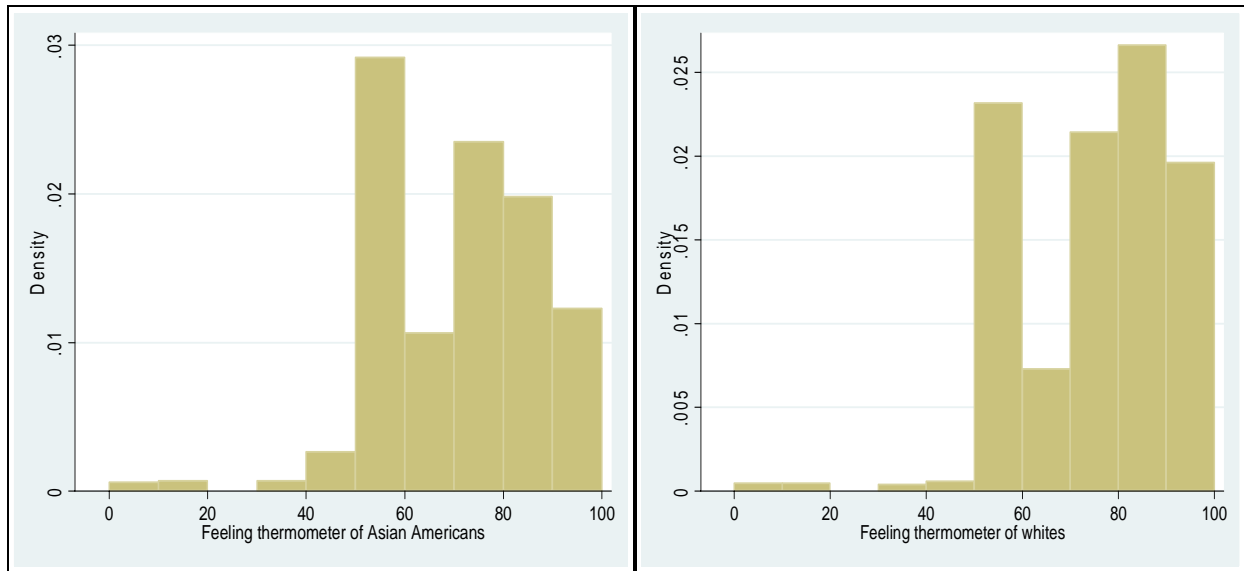
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<sup>15</sup> Although the subsamples of Hispanics and Asians in the 2004 ANES dataset are fairly small in comparison with their current respective U.S. population sizes, the 2004 ANES was used in this dissertation chiefly because it contains the necessary county FIPS code for the contextual data of the county-level population of each of the four groups in this study.

<sup>16</sup> The population weight for each NPS respondent is the product of their non-response weight and their post-stratification weight, divided by a constant such that the sum of the weights is equal to the number of individuals in the U.S. population (minus the specific ethnic groups excluded from the population). This total population size is 283,422,198.

i.e., whether they have positive, neutral, or negative feelings toward the group. Political scientists have often measured favorability toward groups using a feeling thermometer since its introduction in the 1964 American National Election Study (ANES). Feeling thermometers have been used in survey research as an accepted way to determine individual feelings in a range of settings (Wilcox et al., 1989; Bobo and Hutchings, 1996). Respondents use feeling thermometers to position attitude objects in an imaginary scale that ranges from 0 (cold/unfavorable) to 100 (warm/favorable), with a midpoint at 50 signifying neutral feelings (neither cold nor warm). For this study a feeling thermometer item is used to index general respondents' degree of affect toward Asians, whites, blacks, and Hispanics. Ordinary least squares-based (OLS) regression analysis is used to estimate the favorability models since OLS is a procedure appropriate for estimating effects on an interval-level dependent variable.

To describe the contours of the favorability measure of the four groups, I report all respondents' feeling thermometer rating of each group (Figure 4.1). Starting first with the thermometer of Asians in Figure 4.1(a), the histogram indicates that respondents are more likely to have warm feelings toward Asians, and the mean thermometer of Asians at 67.85 (with a standard deviation of 18.98) underscores this finding. Similar results are found for whites [Figure 4.1(b)], blacks [Figure 4.1(c)], and Hispanics [Figure 4.1(d)]. These descriptive statistics also show, however, that some groups have more favorable views than others. In comparison of the mean thermometer ratings of the four groups in Figure 4.1, respondents tend to have more positive views toward whites, followed by blacks, Hispanics, and Asians. The mean thermometer for whites is pretty high at 73.49 degrees, and the mean thermometer for blacks is a little lower at 72.26 degrees. Although Hispanics and Asians average almost similarly on the



**(a) Asian Americans**

N = 1025

Mean = 67.85, Standard Deviation = 18.98

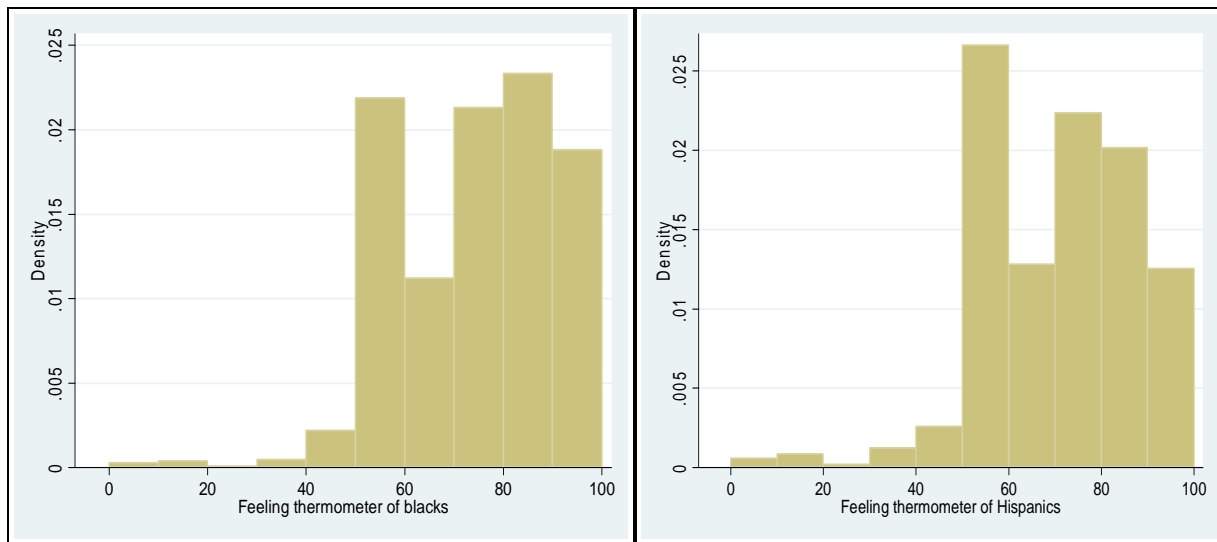
Minimum = 0, Maximum = 100

**(b) White Americans**

N = 1041

Mean = 73.49, Standard Deviation = 19.20

Minimum = 0, Maximum = 100



**(c) Black Americans**

N = 1042

Mean = 72.26, Standard Deviation = 19.13

Minimum = 0, Maximum = 100

**(d) Hispanic Americans**

N = 1037

Mean = 67.88, Standard Deviation = 19.27

Minimum = 0, Maximum = 100

**Figure 4.1 Feeling Thermometer Ratings of the Four Racial/Ethnic Groups**

Note: The figures show descriptive statistics of all respondents' feeling thermometer ratings of Asian Americans [(Figure 4.1(a)], white Americans [(Figure 4.1(b)], black Americans [(Figure 4.1(c)], and Hispanic Americans [(Figure 4.1(d)]. The feeling thermometer scale of each group ranges from 0 (cold/unfavorable) to 100 (warm/favorable), with a midpoint at 50 indicating neither cold nor warm.

Source: 2004 ANES.

thermometer at 67.88 and 67.85 degrees, respectively, Asians have the least favorable responses among the four groups.

The overall results in Figure 4.1 indicate that general Americans tend to view Asians somewhat less favorably than the other groups. Yet, respondents from different racial/ethnic background may differ in their views of Asian Americans, as well as of the other groups. Table 4.1 shows summary statistics of the feeling thermometer rating of each group by respondents who reported an Asian, white, black, or Hispanic origin. Turning first to the thermometer ratings of Asian Americans in Table 4.1, Asian respondents are unsurprisingly most likely to have favorable views of fellow Asians, with the mean thermometer of Asians of 75.26 degrees. Compared with that for Asian respondents, the mean thermometer of Asians drops two degrees for Hispanic respondents (mean of 73.02 degrees), about eight degrees for white respondents (mean of 67.64 degrees), and ten degrees for black respondents (mean of 65.23 degrees). In other words, compared with Asian respondents, white, black, and Hispanic respondents have a weaker likelihood of feeling warm toward Asians.

For the thermometer ratings of white Americans in Table 4.1, surprisingly, Hispanic respondents are more likely to have favorable views of whites (with the mean thermometer of whites of 74.23 degrees), compared with white respondents (with mean of 73.79 degrees). In contrast, black respondents (with mean of 72.66 degrees) and Asian respondents (with mean of 65.79 degrees) are less likely to have positive views of whites, compared with white respondents. For the thermometer ratings of black Americans in Table 4.1, black respondents are most likely to have warm feelings toward fellow blacks (with the pretty high mean thermometer of blacks at 87.04 degrees). Compared with black respondents, Hispanic, white, and Asian respondents are less likely to have favorable views of blacks, with the mean thermometer of blacks of 75.83,

69.24, and 67.63 degrees, respectively. For the thermometer ratings of Hispanic Americans in Table 4.1, Hispanic respondents are most likely to have favorable views of fellow Hispanics (with the high mean thermometer of Hispanics of 82.65 degrees). Black respondents (with mean of 68.84 degrees), white respondents (with mean of 66.61 degrees), and Asian respondents (with mean of 63.61 degrees) have a weaker likelihood to have warm feelings toward Hispanics, compared with Hispanic respondents.

**Table 4.1 Feeling Thermometer Ratings of Racial/Ethnic Groups by Respondents' Race**

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Minimum Value</b>	<b>Maximum Value</b>
<b>Ratings of Asian Americans:</b>					
Asian Respondents	19	75.26	17.68	50	100
White Respondents	756	67.64	19.24	0	100
Black Respondents	149	65.23	18.42	0	100
Hispanic Respondents	63	73.02	16.35	50	100
<b>Ratings of White Americans:</b>					
Asian Respondents	19	65.79	19.23	30	100
White Respondents	763	73.79	19.15	0	100
Black Respondents	154	72.66	20.04	0	100
Hispanic Respondents	65	74.23	18.31	40	100
<b>Ratings of Black Americans:</b>					
Asian Respondents	19	67.63	14.66	50	100
White Respondents	763	69.24	18.43	0	100
Black Respondents	154	87.04	15.45	30	100
Hispanic Respondents	66	75.83	18.74	15	100
<b>Ratings of Hispanic Americans:</b>					
Asian Respondents	18	63.61	14.02	50	85
White Respondents	763	66.61	19.27	0	100
Black Respondents	151	68.84	18.18	15	100
Hispanic Respondents	66	82.65	15.52	50	100

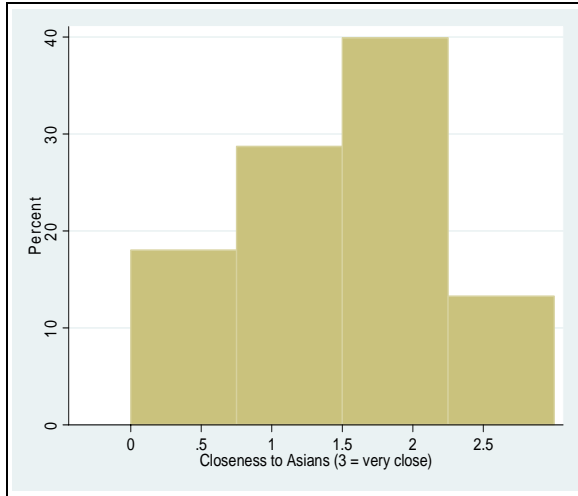
Source: 2004 ANES.

On the whole, the results of Figure 4.1 indicate that general Americans are more likely to have positive views of Asians, whites, blacks, and Hispanics than negative affect of these groups, although Asians are the least favored among the four groups. When respondents of different racial/ethnic origins are taken into account, the overall results in Table 4.1 also show that the respondents are more likely to have positive views of the four groups, but the results indicate that their thermometer ratings of each group tend to vary to some extent. Further, Table 4.1 reveals

some interesting differences in the respondents' favorability toward the four groups. For example, among the different groups of respondents, Asian respondents are least likely to have high favorability ratings of whites, blacks, and Hispanics. While Asian, black, and Hispanic respondents are likely to feel warmer toward their own respective groups, white respondents follow Hispanic respondents in their likelihood of having warmer feelings toward fellow whites.

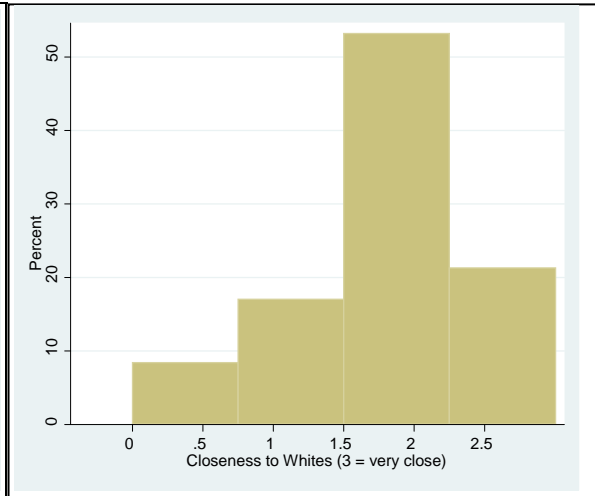
The second dependent measure is closeness. The closeness measure further probes how general Americans affectively perceive Asians, whites, blacks, and Hispanics. The measure is based on the following question: How close do you feel in your ideas, interests and feelings to (Asians/whites/blacks/Hispanics)? Respondents were asked indicate their closeness to each group on a 4-point scale, with 0 = not close at all, 1 = not too close, 2 = fairly close, and 3 = very close. This variable differs from the favorability measure in that by asking individuals to think about their closeness to a particular group, it uncovers not only the respondents' feelings and thoughts about their relationship to that group but also the salience of a particular group's identity and the degree to which the respondents feel attached to that identity. Because the dependent variable is ordinal and rank ordered, ordered logistic regression, a maximum likelihood-estimation (MLE) based procedure, is used to estimate the effects of the independent variables on closeness to each group.

To describe the contours of the closeness measure of the four groups, Figure 4.2 shows all respondents' degree of closeness to each group. Starting first with closeness to Asians in Figure 4.2(a), the histogram shows that respondents are more likely to feel fairly close to Asians. The median closeness to Asians at 2 indicates that respondents tend to fall in the fairly close category. The histograms of closeness to whites, blacks, and Hispanics in Figure 4.2(b), Figure 4.2(c), and Figure 4.2(d), respectively, also show that respondents are more likely to feel fairly



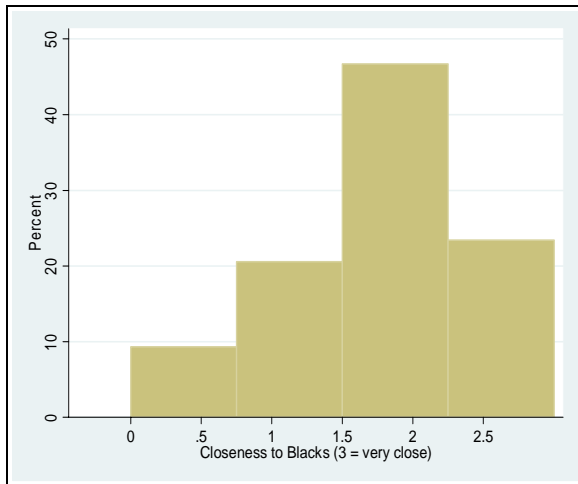
**(a) Asian Americans**

N = 3160  
 Median = 2  
 Mean = 1.48  
 Standard Deviation = 0.94  
 Minimum = 0, Maximum = 3



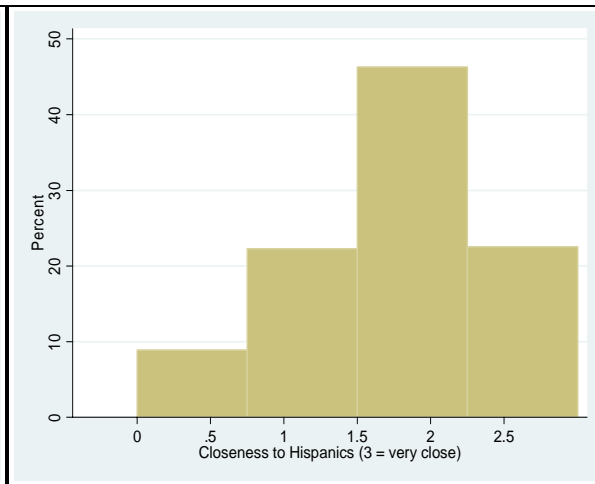
**(b) White Americans**

N = 3236  
 Median = 2  
 Mean = 1.87  
 Standard Deviation = 0.84  
 Minimum = 0, Maximum = 3



**(c) Black Americans**

N = 3236  
 Median = 2  
 Mean = 1.84  
 Standard Deviation = 0.89  
 Minimum = 0, Maximum = 3



**(d) Hispanic Americans**

N = 3211  
 Median = 2  
 Mean = 1.82  
 Standard Deviation = 0.88  
 Minimum = 0, Maximum = 3

**Figure 4.2 Closeness Measures of the Four Racial/Ethnic Groups**

Note: The figures show descriptive statistics of general respondents' degree of closeness to Asian Americans (Figure 4.2[a]), white Americans (Figure 4.2[b]), black Americans (Figure 4.2[c]), and Hispanic Americans (Figure 4.2[d]). The closeness scale comprises the values of 0 (not close at all), 1 (not too close), 2 (fairly close), and 3 (very close).

Source: 2004 NPS.



close to each of these groups. The median closeness of whites, blacks, and Hispanics is the same as that of Asians at a score of 2.

Since closeness to each of the four groups may differ across respondents of dissimilar racial backgrounds, I also report summary statistics in Table 4.2 of closeness to each group by respondents from each of the four racial/ethnic groups. Turning first to closeness to Asians in Table 4.2, Asian and white respondents are more likely to feel fairly close to Asians (both with the median score of 2), while black and Hispanic respondents tend to feel not too close to Asians (both with the median score of 1). Conversely, respondents in general have similar tendencies of closeness to whites. Asian, white, black, and Hispanic respondents are more likely to feel fairly close to whites (all with the median closeness score of 2).

Interestingly, the results of closeness to blacks and to Hispanics reveal some similarities. Black and Hispanic respondents are most likely to feel close to their own respective groups (both with the median score of 3), and they are least likely to feel close to Asians (both with the median score of 1). Compared with black respondents, white and Hispanic respondents (both with the median score of 2) are less likely to feel close to blacks. Compared with Hispanic respondents, white and black respondents (both with the median score of 2) have a weaker likelihood of feeling close to Hispanics.

In sum, the results of Figure 4.2 reveal that general respondents have a stronger likelihood of feeling close to Asians, whites, blacks, and Hispanics. These findings are compatible to the overall results of the thermometer ratings of the groups in Figure 4.1. Similar to the findings of the thermometer ratings in Table 4.1, the results of Table 4.2 indicate that respondents of different racial backgrounds tend to vary somewhat in their feelings of closeness to each of the four groups. Asian respondents are more likely to feel close to Asians and whites, while they are

less likely to feel close to blacks and Hispanics. Interestingly, white respondents are more likely to feel close to all four groups. Black and Hispanic respondents are more likely to feel close to their own respective groups and whites, while they are less likely to feel close to Asians.

**Table 4.2 Closeness to Racial/Ethnic Groups by Respondents' Race**

	N	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum Value	Maximum Value
Closeness to Asian Americans:						
Asian Respondents	495	2	2.23	0.72	0	3
White Respondents	824	2	1.53	0.85	0	3
Black Respondents	725	1	1.29	0.91	0	3
Hispanic Respondents	724	1	1.18	0.93	0	3
Closeness to White Americans:						
Asian Respondents	489	2	1.87	0.71	0	3
White Respondents	874	2	2.31	0.63	0	3
Black Respondents	736	2	1.58	0.89	0	3
Hispanic Respondents	738	2	1.77	0.87	0	3
Closeness to Black Americans:						
Asian Respondents	489	1	1.40	0.78	0	3
White Respondents	866	2	1.77	0.74	0	3
Black Respondents	742	3	2.40	0.73	0	3
Hispanic Respondents	740	2	1.48	0.93	0	3
Closeness to Hispanic Americans:						
Asian Respondents	484	1	1.42	0.76	0	3
White Respondents	857	2	1.61	0.80	0	3
Black Respondents	730	2	1.74	0.87	0	3
Hispanic Respondents	744	3	2.38	0.73	0	3

Source: 2004 NPS.

### Independent Variables

Several sets of independent variables are expected to have effects on the favorability and closeness dependent measures. They include socio-demographic attributes and measures of context, personal contact, self-interest, and symbolic politics. Although I expect that personal contact indicators are likely to influence the favorability dependent measure, data limitations in the 2004 ANES prevent measures of personal contact to be included in the favorability models. Measures of context (e.g., percent population of a given racial/ethnic group in a specified geographic unit) typically used in previous studies of intergroup relations are also not included in the closeness models.

Context Measure: Percent Group Population. Since most people in society tend not to live in isolation, their perceptions and attitudes of out-groups can be affected by the context of where they reside. There are two competing theories in regards to contextual determinants of racial attitudes. First, as Allport (1954) suggests, the contact perspective predicts that larger populations of minority out-groups can enhance the relationships between the out-groups and a majority group as members of the majority group rectify negative views of out-groups with personal or direct social experience. In contrast, the group threat hypothesis (which relates to the context perspective) predicts that larger populations of minority out-groups in a specified geographic area generate perceptions of economic and/or political threat and competition with the out-groups (Key, 1949; Blumer, 1958; Blalock, 1967; Bobo and Hutchings, 1996; Stein et al., 2000). A number of previous studies (e.g., Welch et al., 2001) find that racially or ethnically mixed residential areas are likely to foster interracial contact and alleviate interracial antagonism. The findings from previous research on these two competing theories generate a difficult puzzle, as Oliver and Wong (2003: 569) point out: “how can the proximity of out-groups, a necessary prerequisite for interracial contact, simultaneously promote interracial understanding yet also correspond with greater levels of interracial competition and animosity?” As a way to reconcile the research that supports both theories, Oliver and Wong (2003) suggest taking into account not only that group’s size but also the contextual unit being measured. They contend that racial threat is more likely to take place in comparatively expansive geographic areas with larger minority populations, such as counties and metropolitan areas, while racial contact is more likely to happen in smaller or more local geographic areas, such as towns and neighborhoods.

Only a contextual measure at the county level is included in the favorability models. The percent group population represents the proportion of the population of each of the four groups

(i.e., Asians, whites, blacks, or Hispanics) at the county-level in 2000. This context measure has been used in previous research to estimate contextual effects on racial attitudes (e.g., Stein et. al., 2000). Following the racial threat argument by Oliver and Wong (2003), percent group population is expected to be negatively related to favorability toward each group, particularly such out-groups as Asians, blacks, and Hispanics.

**Personal Contact Measures: Residential Neighborhood, Workplace, Place of Worship, and Friendship.** To estimate the effects of personal contact measures in the closeness model of each group, I use measures of personal contact in four different interactive venues, including residential neighborhood, workplace, place of worship, and friendship.<sup>17</sup> Respondents were asked whether there are Asians/whites/blacks/Hispanics in the neighborhood where they live, in the place where they work or last worked, in their place of worship, or in their group of friends. Responses to each of these questions are coded on a 3-point scale, such that 0 = none, 1 = mixed of different groups, and 2 = mostly (Asians/whites/blacks/Hispanics). Following the personal contact argument suggesting that interactive venues that provide the opportunities for intergroup contact can promote positive views of out-groups (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1971, 1998; Dixon and Rosenbaum, 2004), each of these measures of personal contact is predicted to be positively related to closeness to each group.

**Self-interest Measures: Employment Status, Family Income, Social Class, Job Competition, and Political Competition.** The self-interest perspective suggests that racial animosity is influenced by perceived higher levels of competition for scarce economic and/or

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<sup>17</sup> The residential neighborhood variable has been employed in previous research, such as Dixon and Rosenbaum (2004), as a personal contact measure to estimate models of racial attitudes, as well as the other specified venues for contact. In this study, it is used to determine the influence of neighbor contact on the closeness models. Similarly, the other measures of contact are used to determine the effects of workplace contact, place of worship contact, and friendship contact on closeness to each group.

political resources between different groups (Kluegel and Smith, 1986; Bobo and Hutchings, 1996; Sears et al., 1980). Hence, various measures of self-interest relating to economic/political attributes are used to estimate the models of favorability and closeness.

Because of data limitations, the models of favorability and closeness comprise different measures of self-interest. The favorability models include employment status, which is a dummy variable indexing whether respondents are employed or not; family income, which is measured on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (less than \$10,000) to 7 (\$90,000 and more); and social class, which represents levels of social class in the U.S. and is measured on a 5-point scale, ranging from 0 (lower class) to 4 (upper class). The closeness models include employment status and family income, but not social class, and also incorporate job competition and political competition. For the job competition measure, respondents from particular racial origins were asked to rate on a 4-point scale how strongly they disagree (which is at the lower end of the scale) or agree (which is at the higher end of the scale) with the following statement: More good jobs for (Asians/whites/blacks/Hispanics) mean fewer good jobs for people like me. For instance, only non-Asian respondents were asked how strongly they disagree/agree with the statement: More good jobs for Asian Americans mean fewer good jobs for people like me. Similarly for political competition, respondents from specific racial origins were asked to rate on a 4-point scale how strongly they disagree or agree with the following statement: The more influence (Asians/whites/blacks/Hispanics) have in politics, the less influence people like me will have in politics.

Since previous studies, such as Bobo and Hutchings (1996), suggest that members of a particular racial/ethnic group who are unemployed, have lower income levels, or are in lower levels of the U.S. social class are more likely to feel vulnerable to or threatened by competition

from members of other racial/ethnic groups, I hypothesize that employment status, family income, and social class are positively related to favorability toward and closeness to each group. Following the self-interest argument, I expect that job competition and political competition to negatively influence closeness to each group.

Measures of Symbolic Politics: American Identity, Political Ideology, and Partisanship. Several measures of symbolic politics used in previous research on racial attitudes are included in the models of favorability and closeness. American identity is an alternative measure to such common symbolic politics measures as political ideology and partisanship. Citrin et al. (1990) find that American identity is a stronger determinant of a group's (e.g., whites) perception of immigrant-dominated groups, such as Asians and Hispanics, than other measures of symbolic politics (such as partisanship and ideology). Moreover, Stein et al. (2000) find that American identity is negatively related to white affect toward Hispanics. In Citrin et al.'s (1990) study, respondents were asked to rate how important they felt each of the following six qualities for being truly American: 1) believing in God, 2) voting in elections, 3) speaking and writing English, 4) trying to get ahead on one's own efforts, 5) treating people of all races and backgrounds equally, and 6) defending America when it is criticized. Two of the original six items are used to operationalize the American identity measure used in the favorability models, including trying to get ahead on one's own efforts and treating people of all races and backgrounds equally.<sup>18</sup> Four of the original six items are used to operationalize the American identity measure used in the closeness models, including believing in God, voting in elections,

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<sup>18</sup> The 2004 ANES does not have specific questions about the six items relating to being truly American. However, the survey has related questions for two of the original six items, including trying to get ahead on one's own efforts [a 7-point self-placement scale ranging from 0 (need government help to succeed) to 6 (get ahead on one's own efforts)] and based on the question: Where would you place yourself on the job and good standard of living scale? and treating people of all races and backgrounds equally [a 5-point scale in which respondents were asked to rate how strongly they disagree or agree with the statement: Our society should do whatever is necessary to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.]. Although the reliability of the overall scale of these two items was less than ideal ( $\alpha = 0.33$ ), a factor analysis of the items resulted in a single factor.

speaking and writing English, and trying to get ahead on one's own efforts.<sup>19</sup> For each respective American identity measure, a principal component factor analysis of the items produced a single factor. American identity is predicted to be negatively related to favorability toward and closeness to particularly immigrant-dominated groups (i.e., Asians and Hispanics), while it is expected to have the opposite effect on favorability toward and closeness to whites and blacks.

The other measures of symbolic politics used in this study include political ideology (i.e., a 7-point liberal-conservative scale, ranging from 0 = extremely liberal to 6 = extremely conservative) and partisanship (i.e., a 7-point party identification scale, ranging from 0 = strong Democrat to 6 = strong Republican). The effects of political ideology and partisanship on favorability toward and closeness to each group are not clear in previous research on racial attitudes. For example, in their study of whites' attitudes toward Hispanics, Stein et al. (2000) find that political ideology has a negative influence on white affect toward Hispanics, while partisanship has no effect on the dependent variable. Hence, I expect that the effects of political ideology and partisanship on favorability toward and closeness to each group will vary and be evaluated using a non-directional test.

**Socio-Demographic Attributes: Education, Age, Gender, and Race.** A number of studies indicate that education is a key socialization agent promoting tolerance (Jackman, 1978). Other studies further suggest that as individuals become more educated they are more likely to actively participate in society and feel secure in that society, so their milieu does not frustrate or scare

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<sup>19</sup> The 2004 NPS have similar questions for three of the six items relating to being truly American, all of which are measured on a 4-point scale ranging from 0 (not important at all) to 3 (very important), including believing in God (based on the question: How important do you think each of the following is for being truly American: to be a Christian?), voting in elections (based on the question: How important do you think each of the following is for being truly American: to vote?), and speaking and writing English (based on the question: How important do you think each of the following is for being truly American: to be able to speak English?). The survey has a related question for the fourth item (i.e., trying to get ahead on one's own efforts) which asked respondents to rate on a 4-point scale how strongly they disagree or agree with the statement: America is a land of opportunity in which you only need to work hard to succeed. Although the reliability of the overall scale of these four items was less than ideal ( $\alpha = 0.52$ ), a factor analysis of the items produced a single factor.

them (Angell, 1962; Giles and Evans, 1989). I expect that education is positively related to both favorability toward and closeness to each group. Education is operationalized in the favorability models on a 7-point scale, ranging from 0 (less than or equal to grade school) to 6 (advanced degree), while the variable is operationalized in the closeness models on a 5-point scale, ranging from 0 (less than or equal to grade school) to 4 (advanced degree).

The effects of age (in years) and gender (1 = female, 0 = male) on the favorability and closeness dependent variables, however, are not clear, and so are evaluated case by case (using a non-directional test). In terms of race, dichotomous variables are included for Asian, black, white, and/or Hispanic respondents in the favorability and closeness models of the four groups, with the reference or omitted category to be the race corresponding to the favorability or closeness model of the respective group. For instance, for the favorability or closeness model of Asians, the reference category is Asian. I expect the effects of race on the favorability and closeness measures to be compatible with the findings in Tables 4.1 and 4.2, respectively.

## **Results**

### Predicting Patterns of Favorability toward the Four Groups

Table 4.3 presents the OLS regression results of the favorability model of each group. Starting with favorability toward Asian Americans, the findings reveal that symbolic politics (American identity) and socio-demographic (education and race [black]) measures have strong effects on the dependent variable (at the .05 or lower level of significance). As expected, Americans who have a weaker belief in the importance of the American identity and higher levels of education attainment are more likely to feel warm toward Asians, other conditions being equal. Compared with individuals of Asian ancestry, those of black racial origin have a weaker likelihood of possessing warm feelings toward Asians, all else equal. Relatively



**Table 4.3 OLS Regression Analysis of Favorability Models of the Four Racial/Ethnic Groups**

	Asians	Whites	Blacks	Hispanics
<b>Context</b>				
Percent Group Population (county-level)	0.016 (0.07)	0.012 (0.23)	-0.034 (-0.41)	0.149** (2.38)
<b>Self-interest</b>				
Employment Status	-1.683 (-1.05)	-1.094 (-0.66)	-2.966* (-1.89)	-1.737 (-1.08)
Family Income	0.134 (0.32)	0.311 (0.71)	0.357 (0.86)	0.542 (1.28)
Social Class	1.949* (1.89)	0.338 (0.32)	-1.491 (-0.49)	0.878 (0.85)
<b>Symbolic Politics</b>				
American Identity	-1.436** (-1.97)	-0.550 (-0.73)	-1.472** (-2.07)	-1.262* (-1.71)
Political Ideology	1.703* (1.73)	2.500** (2.48)	1.673* (1.75)	2.021** (2.05)
Partisanship	-0.589 (-0.68)	-0.386 (-0.43)	-1.046 (-1.23)	-0.138 (-0.16)
<b>Socio-demographic Attributes</b>				
Education	2.040*** (4.25)	-0.134 (-0.27)	1.508*** (3.20)	1.488*** (3.08)
Age	0.020 (0.45)	0.171*** (3.71)	-0.010 (-0.23)	-0.026 (-0.59)
Female	0.949 (0.71)	3.817*** (2.76)	3.911*** (2.99)	2.100 (1.56)
Asian	--	-4.927 (-1.05)	-17.880*** (-3.81)	-17.630*** (-3.50)
White	-4.459 (-1.58)	--	-13.516*** (-6.97)	-10.434*** (-4.48)
Black	-6.491** (-1.96)	-1.039 (-0.47)	--	-7.762*** (-2.72)
Hispanic	5.048 (1.34)	5.918** (2.01)	-5.121* (-1.68)	--
Intercept	59.176*** (13.47)	59.193*** (11.37)	76.863*** (20.61)	65.779*** (17.29)

**(Table 4.3 continued)**

N	813	820	821	820
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.05	0.04	0.10	0.06

Note: The *t*-scores are in parentheses.

Source: 2004 ANES.

\*\*\*  $p \leq .01$ ; \*\* $p \leq .05$ ; \*  $p \leq .10$

speaking, favorability toward Asians is not associated with the context measure (percent group population) and the white and Hispanic race categories. Neither being employed, nor having higher levels of family income, nor identifying more with the Republican Party, nor being older in age, nor being female may independently influence favorability toward Asians. However, in nine out of ten times, being in higher levels of the U.S. social class and being conservative in political ideology are associated with a higher likelihood of having positive views of Asians, holding other factors constant.

How do the findings of the favorability model for white Americans compared with those for Asian Americans? The results of the favorability model in the second column of Table 4.3 reveal that symbolic politics and socio-demographic indicators are also strong predictors of favorability toward whites. However, different measures of these concepts affect favorability toward whites, specifically the symbolic politics measure of political ideology and socio-demographic attributes of age, gender, and race (Hispanic). All things being equal, individuals who are more likely to be conservative in political ideology, older in age, and female are more likely to have positive views of whites. Compared with persons of white descent, individuals of Hispanic origin have a stronger likelihood of feeling warm toward whites. Race (Asian and black) and measures of context (percent group population) and self-interest (employment status, family income, and social class) have no effects on favorability toward whites. Neither having a stronger belief in the importance of the American identity, nor having higher levels of education

attainment, nor identifying more with the Republican Party is related to greater odds of having favorable views of whites.

In comparison to the findings for Asian Americans, the results in the third column of Table 4.3 for black Americans show that similar symbolic politics and socio-demographic indicators affect favorability toward blacks. Specifically, the findings show that the symbolic politics measure of American identity and socio-demographic attributes of education, race (Asian and white), and also gender are strong determinants of favorability toward blacks. Unexpectedly, Americans who have a weaker belief in the importance of the American identity are likely to feel warmer toward blacks, holding other factors constant. As expected, having more education is associated with greater odds of having favorable views of blacks. Being female is related to a stronger likelihood of possessing warm feelings toward blacks. Compared with individuals of black racial descent, those of Asian and white origins have a weaker likelihood of possessing positive views of blacks. Employment status, political ideology, and Hispanic origin are also significantly related to favorability toward blacks, but at a less stringent .10 level of significance. In nine out of ten instances, being conservative in political ideology has a higher likelihood, while being employed has a weaker likelihood, of having favorable views of blacks, other conditions being equal. In nine times out of ten, compared with individuals of black racial descent, those of Hispanic origin are less likely to feel warm toward blacks, all else equal. Relatively speaking, favorability toward blacks is not associated with the context measure (percent group population), two of the self-interest measures (family income and social class), partisanship, and age.

Compared to the results of favorability toward Asian Americans, the findings of favorability toward Hispanic Americans in the last column of Table 4.3 reveal that similar socio-

demographic indicators and other different measures strongly influence favorability toward the group. Specifically, context (percent group population), symbolic politics (political ideology), and socio-demographic [education and race (Asian, white, and black)] measures are strong predictors of the dependent variable. Unexpectedly, individuals who live in counties with larger populations of Hispanics are more likely to feel warm toward Hispanics, all else equal. Being conservative in political ideology and, as predicted, having more education are associated with greater odds of having favorable views of Hispanics, other conditions being equal. Compared with individuals of Hispanic ancestry, those of Asian, white, and black racial origins have a weaker likelihood of possessing positive views of Hispanics. The self-interest measures (employment status, family income, and social class), partisanship, age, and gender (female) have no effects on favorability toward Hispanics. However, nine times out of ten, having a weaker belief in the importance of the American identity is related to a higher likelihood of feeling warm toward Hispanics, other conditions being equal.

The overall findings in Table 4.3 indicate that symbolic politics and socio-demographic measures are strong determinants of favorability toward Asians and the other groups. Yet, the measures of these concepts vary in their effects on the dependent variable for each group. For Asian Americans, only American identity, education, and race (black) are significantly related to favorability toward this group, and the direction of the coefficient of each independent variable is as predicted. For white Americans, political ideology, age, gender, and race (Hispanic) alone are significantly and positively associated with favorability toward the group. For black Americans, only American identity, education, gender, and race (Asian and white) have a high likelihood of influencing warm feelings toward the group. For Hispanic Americans, political ideology,

education, and race (Asian, white, and black) alone are significantly linked to favorability toward this group.

Moreover, for Asian, black, and Hispanic groups alone, education has a strong and positive influence on the favorability measure of the respective group. In general, race has a strong effect on favorability toward each of the four groups, particularly Hispanics and blacks, and the findings for each group are consistent with the respective aggregate-level results in Table 4.1. For example, regarding the feeling thermometer ratings of Asians in Table 4.1, black respondents are found to have a weaker likelihood of possessing warm feelings toward Asians, compared with Asian respondents. This finding is confirmed with the significant and negative coefficient of race (black) in the multivariate result in Table 4.3 for favorability toward Asians.

Interestingly, the context measure (percent group population) is significantly related to favorability toward only Hispanics, but in the unexpected direction. The positive direction of this coefficient suggests that larger populations of an out-group, such as Hispanics, in comparatively expansive geographic units, such as counties, can promote positive affect toward the out-group. This finding supports the contact argument rather than the group threat argument. Measures of self-interest (employment status, family income, and social class), in general, have little to no effects on favorability toward Asians and the other groups.

#### Predicting Patterns of Closeness to the Four Groups

Table 4.4 reports the ordered logistic regression results of the closeness models of Asian, white, black, and Hispanic Americans. Turning first to closeness to Asian Americans in the first column of Table 4.4, the results indicate that personal contact (workplace and friendship), self-interest (job competition), symbolic politics (American identity and partisanship), and socio-demographic (education, gender) measures have strong effects on closeness to the group (at the

**Table 4.4 Ordered Logistic Regression Analysis of Closeness Models of the Four Racial/Ethnic Groups**

	Asians	Whites	Blacks	Hispanics
<b>Personal Contact</b>				
Residential Neighborhood	0.072 (0.41)	0.133 (1.02)	0.018 (0.13)	0.222 (1.59)
Workplace	0.432** (2.34)	0.023 (0.24)	0.057 (0.39)	0.250 (1.59)
Place of Worship	0.089 (0.54)	0.026 (0.22)	0.501** (2.51)	0.376** (2.00)
Friendship	0.642*** (3.32)	0.454*** (3.28)	0.828*** (5.23)	0.839*** (3.77)
<b>Self-interest</b>				
Job Competition	-0.347*** (-3.55)	-0.146** (-2.02)	-0.272** (-2.44)	-0.214* (-1.88)
Political Competition	-0.098 (-1.07)	-0.169** (-2.27)	-0.151 (-1.59)	-0.343*** (-2.93)
Employment Status	-0.110 (-0.61)	0.214 (1.46)	-0.151 (-0.79)	0.042 (0.20)
Family Income	-0.076 (-1.51)	0.015 (0.36)	-0.056 (-0.99)	-0.126** (-2.04)
<b>Symbolic Politics</b>				
American Identity	-0.260*** (-2.82)	0.077 (0.96)	-0.243** (-2.48)	-0.264*** (-2.80)
Political Ideology	0.040 (0.48)	0.030 (0.40)	-0.106 (-1.11)	0.029 (0.30)
Partisanship	-0.196** (-1.99)	0.014 (0.14)	-0.294*** (-2.60)	-0.257** (-2.19)
<b>Socio-demographic Attributes</b>				
Education	0.182** (2.43)	-0.052 (-0.86)	0.017 (0.20)	0.141* (1.68)
Age	0.009 (1.64)	0.009* (1.82)	0.014** (2.35)	0.013** (2.10)
Female	-0.423*** (-2.96)	-0.240* (-1.72)	-0.039 (-0.23)	-0.339** (-2.04)
Asian	--	0.176 (0.63)	-0.726* (-1.75)	-1.037*** (-3.07)

(Table 4.4 continued)

White	0.084 (0.34)	--	-0.308 (-0.74)	-1.080*** (-3.19)
Black	0.103 (0.44)	-0.070 (-0.29)	--	-0.052 (-0.17)
Hispanic	-2.508 (-1.09)	0.059 (0.23)	-0.578 (-1.45)	--
Constant1	-1.887	-1.862	-2.910	-3.374
Constant2	-0.179	-0.628	-1.149	-1.524
Constant3	2.631	2.072	1.985	1.527
<hr/>				
N	1601	1339	1367	1359
LR $\chi^2$	116.04	56.82	158.99	129.94
Prob ( $\chi^2$ )	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.07	0.03	0.08	0.10

Note: The z-scores are in parentheses.  
Source: 2004 NPS.

\*\*\*  $p \leq .01$ ; \*\* $p \leq .05$ ; \*  $p \leq .10$

.05 or lower level of significance). As predicted, having more Asians in one's workplace and as friends, feeling less threatened by job competition with Asians, having a weaker belief in the importance of the American identity, and having more education are associated with greater odds of feeling close to Asians in terms of ideas, interests and feelings, other conditions being equal. Individuals who identify more with the Democratic Party and are male are more likely to feel close to Asians, all else equal. Relatively speaking, closeness to Asians is not associated with two of the personal contact measures (residential neighborhood and place of worship), three of the self-interest measures (political competition, employment status, family income), political ideology, age, and race (white, black, and Hispanic).

Compared with the results of closeness to Asian Americans, the findings for closeness to white Americans in the second column of Table 4.4 reveal that only measures of personal contact (friendship) and self-interest (job competition and political competition) are strong predictors of

closeness to the group. As expected, having more whites as friends and feeling less threatened by job and political competitions with whites are significantly related to feeling closer to whites, controlling for all other variables. Relatively speaking, closeness to whites has no effects on three of the personal contact measures (residential neighborhood, workplace, and place of worship), two of the self-interest measures (employment status and family income), all measures of symbolic politics (American identity, political ideology, and partisanship), education, and race (white, black, and Hispanic). However, nine times out of ten, being older in age and male is associated with a higher likelihood of feeling close to whites, holding other factors constant.

Compared with the findings of the closeness model for Asians, the results of the closeness model for black Americans in the third column of Table 4.4 indicate that similar groups of measures have strong effects on the dependent variable. Specifically, personal contact (place of worship and friendship), self-interest (job competition), symbolic politics (American identity and partisanship), and socio-demographic (age) measures strongly influence closeness to blacks. As predicted, having more blacks in one's place of worship and as friends and feeling less threatened by job competition with blacks significantly affect feeling closer to blacks, controlling for all other variables. Unexpectedly, having a weaker belief in the importance of the American identity is associated with a greater likelihood of closeness to blacks, all else equal. Individuals who identify more with the Democratic Party and are older in age are more likely to feel close to blacks, when other conditions are controlled. Closeness to blacks is not associated with two of the personal contact measures (residential neighborhood and workplace), three of the self-interest measures (political competition, employment status, and family income), political ideology, education, and gender (female). However, in nine out of ten instances, compared with



individuals of black ancestry, those of Asian origin have a weaker likelihood of closeness to blacks, all else equal.

In comparison to the results of closeness to Asians, the results of closeness to Hispanic Americans in the last column of Table 4.4 also show that similar groups of measures strongly influence closeness to the group. In particular, personal contact (place of worship and friendship), self-interest (political competition and family income), symbolic politics (American identity and partisanship), and socio-demographic (age, gender, and Asian and white origins) measures are strong predictors of closeness to Hispanics. As expected, having more Hispanics in one's place of worship and as friends, feeling less threatened by political competition with Hispanics, and having a weaker belief in the importance of the American identity are significantly related to a higher likelihood of feeling close to Hispanics, holding all other variables constant. Unexpectedly, individuals with lower levels of family income are more likely to feel close to Hispanics, other conditions being equal. Persons who associate more with the Democratic Party, are older in age, and are male are more likely to feel close to Hispanics, all else equal. Compared with individuals of Hispanic ancestry, those of Asian and white origins have a weaker likelihood of closeness to Hispanics. Relatively speaking, two of the personal contact measures (residential neighborhood and workplace), employment status, and political ideology are not associated with closeness to Hispanics. However, nine out of ten instances, feeling less threatened by job competition with Hispanics and having more education are related to having a stronger likelihood of feeling closer to Hispanics, other conditions being equal.

In sum, the findings in Table 4.4 indicate that similar sets of measures, including personal contact, self-interest, symbolic politics, and socio-demographic attributes, have strong effects on closeness to Asians, blacks, and Hispanics, while only personal contact and self-interest

measures are strong determinants of closeness to whites. The indicators of each concept, however, differ in their influence on closeness to each group. Personal contact measures of workplace and friendship, self-interest measure of job competition, symbolic politics measures of American identity and partisanship, and socio-demographic attributes of education and gender are strongly related to closeness to Asians. Closeness to blacks is significantly influenced by personal contact measures of place of worship and friendship, self-interest measure of job competition, symbolic politics measures of American identity and partisanship, and socio-demographic attribute of age. Closeness to Hispanics is strongly affected by personal contact measures of place of worship and friendship, self-interest measures of political competition and family income, symbolic politics measures of American identity and partisanship, and socio-demographic attributes of age, gender, and race (Asian and white). For whites, only personal contact measure of friendship and self-interest measures of job and political competitions are strongly associated with closeness to this group.

In general, friendship contact is the most consistently influential factor of the closeness measure for all groups. Furthermore, for all groups, the closeness dependent variable is significantly and negatively affected by job competition (although at a less stringent .10 level of significance for closeness to Hispanics). For only Asians, blacks, and Hispanics, symbolic politics measures of American identity and partisanship are strong determinants of the respective closeness measure. Workplace contact is a significant predictor of closeness to only Asians. Race (specifically Asian and white) has a strong effect on the closeness to Hispanics alone.

Compared with the impact of the race categories on the favorability models of the four groups in Table 4.3, the race categories have significant effects on closeness to only Hispanics and blacks, although the effect of race (Asian) is weak on closeness to blacks. The findings for

the respective closeness models in terms of the race categories are compatible to the findings in Table 4.2. Surprisingly, neighbor contact, employment status, and political ideology have no effects on closeness to any of the four groups.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter is to conduct a systematic analysis of affect-based perceptions of Asian Americans in comparison with those of white, black, and Hispanic Americans. How do Americans view Asians compared with the other major groups? Do Americans have more or less favorable views of Asians? Do Americans feel close to Asians? Studying affect-based perceptions of Asians is important to gain an appreciation of the socioeconomic and political factors that determine the positive or negative affect which Americans have for fellow Asian Americans, in order to better understand the dynamics of racial prejudice and to identify the kinds of individuals more likely to subscribe to such beliefs about or views of Asians. Moreover, some previous studies have made a strong case of the importance of affect, which is argued to be first obtained with little cognitive appraisal, in the formation of preferences for groups (Edwards, 1990; Edwards and von Hippel, 1995).

In this chapter, two measures of affect-based perceptions of Asians, whites, blacks, and Hispanics are analyzed, including favorability toward and closeness to each group. At the aggregate level, general Americans are found more likely to possess feelings of both warmth toward and closeness to Asians and also the other groups. When respondents of diverse racial/ethnic origins are considered, the overall picture looks somewhat different. Although these respondents in general are more likely to have positive views of the groups (in terms of favorability and closeness), they tend to vary in some degree in their favorability toward and closeness to each group. For example, compared with Asian respondents, Hispanic respondents

have a weaker likelihood of feeling warm toward Asians, followed by white respondents and lastly black respondents. Compared with Asian respondents, white respondents are more likely to feel fairly close to Asians while black and Hispanic respondents tend to feel not too close to Asians. These findings indicate that feelings of warmth and closeness are not necessarily consistent between different groups. For instance, among the non-Asian groups of respondents, white respondents' tendency of having more favorable views of Asians falls between that of black and Hispanic respondents. Conversely, among the non-Asian groups of respondents, white respondents' likelihood of being closer to Asians is stronger than that of black and Hispanic respondents. A reason for this discrepancy might be that whites believe they have more things in common with Asians, such as socioeconomic status, than with blacks and Hispanics and thus are likely to feel closer to Asians, but this belief does not necessarily mean whites are likely to feel warmer toward Asians. These findings suggest that, at the aggregate level, affect-based perceptions of groups are fairly complicated and depend on the racial background of who is subscribing to the perception as well as on the racial background of who is being perceived.

The multivariate analyses of the favorability and closeness models of Asian Americans reveal mixed results relative to the key explanatory measures of self-interest, symbolic politics, context, and/or personal contact. The processes shaping both favorability toward and closeness to Asians are in several ways different from those affecting both favorability toward and closeness to the other groups, especially in terms of symbolic politics. For example, as expected, having a weaker belief in the importance of the American identity is strongly related to greater feelings of both warmth toward and closeness to Asian Americans. American identity is also significantly and, as predicted, negatively associated with both models of Hispanic Americans; however, the effects of these measures on the dependent variables of Hispanics are not

consistently strong at the .05 or lower level of significance, compared with those of Asians. Having a weaker belief in the importance of the American identity is associated as well with a stronger likelihood of feeling warm toward and close to black Americans, but the effects of American identity on both the dependent variables of blacks are not in the hypothesized direction.

There are quite a few key measures that significantly affect either of the dependent variables of Asians that also significantly influence either of those of blacks, Hispanics, and/or whites. For instance, friendship contact has the strongest and most consistent influence on closeness to Asians, whites, blacks, and Hispanics at the .01 level of significance. In fact, among the measures of personal contact in Table 4.4, friendship contact is the strongest determinant of closeness to all four groups. The self-interest measure of job competition is also significantly related to closeness to Asians and the other groups, but the effect of job competition is strongest on the dependent variable of Asians ( $b = -0.347; p \leq .01$ ) and is weak on that of Hispanics ( $p \leq .10$ ). The symbolic politics measure of political ideology is significantly linked to favorability toward all four groups, but the effect is not strong on favorability toward Asians and also blacks. The symbolic politics measures of American identity and partisanship have strong effects on closeness to only Asians, blacks, and Hispanics. There are also some key factors that influence evaluations of Asians and not those of any of the other groups. For example, workplace contact and the self-interest measure of social class have significant effects on closeness to only Asians, although the effect of social class on the dependent variable is weak ( $p \leq .10$ ).

Other key measures are found to have no effects on favorability toward or closeness to Asians, but have significant influence on either of the models of whites, blacks, and/or Hispanics. In particular, the context measure of percent group population has null effects on

favorability toward Asians (and also whites and blacks), while it has a strong but unexpectedly negative influence on favorability toward Hispanics. These findings do not support the argument of the group threat hypothesis that the group size of a minority population in larger environments matters in increasing hostility toward the out-group. The null contextual effects on the dependent variable of Asians suggest as well that context is less likely to be an important factor in understanding Americans' favorability toward Asians, compared with other key factors, such as the symbolic politics measure of American identity. The self-interest measures also have little to no effects on favorability toward Asians, suggesting that perceived economic threats may not necessarily account for a racial/ethnic group's unfavorable or favorable perceptions of another racial/ethnic group.

In sum, the overall results of favorability toward and closeness to Asian Americans (and also the other groups) indicate that both dependent measures have complicated predictors. The findings confirm some aspects of the personal contact, self-interest, and symbolic politics hypotheses, as well as those of the socio-demographic hypotheses, discussed in past research in the respective models of Asian Americans. The findings also call into question the validity of some key explanatory factors that have been explored in previous studies of racial attitudes, particularly relative to context. Affect-based perceptions of Asians, hence, involve social-psychological processes that cannot be reduced to a single cause.

Ideally, having the full sets of personal contact, self-interest, symbolic politics, and context measures in both the favorability and closeness models of Asians would provide a better understanding of the dynamics of intergroup relations, but problems, such as data limitations, necessitate leaving out certain measures in both models. In the next chapter, I analyze a different component of attitudes toward Asian Americans (i.e., cognitive-based perceptions) that takes

into account the effects of context, personal contact, self-interest, and symbolic politics on stereotypes about Asian Americans.

## **CHAPTER 5: COGNITION-BASED PERCEPTIONS OF ASIAN AMERICANS**

Karl Marx ([1852] 1913) asserted that while individuals make their own history, they do not do so in a world of their own making. This view is especially relevant for Asian Americans who have had to cope with a number of stereotypes, but, unlike groups such as black Americans, Asians seem to be perceived in both flattering and unflattering ways. As a “model minority” Asians in general are viewed as successful socioeconomically relative largely to blacks and Hispanics (see Table 2.10), although the group averages that are assessed on the foundation of the broad “Asian” category disguise the considerable differences among the Asian ethnic groups. In terms of such measures of socioeconomic success as education, income, and home ownership, Asians seem to be quickly assimilating into the larger American society and advancing in such a way that typecasts them with the model minority image (see also Alba and Nee, 2003; Chong and Kim, 2006). In contrast, a prevalent stereotype that persists to accentuate the racial minority status of Asian Americans is that of members of a perpetually foreign race who exhibit interest more in their own Asian countries of origin than in American society and politics (Lien et al., 2004; Lee, 1999). Scholars, such as Lee (1998), suggest that the physical characteristics (e.g., black hair and almond eyes) as well as the many ethnic origins of Asians have served to distinguish them as a racial minority in the United States. Possible bases of the continued predominance of this stereotype, however, are not well substantiated as the findings in Chapter 2 reveal. In terms of such measures as English proficiency and U.S. citizenship and interracial marriage, the results of Table 2.8 and Figures 2.4 and 2.5, respectively, do not altogether support the perception of Asian Americans as culturally, politically, and socially inadapted to mainstream America.



Yet, it is not clear whether Americans typically view Asians through such stereotypical lenses. Stereotypes can be thought of as the traits that are mentally linked with a social category label stored in long-term memory in cognitive representations, such that as people learn about different groups, stereotypes become a part of their memory (Stangor, 2000). Are Americans more likely to evaluate Asians favorably or unfavorably across specific attributes of group stereotypes (e.g., “hardworking,” “intelligent”)? Does Americans’ general stereotyping of Asians tend to be positive or negative? How do the evaluations of Asians compare to those of other racial and ethnic groups? To seek answers to these questions, I conduct a systematic examination of cognition-based perceptions of Asians by focusing on the content and antecedents of such beliefs.<sup>20</sup>

The purpose in examining the content of Americans’ images of Asians is to ascertain the extent to which general Americans (i.e., Asians, whites, blacks, and Hispanics) subscribe to the perceptions of Asians along different trait dimensions of group stereotypes or beliefs about personal attributes of groups often included in national surveys (e.g., American National Election Study), such as the lazy-hardworking, unintelligent-intelligent, and untrustworthy-trustworthy dimensions. In this study such trait dimensions are used as dependent variables and also as the composition of general group stereotype dependent measures. As Massey et al. (2003) indicate, stereotypical attitudes reflect individual predilections and beliefs about the “proper” status hierarchy among various groups in U.S. society. Thus, the images that Americans hold of Asians are more likely to affect their status in mainstream society. For instance, if Americans tend to view Asians as hardworking and intelligent, their status as a respected, competent model minority is more likely to be confirmed. If Americans tend to perceive Asians as untrustworthy,

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<sup>20</sup> Following the work of Peffley and Hurwitz (1998) on racial stereotyping of blacks, I use similar concepts of content and antecedents in the analysis of racial stereotyping of Asians.

their status as an alien presence or perpetual foreigners in America is more likely to be supported.

More importantly, the second goal is to gain an insight into the social, economic, and political antecedents of current racial stereotypes of Asians in order to identify the kinds of individuals who are likely to have such beliefs about Asians and to better comprehend the dynamics of racial discrimination. These antecedents constitute the independent measures in this study. Allport (1954) cautions against seeking the sources of stereotyping and prejudice in a “single sovereign explanation”; hence, I suggest that Asian stereotyping is influenced by a range of correlates, such as indicators of the context, personal contact, self-interest, and symbolic politics theoretical perspectives discussed in Chapter 3, socio-demographic indicators, and an indicator of general view of human nature. For example, are certain segments of society, such as among individuals who have more education or those who are older in age, more likely to view Asians as intelligent, hardworking, and/or trustworthy? Do people who live in areas with high proportions of Asians or who have personal contact with Asians more likely to have positive (or negative) evaluations of Asians? Are Americans’ images of Asians influenced by economic self-interest in terms of such measures as employment status and social class? To what extent do Americans’ stereotyping of Asians is shaped by such political orientations as partisanship, ideology, and sense of American identity? Do individuals who have a positive view of human nature more likely to subscribe to positive evaluations of Asians?

### **Cognition-Based Responses in Groups**

Researchers in social psychology have long speculated that cognition can contribute to the structure of attitudes, in conjunction with or separate from affect (McGuire, 1969; Fabrigar and Petty, 1999; Edwards, 1990; Edwards and von Hippel, 1995; Katz and Stotland, 1959; Breckler,

1984; Zajonc and Markus, 1982). The *cognition* term has been commonly used to express beliefs, judgments, or thoughts about positive and/or negative attributes of an attitude object (McGuire, 1969; Fabrigar and Petty, 1999; Edwards and von Hippel, 1995; Coren et al., 1999). In contrast to the affect-based response that is an emotional response expressing an individual's degree of preference for an object, the cognition-based response is a cognitive evaluation of the object that constitutes an individual's beliefs about the object. Beliefs, judgments, knowledge structures, perceptual responses, and thoughts constitute the cognitive component (Breckler, 1984; Edwards, 1990). Allport (1935) indicates that a core assumption of the attitude concept is that, like the affect component which was explored in the previous chapter, the cognition component varies on a common evaluative continuum, such that cognitions or thoughts may vary from unfavorable to favorable, such as negative stereotyping versus positive stereotyping of a racial/ethnic group (see also Breckler, 1984).

In studies of intergroup relations, cognition-based attitudes have been examined to a large extent in terms of stereotypes and prejudice. Stereotypes and prejudice have long engaged the interest of researchers in social psychology, sociology, and political science/political psychology. They are integrally linked to many key topics in these disciplines, such as attitudes, group behavior, conformity, and aggression. As noted in the previous chapter, the difference between stereotypes and prejudice are somewhat hazy because researchers tend to include notions of stereotypes in descriptions of prejudice. Notably, Allport ([1954] 1979: 9) defines prejudice as an antipathy rooted in faulty and inflexible generalizations of a particular group in society. Blumer (1958: 4) further describes prejudice as a cultural product comprised of feelings that an out-group is different, foreign, and inferior compared with one's own racial/ethnic group.

Allport ([1954] 1979: 204) contends that unflattering stereotypes “rationalize” prejudice against out-groups by acclimatizing “to the prevailing temper of prejudice or the needs of the situation.”

Consistent with Allport (1954), researchers tend to view only negative or unflattering stereotypes as signifying prejudice, where prejudice is a uniform aversion or contempt toward out-groups across an assortment of dimensions (see also Fiske et al., 2002). Stereotypes are typically maintained “not by completely ignoring reality or making something up out of whole cloth, but by forms of selective perception that fixate on partial truths in such a way that the fuller truth is obscured” (Wachtel, 1999: 12). For instance, although the contemporary Asian population is predominantly immigrant, many Asian families have been U.S. citizens for a number of generations; yet, the image of Asians as an alien presence in America still persists (Lee, 1999; Lee, 1998; Lien et. al, 2004). Stereotypes and prejudice, moreover, are the result of social categorization (Stangor, 2000; Milner, 1975). Stangor (2000) indicates that social categorization transpires when, rather than thinking about or viewing another person as a unique individual, people think of the person as a member of a particular group on the basis of, for example, physical traits (e.g., skin color, gender, or age). In other words, stereotypes commonly involve the application of group perceptions to define individuals. For example, typecast as a model minority, an Asian individual is likely assumed to be more successful socioeconomically, say in terms of education, than members of other racial/ethnic groups, even though the person may be more poorly educated than the members of the other groups.

A number of researchers have explored stereotypes and prejudice toward racial/ethnic and other types of out-groups in American society, such as black Americans (Schuman et al., 1985; Sigelman and Welch, 1991; Peffley and Hurwitz, 1998; Gaertner and Dovidio, 1986; Dixon, 2001; McClain et al., 2006), Hispanic Americans (Dixon and Rosenbaum, 2004), multiracial

groups (Oliver and Wong, 2003), women (Eagly and Mladinic, 1989; Deaux and Major, 1987), homosexuals (Herek, 1987), and the elderly (Brewer et al., 1981). Few studies have focused specifically and systematically on Asian Americans; a small number of past studies that concentrated on Asians (e.g., Lin et al., 2005) generally base their analyses on non-random samples. Part of the interest in studying stereotypes and prejudice is because of its considerable practical importance. Many American cities have increasingly become racially and ethnically diverse such that individuals from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds are coming into more contact with each other (Oliver and Wong, 2003; Jackson et al., 1994). These augmented contacts between people of different racial/ethnic groups increase the opportunities for the expression of prejudice and stereotypes, and these contacts may, in some cases, be accompanied by overt hostility and conflict between and among races, cultures, and ethnic groups (Stangor, 2000). Conversely, supporters of the contact theory (e.g., Allport, 1954) argue that increased contact between members of different racial/ethnic groups can break down stereotypes with personal or direct social experience (see also Oliver and Wong, 2003). Hence, researchers are interested in studying prejudice and stereotyping of groups because these beliefs can have negative (or positive) consequences for the individuals who are targets of prejudice and stereotypes and for the larger American society (Crocker and Major, 1989; Jones, 1996; Stangor, 2000).

Understanding group stereotypes also attends to theoretical questions within political science. One question concerns the nature and scope of prejudice in the U.S. The literature on prejudice concentrates primarily on racial groups, especially black Americans. Attitudes toward blacks have changed dramatically over the past several decades, with traditional forms of racism of the post-Civil War era—those that accentuated the inferiority of blacks, such as an inherent

lack of intelligence—becoming increasingly uncommon, if we can rely on self-reported attitudes or other observations of behavior (Schuman et al., 1985; Sigelman and Welch, 1991; Peffley and Hurwitz, 1998; Sides and Gross, 2009). These attitude changes have kindled a debate about how much and what kind of prejudice persists in the contemporary American society. I suggest that a more complete understanding of modern prejudice necessitates focusing on all groups that are salient to politics, including Asian Americans.

A second question concerns the multi-dimensionality of attitudes toward groups. The pattern of group stereotypes is rarely neutral, as Lippmann (1922), who first argued that stereotyping helps individuals make sense of other groups, acknowledged, since the neutral position is likely to indicate no stereotype. Evaluations of groups tend not to be uniformly negative or positive across all traits and all groups (Peffley and Hurwitz, 1998; Sides and Gross, 2009; Lin et al., 2005). In other words, individuals may value and de-value various groups for different reasons (Fiske et al., 2002; Sides and Gross, 2009). Positive or flattering stereotypes have been directed predominantly at in-groups (e.g., whites), whereas negative or unflattering generalizations have typically targeted out-groups (Fiske et al., 2002; Sides and Gross, 2009). Fiske et al. (2002: 878) note that positive stereotypes may also be directed at out-groups, but when they do the stereotypes have presumably suggested a “compunction stemming from modern egalitarian ideals.” The propensity to stereotype is widely known (Allport, 1954; Fiske, 1998); however, less is known about the content of stereotypes and why the content differs across the groups being stereotyped and over time. For instance, although the findings tend to be based on experimental samples of college students’ evaluations of Asian Americans, Asians are viewed as highly competent, hardworking, and ambitious, and, at the same time, not sociable or friendly (Fiske et al., 2002; Lin et al., 2005; Hurh and Kim, 1989; Kitano and Sue, 1973; Sue and

Kitano, 1973). Conversely, black Americans are frequently perceived as lazy or aggressive (Peffley and Hurwitz, 1998; Sniderman and Piazza, 1993). These dimensions of evaluations can have wide-ranging impacts on political and policy attitudes toward out-groups. For instance, the image of Asians as a competent, hard-working model minority that is seemingly not hampered by social inequities and not in need of government aid may undermine prospects for Asians to be included in multiracial coalitions with other racial/ethnic minority groups (Lien et al., 2004: 8). In their study of whites' stereotypes of blacks, Peffley and Hurwitz (1998) indicate that negative stereotypes of blacks as "lazy" or "violent" are an important contribution to whites' (inaccurate) tendency to view the typical welfare recipient and criminal as being black.

Finally, researchers are also interested in studying stereotypes and prejudice for a more basic reason—understanding how people make sense of and react to other people (Lippmann, 1922; Stangor, 2000; Kunda, 1999). Many researchers in social psychology concur that stereotyping illustrates the universal human propensity to categorize (Allport 1954; Fiske 1998; Stangor, 2000; Fiske et al., 2002). People classify individuals into discrete groups in order to simplify, structure, and give meaning to their world (Sides and Gross, 2009; Stangor, 2000; Lippmann, 1922).

In this chapter I explore cognition-based perceptions of Asian Americans to obtain a better understanding of how the general American public makes sense of and reacts to Asians. I construct a series of models to determine cognition-relevant responses to Asians in terms of different stereotype measures as dependent variables. The first set of models uses as the dependent variables specific trait dimensions of racial stereotyping (e.g., lazy-hardworking, unintelligent-intelligent) frequently included in national surveys. The second set of models employs general group stereotype measures as the dependent variables. Similar to the affect-

based perception models in Chapter 4, the models are estimated with the general Asian American population as the target population. In addition, in order to compare how people evaluate Asians relative to how they assess other racial/ethnic groups (such as whites or Hispanics), each model is estimated separately for each particular group. Evaluations across different groups will help to determine whether Americans' views of Asians are distinctive and also the degree to which the coefficients for the independent measures vary across the groups.

### **Data and Measures**

The 2004 American National Election Study (ANES)<sup>21</sup> includes various racial stereotyping measures of different racial/ethnic groups that allow researchers to compare the evaluations of Asians to those of other groups, including whites, blacks, and Hispanics. The ANES also enables an examination of specific and general stereotypes that people have of Asians and the other groups. The majority of the models in this study use the 2004 ANES as the data source. The 2004 National Politics Survey (NPS)<sup>22</sup> also contains stereotype measures of Asians and other racial/ethnic groups that are used as general group stereotype dependent measures in this study.

### Dependent Variables and the Contours of Racial Stereotyping

I examine two sets of dependent measures of cognition-based perceptions of Asians and other racial/ethnic groups. Previous studies (e.g., Peffley and Hurwitz, 1998; Dixon and Rosenbaum, 2004) have typically followed Allport's (1954) description of stereotypes as irrational and unflattering generalizations of a group in society that signify prejudice by

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<sup>21</sup> The 2004 ANES reports a sample of respondents from the four racial/ethnic groups, including 876 whites, 180 blacks, 81 Hispanics, and 28 Asians. Although the sub-samples of Asians and Hispanics are small relative to their current population sizes, the 2004 ANES have the necessary measures relating to cognition-based relevant responses to Asians as well as the other major racial/ethnic groups.

<sup>22</sup> As noted in Chapter 4, the 2004 NPS uses a non-random sampling frame. Hence, a centered weight variable is used to estimate the multivariate models of general stereotyping of Asians and other racial/ethnic groups that employ the NPS as the data source. For the major racial/ethnic groups of interest in this analysis, the sample of respondents in the NPS contains 919 Whites, 756 Blacks, 757 Hispanics, and 503 Asians.



reflecting higher values of dependent variables to represent more negative views of a group; however, this study takes a different approach by having higher values of the dependent measures to indicate more positive perceptions of a group. The rationale for this approach is that positive (and neutral) responses outnumber negative responses for all stereotype items of the four major racial/ethnic groups in both the 2004 ANES and 2004 NPS (see Tables 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4).

The first set of dependent measures concerns people's beliefs about specific personal attributes of Asians and the other groups. In the 2004 ANES respondents were asked to rank the groups along three different trait dimensions: lazy-hardworking, unintelligent-intelligent, and untrustworthy-trustworthy. Responses to each of these items are coded on a 7-point scale ranging from 0 (lazy) to 6 (hardworking), from 0 (unintelligent) to 6 (intelligent), and from 0 (untrustworthy) to 6 (trustworthy), respectively. For each item a score of 3 means neutral or a group does not personify a positive or negative stereotype. Ordered logistic regression is used to estimate these models because the dependent variables are ordinal and rank ordered.

The second set of dependent measures involves general group stereotype measures drawn from two different national surveys (2004 ANES and 2004 NPS) to ascertain, in part, whether general evaluations of Asians, as well as those of whites, blacks, and Hispanics, across an assortment of dimensions vary across different survey samples and instruments. The measure of each group from the ANES is a factor scale comprised of the lazy-hardworking, unintelligent-intelligent, and untrustworthy-trustworthy dimensions whose higher values indicate more positive assessments of the respective group; the factor analysis results for the four groups are in Appendix B.<sup>23</sup> The dependent measures from the NPS of Asians, whites, blacks, and Hispanics

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<sup>23</sup> The reliability of the overall scale of the hardworking-lazy, intelligent-unintelligent, and untrustworthy-trustworthy items for the group stereotype measure of each group is pretty high, as follows: for Asians, alpha = 0.76;

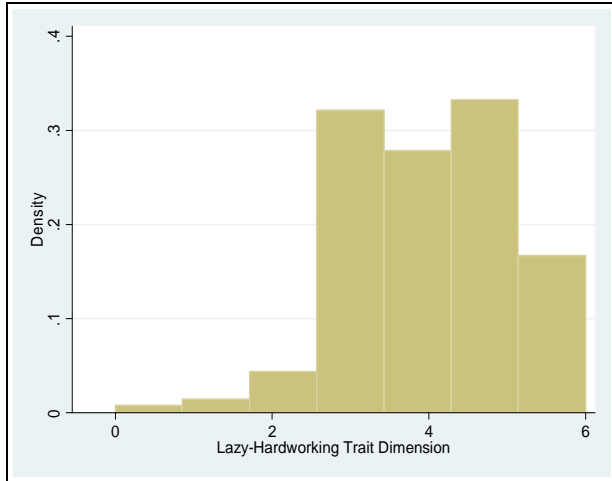
differ from those drawn from the ANES in that they encompass a general stereotyping of the respective group based on one specific trait dimension. Respondents were asked to rate each group in general on a scale from 0 to 6, where 0 signifies lazy (or negative perception), 6 means hardworking (or positive perception), and 3 indicates most Asians/whites/blacks/Hispanics are not closer to one end or the other. OLS regression is used to estimate the group stereotype models from the ANES since the dependent variables are interval-level. Ordered logistic regression is used to estimate the group stereotype models from the NPS because the dependent measures are ordinal and rank ordered.

To describe the contours of racial stereotyping of each group in terms of the three trait dimensions, I turn first to all respondents' rankings of Asians along these dimensions in Figure 5.1 (see also Table 5.1). The results of Figure 5.1 show that respondents tend not to be uniform in their evaluations of Asians across the three traits. The graphs in Figure 5.1(a) and Figure 5.1(b) reveal that respondents are more likely to have positive evaluations of Asians on the lazy-hardworking and unintelligent-intelligent dimensions, respectively. Respondents are more likely to view Asians as hardworking (mean score of 4.16) and intelligent (mean score of 4.04). In contrast, the graph in Figure 5.1(c) shows that respondents are more likely to be fairly neutral in their assessments of Asians along the untrustworthy-trustworthy dimension. The mean score of this measure at 3.47 indicates that respondents tend to perceive Asians as neither untrustworthy nor trustworthy.

Do respondents from different racial origins have similar views of Asians along the three trait dimensions? Starting with the lazy-hardworking dimension in the first column and first row

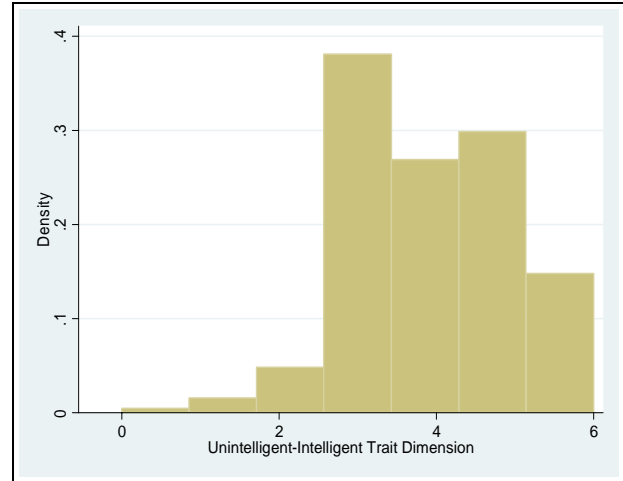
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for whites,  $\alpha = 0.79$ ; for blacks,  $\alpha = 0.80$ ; and for Hispanics,  $\alpha = 0.73$ . For each group stereotype measure, a principal component factor analysis of the items produced a single factor.



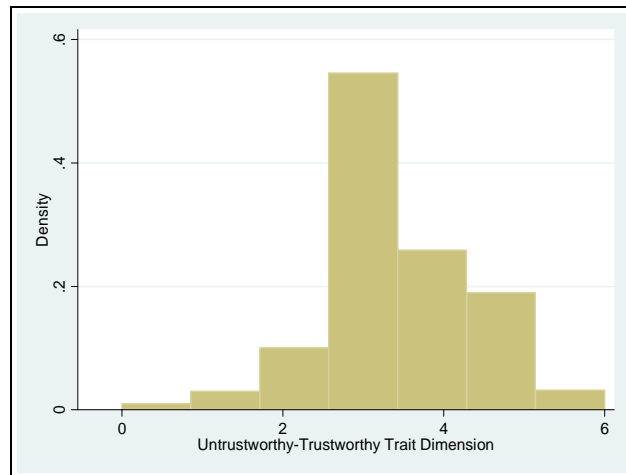
**(a) Lazy-Hardworking**

N = 1034  
 Mean = 4.16 (Std. Dev. = 1.22)  
 Median = 4  
 Minimum = 0, Maximum = 6



**(b) Unintelligent-Intelligent**

N = 1031  
 Mean = 4.04 (Std. Dev. = 1.20)  
 Median = 4  
 Minimum = 0, Maximum = 6



**(c) Untrustworthy-Trustworthy**

N = 1020  
 Mean = 3.47 (Std. Dev. = 1.08)  
 Median = 3  
 Minimum = 0, Maximum = 6

**Figure 5.1 Trait Dimensions of Asian Stereotyping**

Note: Each graph shows descriptive statistics of all respondents' stereotyping of Asian Americans in terms of trait dimension measures, including (a) lazy-hardworking, (b) unintelligent-intelligent, and (c) untrustworthy-trustworthy. The scale of each respective measure ranges as follows: from 0 (lazy) to 6 (hardworking), from 0 (unintelligent) to 6 (intelligent), and from 0 (untrustworthy) to 6 (trustworthy). For each measure a score of 3 means not closer to one end or the other.

Source: 2004 ANES.

**Table 5.1 All Respondents' Trait Dimension Measures of the Four Racial/Ethnic Groups**

Racial/Ethnic Group	Lazy-Hardworking				Unintelligent-Intelligent				Untrustworthy-Trustworthy			
	N	Median	Mean	Min/Max	N	Median	Mean	Min/Max	N	Median	Mean	Min/Max
Asians	1034	4	4.16 (1.22)	0/6	1031	4	4.04 (1.20)	0/6	1020	3	3.47 (1.08)	0/6
Whites	1050	4	3.80 (1.11)	0/6	1046	4	3.97 (1.12)	0/6	1043	3	3.64 (1.15)	0/6
Blacks	1047	3	3.09 (1.17)	0/6	1042	3	3.37 (1.14)	0/6	1039	3	3.16 (1.10)	0/6
Hispanics	1037	3	3.66 (1.24)	0/6	1027	3	3.33 (1.07)	0/6	1027	3	3.24 (1.10)	0/6

Note: For each measure, higher mean (and median) scores indicate more positive evaluations of each group. Standard deviation values are in parentheses under each mean column.

Source: 2004 ANES.

**Table 5.2 Trait Dimension Measures of the Racial/Ethnic Groups by Respondents' Race**

	Lazy-Hardworking				Unintelligent-Intelligent				Untrustworthy-Trustworthy			
	N	Median	Mean	Min/Max	N	Median	Mean	Min/Max	N	Median	Mean	Min/Max
Stereotype of Asians:												
Asian Respondents	20	5	4.70 (1.17)	3/6	20	4	4.20 (1.10)	2/6	20	4	3.95 (1.00)	3/6
White Respondents	759	4	4.17 (1.17)	0/6	759	4	4.02 (1.16)	0/6	754	3	3.51 (1.06)	0/6
Black Respondents	151	4	3.87 (1.36)	0/6	149	4	3.98 (1.36)	1/6	144	3	3.16 (1.13)	0/6
Hispanic Respondents	64	5	4.42 (1.22)	2/6	63	5	4.57 (1.17)	2/6	62	3	3.66 (1.16)	1/6
Stereotype of Whites:												
Asian Respondents	20	4	4.05 (1.15)	2/6	20	4	4.10 (1.07)	3/6	20	4	3.75 (1.12)	1/6
White Respondents	771	4	3.82 (1.03)	0/6	769	4	3.95 (1.07)	0/6	768	4	3.75 (1.07)	0/6
Black Respondents	154	3	3.60 (1.35)	0/6	152	4	3.88 (1.26)	0/6	151	3	3.11 (1.34)	0/6
Hispanic Respondents	64	4	3.88 (1.15)	0/6	64	5	4.47 (1.21)	1/6	63	3	3.73 (1.31)	0/6
Stereotype of Blacks:												
Asian Respondents	19	3	2.95 (0.97)	1/4	19	3	3.00 (1.00)	1/5	19	3	3.21 (0.79)	2/5
White Respondents	769	3	2.99 (1.09)	0/6	767	3	3.25 (1.06)	0/6	765	3	3.11 (1.08)	0/6
Black Respondents	154	3	3.58 (1.34)	0/6	152	4	3.92 (1.25)	0/6	151	3	3.45 (1.18)	0/6
Hispanic Respondents	64	3	2.95 (1.29)	0/6	63	4	3.79 (1.23)	1/6	63	3	3.11 (1.27)	0/6
Stereotype of Hispanics:												
Asian Respondents	20	3	3.40 (0.88)	2/5	20	3	3.10 (0.85)	2/5	20	3	3.40 (1.10)	2/6
White Respondents	763	3	3.57 (1.18)	0/6	754	3	3.25 (1.00)	0/6	756	3	3.22 (1.08)	0/6
Black Respondents	150	4	3.77 (1.44)	0/6	150	3	3.40 (1.18)	0/6	148	3	3.13 (1.09)	0/6
Hispanic Respondents	64	5	4.53 (1.17)	2/6	63	4	4.17 (1.19)	2/6	63	4	3.95 (1.17)	2/6

Source and Note: See Table 5.1

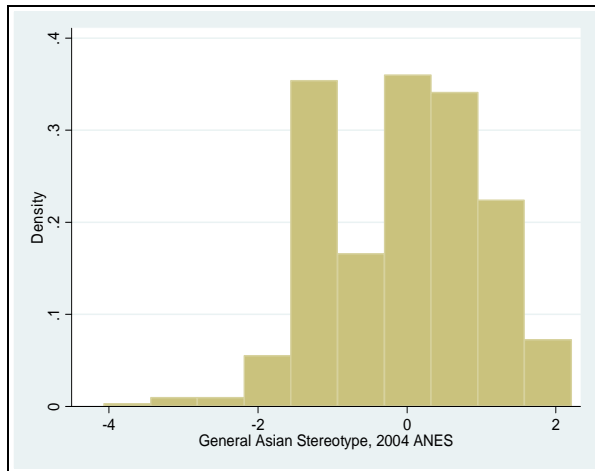
of Table 5.2, respondents from each racial/ethnic background are overall more likely to view Asians as hardworking. Their evaluations of Asians, however, are not altogether consistent. Asian respondents (mean score of 4.70) tend to perceive Asians more positively on this dimension than do Hispanic (mean score of 4.42), white (mean score of 4.17), and black (mean score of 3.87) respondents. In terms of the unintelligent-intelligent dimension in the second column and first row of Table 5.2, the overall evaluations of Asians are also more likely to be flattering. Interestingly, Hispanic respondents (mean score of 4.57) are more likely than Asian (mean score of 4.20), white (mean score of 4.02), and black (mean score of 3.98) respondents to

view Asians as intelligent. In terms of the untrustworthy-trustworthy dimension in the last column and first row of Table 5.2, Asian respondents (mean score of 3.95) are more likely than Hispanic (mean score of 3.66), white (mean score of 3.51), and black (mean score of 3.16) respondents to view Asians as trustworthy.

How do evaluations of whites, blacks, and Hispanics compare with those of Asians in terms of the trait dimensions? Starting with the evaluations of whites, the results of all respondents' evaluations of whites in Table 5.1 are fairly comparable to those of Asians across the first two trait dimensions. Respondents are more likely to view whites as hardworking (mean score of 3.80) and intelligent (mean score of 3.97), although respondents tend to evaluate Asians more positively on these dimensions. In contrast, respondents tend to rate whites (mean score of 3.64) higher on the untrustworthy-trustworthy dimension in Table 5.1 than they do Asians (mean score of 3.47). The evaluations of whites by respondents' race on the unintelligent-intelligent dimension in the second row and second column of Table 5.2 are also comparable to those of Asians. Specifically, Hispanic respondents (mean score of 4.47) are more likely than Asian (mean score of 4.10), white (mean score of 3.95), and black (mean score of 3.88) respondents to perceive whites as intelligent. The results of the evaluations of whites by respondents' race, however, vary from those of Asians for the lazy-hardworking (second row, first column of Table 5.2) and untrustworthy-trustworthy (second row, third column of Table 5.2) dimensions. Asian (mean score of 4.05) are more likely than Hispanic (mean score of 3.88), white (mean score of 3.82), and black (mean score of 3.60) respondents to view whites as hardworking. Asian (mean score of 3.75), white (mean score of 3.75), and Hispanic (mean score of 3.73) respondents are more likely than black respondents (mean score of 3.11) to perceive whites as trustworthy.

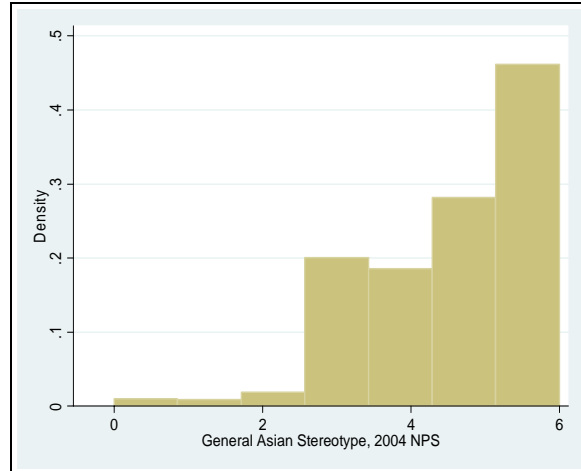
The results of the evaluations of blacks and Hispanics by all respondents (Table 5.1) and by respondents from different racial groups (Table 5.2), however, differ dramatically from those of Asians. Compared with those of Asians, all respondents' views of both blacks and Hispanics tend to be neutral across all three trait dimensions. For the evaluations of blacks, the mean score of the lazy-hardworking dimension is 3.09, the mean score of the unintelligent-intelligent dimension is 3.37, and the mean score of the untrustworthy-trustworthy is 3.16; for the evaluations of Hispanics, the mean score of the lazy-hardworking dimension is 3.66, the mean score of the unintelligent-intelligent dimension is 3.33, and the mean score of the untrustworthy-trustworthy is 3.24. The results of the third row in Table 5.2 also show that Asian, white, black and Hispanic respondents are more likely to be neutral in their assessments of blacks in terms of the lazy-hardworking (with mean scores ranging from 2.95 to 3.58) and untrustworthy-trustworthy (with mean scores ranging from 3.11 to 3.45) dimensions. Black (mean score of 3.92) and Hispanic (mean score of 3.79) respondents, however, are more likely than Asian (mean score of 3) and white (mean score of 3.25) respondents to perceive blacks as intelligent. In terms of the three trait dimensions in the last row of Table 5.2, Hispanic respondents are more likely to view Hispanics as hardworking (mean score of 4.53), intelligent (mean score of 4.17), and trustworthy (mean score of 3.95) than do Asian, white, and black respondents.

To describe the contours of racial stereotyping in terms of general stereotypes of the four groups, I report first all respondents' general Asian stereotype measures in Figure 5.2 (see also Table 5.3). Starting with the measure from the 2004 ANES in Figure 5.2(a), the graph shows that respondents are more likely to have positive perceptions of Asians. The mean score of this measure is 0. The graph of the Asian stereotype measure from the 2004 NPS in Figure 5.2(b)



(a) 2004 ANES

N = 1022  
 Mean = 0 (Std. Dev. = 1)  
 Median = 0.10  
 Minimum = -4.07, Maximum = 2.20



(b) 2004 NPS

N = 3126  
 Mean = 4.77 (Std. Dev. = 1.29)  
 Median = 5  
 Minimum = 0, Maximum = 6

**Figure 5.2 General Asian Stereotypes**

Note: Each graph shows descriptive statistics of all respondents' general stereotype of Asians. Graph (a) depicts the Asian stereotype measure from the 2004 ANES that is a factor scale comprised of the hardworking-lazy, intelligent-unintelligent, and untrustworthy-trustworthy dimensions. Graph (b) describes the Asian stereotype measure from the 2004 NPS that is operationalized on a scale from 0 (lazy) to 6 (hardworking). Higher scores of each measure indicate more positive perceptions of Asians.

**Table 5.3 All Respondents' General Stereotype Measures of the Four Racial/Ethnic Groups**

Racial/Ethnic Group	Group Stereotype (2004 ANES)				Group Stereotype (2004 NPS)			
	N	Median	Mean	Min/Max	N	Median	Mean	Min/Max
Asians	1010	0.10	0	-4.07/2.20	3126	5	4.77 (1.29)	0/6
Whites	1039	-0.14	0	-4.05/2.32	3198	4	4.29 (1.36)	0/6
Blacks	1035	-0.21	0	-3.32/2.89	3174	3	3.70 (1.50)	0/6
Hispanics	1009	-0.12	0	-3.32/2.84	3168	4	4.34 (1.41)	0/6

Note: The standard deviations for the Group Stereotype (2004 ANES) measures are equal to one; for the Group Stereotype (2004 NPS) measures the standard deviation values are in parentheses under the mean column. Higher scores represent more positive evaluations of each group.

**Table 5.4 General Stereotype Measures of the Racial/Ethnic Groups by Respondents' Race**

	Group Stereotype (2004 ANES)				Group Stereotype (2004 NPS)			
	N	Median	Mean	Min/Max	N	Median	Mean	Min/Max
Stereotype of Asians:								
Asian Respondents	20	0.46	0.41	-1.28/1.86	483	5	5.00 (0.94)	1/6
White Respondents	746	0.11	0.01	-4.07/2.20	857	5	4.70 (1.26)	0/6
Black Respondents	142	-0.24	-0.21	-2.33/2.20	708	5	4.76 (1.39)	0/6
Hispanic Respondents	62	0.46	0.33	-1.63/2.20	695	5	4.64 (1.39)	0/6
Stereotype of Whites:								
Asian Respondents	20	-0.14	0.17	-0.87/2.32	479	4	4.11 (0.99)	1/6
White Respondents	765	-0.14	0.03	-4.05/2.32	877	4	4.17 (1.21)	0/6
Black Respondents	150	-0.50	-0.27	-2.97/2.32	727	4	4.33 (1.53)	0/6
Hispanic Respondents	63	0.19	0.22	-3.69/2.32	727	5	4.38 (1.47)	0/6
Stereotype of Blacks:								
Asian Respondents	19	-0.17	-0.16	-1.93/0.82	475	3	3.01 (1.27)	0/6
White Respondents	762	-0.21	-0.09	-3.32/2.89	869	3	3.63 (1.27)	0/6
Black Respondents	150	0.14	0.47	-2.99/2.89	729	4	4.30 (1.48)	0/6
Hispanic Respondents	63	-0.21	0.08	-1.96/2.89	710	3	3.46 (1.60)	0/6
Stereotype of Hispanics:								
Asian Respondents	20	-0.06	-0.12	-1.53/1.43	466	4	3.76 (1.22)	0/6
White Respondents	742	-0.19	-0.07	-3.32/2.84	870	4	4.11 (1.30)	0/6
Black Respondents	144	-0.12	0.04	-2.63/2.84	710	5	4.54 (1.46)	0/6
Hispanic Respondents	63	-0.21	0.08	-1.96/2.89	735	5	4.69 (1.41)	0/6

Note: See Table 5.3

reveals that all respondents also have a greater likelihood of holding flattering views of Asians; the mean score is 4.77.

When assessing general Asian stereotyping from the 2004 ANES by respondents' race, the results in the first column and first row of Table 5.4 show that Asian respondents (mean score of 0.41) tend to evaluate Asians more positively than Hispanic (mean score of 0.33), white (mean score of 0.01), and black (mean score of -0.21) respondents. In contrast, the findings of general Asian stereotyping from the 2004 NPS in the second column and first row of Table 5.4 reveal that respondents from all racial groups are more likely to have positive views of Asians, although Asian respondents tend to view Asians somewhat more flatteringly than do white, black, and Hispanic respondents. The mean score for Asian respondents is 5, while for white respondents the mean score is 4.70, for black respondents it is 4.76, and for Hispanic respondents it is 4.64.

Similar to the results of all respondents' general stereotyping of Asians from the ANES, the findings of that of whites, blacks, and Hispanics in the first column of Table 5.3 show that



respondents are more likely to have flattering perceptions of these groups. The mean score of the measure of each of these groups is 0. Compared with those of Asians, all respondents' assessments of whites, blacks, and Hispanics from the NPS in the second column of Table 5.3 reveal that respondents tend to have less positive views of these groups. The mean score for Asians is 4.77, while for whites the mean score is 4.29, for blacks it is 3.70, and for Hispanics it is 4.34.

When respondents from different racial backgrounds are considered in the group assessments of whites, blacks, and Hispanics in the first column of Table 5.4, the results show that the group evaluations of blacks and Hispanics are fairly comparable to those of Asians whereas the group stereotyping of whites differs somewhat from that of Asians. Similar to Asian respondents' evaluations of Asians, black and Hispanic respondents tend to have more positive perceptions of their fellow groups than do other respondents. Black respondents (mean score of 0.47) are more likely than Asian (mean score of -0.16), white (mean score of -0.09), and Hispanic (mean score of 0.08) respondents to have positive perceptions of blacks. Hispanic respondents (mean score of 0.08) are more likely to have flattering views of Hispanics than do Asian (mean score of -0.12), white (mean score of -0.07), and black (mean score of 0.04) respondents. In contrast, Hispanic (mean score of 0.22) and Asian (mean score of 0.17) respondents are more likely than white respondents (mean score of 0.03) to have positive views of whites, while black respondents (mean score of -0.27) are less likely to have flattering perceptions of whites. In terms of the group evaluations of whites, blacks, and Hispanics in the second column of Table 5.4, the results are dramatically different from those of Asians. Hispanic respondents (mean score of 4.38) are more likely than Asian (mean score of 4.11), white (mean score of 4.17), and black (mean score of 4.33) respondents to hold flattering views

of whites. Black respondents (mean score of 4.30) are more likely to have positive perceptions of blacks than do Asian (mean score of 3.01), white (mean score of 3.63), and Hispanic (mean score of 3.46) respondents. Hispanic (mean score of 4.69) and black (mean score of 4.54) respondents tend to possess more positive perceptions of Hispanics than do Asian (mean score of 3.76) and white (mean score of 4.11) respondents.

In sum, the contours of racial stereotyping of Asians and the other groups indicate that respondents tend to have flattering rather than negative evaluations of each group, but there are some variations in these values within each group. In terms of the lazy-hardworking and unintelligent-intelligent dimensions, all respondents are more likely to view Asians and whites as hardworking and intelligent than they do blacks and Hispanics, even though respondents from different racial groups tend to rate Asians higher than whites on the lazy-hardworking dimension (while they tend to have comparable ratings of both groups on the unintelligent-intelligent dimension). Interestingly, respondents are more likely to take a neutral position than a positive or negative stance in their evaluations of Asians, as well as whites, blacks, and Hispanics, on the untrustworthy-trustworthy dimension. In fact, 46.8 percent of all respondents in the 2004 ANES reported a neutral evaluation of Asians on the untrustworthy-trustworthy measure, while they reported 40.5 percent for whites, 49.2 percent for blacks, and 49.5 percent for Hispanics. In terms of the group stereotype measures from the 2004 ANES, the overall assessments of Asians, whites, blacks, and Hispanics are more likely to be positive. Similar results are found for the group stereotype measures of Asians, whites, and Hispanics (but not of blacks) from the 2004 NPS, although the evaluations of Asians by respondents from different racial origins tend to be more positive than those of whites and Hispanics.

## Independent Variables

Several sets of explanatory factors are predicted to influence the cognition-based perceptions of Asians and other groups, including measures of context, personal contact, self-interest, and symbolic politics; socio-demographic indicators; and also a measure of general view of human nature. Data limitations in the 2004 ANES, however, exclude personal contact measures from the models that employ the ANES as the data source. Measures of context (e.g., percent population of a particular racial/ethnic group in a specified geographic unit) typically used in previous studies are also not included in the models that use the 2004 NPS as the data source. In addition, a measure of general view of human nature is not included in these group stereotype models because the NPS lacks such a measure.

**Context Measure: Percent Group Population.** As discussed in the previous chapter, Americans' perceptions of groups in society, particularly out-groups, can be influenced by the context of where they live. Individuals from different cultures and ethnic origins are coming into more contact with each other as many American cities have increasingly become a racial and ethnic melting pot. As the group threat hypothesis (which relates to the context perspective) contends, these augmented contacts between individuals of different racial/ethnic groups enhance the opportunities for the expression of prejudice and stereotypes, and, in some cases, be accompanied by overt hostility and conflict between members of different groups (Blumer 1958; Stein et. al., 2000; Dixon and Rosenbaum, 2004; see also Stangor, 2000). In contrast, supporters of the contact hypothesis argue that increased contact between members of different racial/ethnic groups can break down or discourage negative stereotypes with first-hand social experience (Allport, 1954; see also Oliver and Wong, 2003). Oliver and Wong (2003) suggest that racial threat is more likely to take place in comparatively expansive geographic areas with larger

minority populations, such as counties and metropolitan areas, while racial contact is more likely to happen in smaller or more local geographic areas, such as towns and neighborhoods.

Only a contextual measure at the county level is included in the stereotype models. The percent group population represents the proportion of the population of each group (i.e., Asians or whites) at the county-level in 2000. This context measure has been used in previous research to estimate contextual effects on racial stereotypes (e.g., Dixon and Rosenbaum, 2004; Oliver and Wong, 2003). Following the racial threat argument by Oliver and Wong (2003), percent group population is expected to be negatively related to evaluations of Asians as well as those of whites, blacks, and Hispanics.

Personal Contact Measures: Residential Neighborhood, Workplace, Place of Worship, and Friendship. The personal contact perspective suggests that interactive venues that provide the opportunities for intergroup contact can promote positive views of groups (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1971, 1998; Dixon and Rosenbaum, 2004). Hence, personal contact measures in four different interactive venues are used to estimate the group stereotype models from the 2004 NPS, including residential neighborhood, workplace, place of worship, and friendship. Respondents were asked whether there are Asians/whites/blacks/Hispanics in the neighborhood where they live, in the place where they work or last worked, in their place of worship, or in their group of friends. Responses to each of these questions are coded on a 3-point scale, such that 0 = none, 1 = mixed of different groups, and 2 = mostly Asians/whites/blacks/Hispanics. Even though it may be possible that these contact measures are proxies for residential segregation (particularly neighborhood segregation), this possibility cannot be tested because confidentiality concerns in the NPS prohibit connecting respondents to their neighborhoods. Each of these personal contact

variables is predicted to be positively related to evaluations of Asians, whites, blacks, and Hispanics.

Self-interest Measures: Employment Status, Family Income, Social Class, Job Competition, and Political Competition. The self-interest perspective suggests that a group's racial animus and prejudice is affected by beliefs of significant economic and/or political threat from another group (Kluegel and Smith, 1986; Bobo and Hutchings, 1996; Sears et al., 1980). Various measures of self-interest relating to economic/political attributes are used to estimate the stereotype models. Because of data limitations in the 2004 ANES and 2004 NPS, the stereotype models comprise different measures of self-interest. The stereotype models from the ANES include: (1) employment status coded as a dummy variable indexing whether respondents are employed or not (1 = employed, 0 otherwise); (2) social class which represents levels of social class in the U.S. and is measured on a 5-point scale, ranging from 0 (lower class) to 4 (upper class); and (3) family income which is measured on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (less than \$10,000) to 7 (\$90,000 and more). Although Gay (2006) suggests that relative income (i.e., the income of members of a racial/ethnic group relative to that of members of another group) rather than simply income (e.g., family income) affects racial animus between different groups, family income is used as a measure of self-interest because the ANES (as well as the NPS) does not have a measure of relative income of racial/ethnic groups.

The stereotype models from the NPS include employment status and family income (but not social class); these measures are operationalized in a similar fashion as those of the corresponding measures drawn from the ANES. The models also incorporate measures of job competition and political competition. For the job competition measure, respondents from particular racial origins were asked to rate on a 4-point scale how strongly they disagree (which

is at the lower end of the scale) or agree (which is at the higher end of the scale) with the following statement: More good jobs for Asians/whites/blacks/Hispanics mean fewer good jobs for people like me. For instance, only non-Asian respondents were asked how strongly they disagree/agree with the statement: More good jobs for Asian Americans mean fewer good jobs for people like me. Likewise for political competition, respondents from specific racial origins were asked to rate on a 4-point scale how strongly they disagree or agree with the following statement: The more influence Asians/whites/blacks/Hispanics have in politics, the less influence people like me will have in politics.

Scholars, such as Bobo and Hutchings (1996), suggest that members of a racial/ethnic group who are confronted with unemployment, have low incomes, or are in lower levels of social class in the U.S. are more likely to regard members of another group as considerable competitors for scarce economic and/or political resources and, hence, are more likely to have negative perceptions of them. Therefore, I hypothesized that stereotypes of Asians, whites, blacks, or Hispanics are positively associated with employment status, family income, and social class. In addition, following the self-interest argument, I expect that job competition and political competition to negatively influence the evaluation of each group.

Symbolic Politics Measures: American Identity, Political Ideology, and Partisanship. Several measures of symbolic politics used in previous research on racial attitudes are included in all the stereotype models. American identity is an alternative measure to such common symbolic politics measures as political ideology and partisanship. Citrin et al. (1990) find that American identity is a stronger determinant of a group's perception of immigrant-dominated groups, such as Asians and Hispanics, than other measures of symbolic politics (e.g., partisanship and ideology). Thus, I expect that people who believe in the importance of the

American identity are less likely to have positive stereotypes of Asians or Hispanics, while they are more likely to hold positive stereotypes of whites or blacks. The American identity measure used in the stereotype models from the 2004 ANES is a factor scale consisting of two items that correspond to qualities Citrin et al. (1990) suggest for being truly American.<sup>24</sup> The first item depicts the quality of trying to get ahead on one's own efforts; respondents were asked to place themselves on a 7-point scale ranging from 0 (need government help to succeed) to 6 (get ahead on one's own efforts), based on the question: Where would you place yourself on the job and good standard of living scale? The second item describes the quality of treating people of all races and backgrounds equally; respondents were asked to rate how strongly they disagree or agree with the following statement on a 5-point scale, ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree): Our society should do whatever is necessary to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.

The American identity measure employed in the stereotype models from the 2004 NPS is a factor scale comprised of four items representing qualities of the American identity that Citrin et al. (1990) propose. The first three items include the qualities of (1) being a Christian (based on the question: How important do you think each of the following is for being truly American: to be a Christian?), (2) voting in elections (based on the question: How important do you think each of the following is for being truly American: to vote?), and (3) speaking and/or writing English (based on the question: How important do you think each of the following is for being truly American: to be able to speak English?); all of these items are measured on a 4-point scale

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<sup>24</sup> As discussed in Chapter 4, Citrin et al.'s (1990) propose six qualities that embody the importance of the American identity. In their study respondents were asked to rate how important they felt each of the following six qualities for being truly American: 1) believing in God, 2) voting in elections, 3) speaking and writing English, 4) trying to get ahead on one's own efforts, 5) treating people of all races and backgrounds equally, and 6) defending America when it is criticized. The 2004 ANES and 2004 NPS include some of these qualities that nicely capture the American identity measure.

ranging from 0 (not important at all) to 3 (very important). The fourth item describes the quality of trying to get ahead on one's own efforts; respondents were asked to rate on a 4-point scale how strongly they disagree (which is at the lower end of the scale) or agree (which is at the higher end of the scale) with the statement: America is a land of opportunity in which you only need to work hard to succeed.

The other measures of symbolic politics used in this study include political ideology (i.e., a 7-point liberal-conservative scale, ranging from 0 = extremely liberal to 6 = extremely conservative) and partisanship (i.e., a 7-point party identification scale, ranging from 0 = strong Democrat to 6 = strong Republican). The effects of political ideology and partisanship on stereotypes of racial/ethnic groups, particularly blacks, are not clear in previous research on racial attitudes. For example, in their study of whites' stereotypes of blacks, Peffley and Hurwitz (1998) find that neither political ideology nor party identification has an effect on the dependent variables. Therefore, the effects of political ideology and partisanship on the evaluations of Asians, whites, blacks, and Hispanics will be assessed case by case (using a non-directional test).

**Socio-Demographic Measures: Education, Age, Gender, and Race.** Studies of socio-demographic correlates of stereotyping and prejudice (e.g., Schuman et al., 1985) typically presume that racial animosity originates from a person's social background and early socialization experiences (Peffley and Hurwitz, 1998: 63). Several socio-demographic measures are included in the stereotype models. A number of studies (e.g., Jackman, 1978) indicate that education is a key socialization agent promoting tolerance. Hence, I expect that education positively affects evaluations of Asians, whites, blacks, and Hispanics. Education is operationalized on a 7-point scale, ranging from 0 (for less than or equal to grade school) to 6 (advanced degree), in the stereotype models from the 2004 ANES, and the variable is indexed on



a 5-point scale, ranging from 0 (for less than or equal to grade school) to 4 (advanced degree), in the stereotype models from the 2004 NPS.

In terms of age (in years), previous studies have found that older people are more likely than younger people to express negative stereotypes of racial/ethnic groups, such as blacks (Peffley and Hurwitz, 1998; Dixon and Rosenbaum, 2004) and Hispanics (Dixon and Rosenbaum, 2004) because stereotypes (often negative) are likely transmitted across generations (and cultures) through childhood and adulthood socialization processes and likely become more rigid in adulthood (Dixon and Rosenbaum, 2004). Given the findings of previous studies, I expect age to be negatively related to evaluations of Asians, whites, blacks, and Hispanics. The effects of gender (1 = female, 0 = male) on the dependent variables, however, are unclear, and thus are evaluated using a non-directional test. In terms of race, dummy variables are included for Asian, black, white, and/or Hispanic respondents in all stereotype models, with the reference or omitted category to be the race corresponding to the stereotype models of the respective group. For example, for the evaluations of Asians, the reference category is Asian. I expect the effects of race on the dependent measures to be compatible with the findings in Tables 5.2 and 5.4.

Measure of General View of Human Nature. How individuals perceive people in general can conceivably influence how they stereotype racial/ethnic groups. For example, individuals who have a positive view of human nature are likely to differ from those who have a negative view of human nature in that the former group are more likely to have flattering stereotypes of Asians. The measure of general view of human nature drawn from the 2004 ANES is a factor scale of three dummy variables, including items operationalizing trust of people in general whose scale is 1 (most people can be trusted) and 0 (otherwise), fairness in treatment of people whose scale is 1

(most people try to be fair) and 0 (otherwise), and helpfulness of people whose scale is 1 (most people try to be helpful) and 0 (otherwise).<sup>25</sup> Higher values of this measure represent more positive view of human nature. I expect that general view of human nature is positively related to stereotypes of Asians, whites, blacks, and Hispanics.

## **Results**

### Predicting Patterns of Racial Stereotyping in Terms of the Trait Dimensions

Table 5.5 presents the ordered logistic regression results of the lazy-hardworking dimension models of Asians, whites, blacks, and Hispanics. Starting with the lazy-hardworking model of Asians in the first column, the results show that the self-interest measure of family income and the symbolic politics measure of partisanship have strong effects on the stereotyping of Asians on this dimension. Other conditions being equal, Americans who have higher income levels and identify more with the Republican Party have a stronger likelihood of viewing Asians as hardworking. Education also has a significant influence on the evaluation of Asians but at a less stringent .10 level of significance. Holding other factors constant, nine times out of ten, having more education is associated with greater odds of perceiving Asians as hardworking.

Compared with those for Asians, the results for whites in the second column reveal that different measures significantly affect the stereotyping of whites on the lazy-hardworking dimension. Specifically, social class, American identity, and age are strong predictors of the evaluation of whites but not in the hypothesized direction. Americans who are in lower levels of the U.S. social class, have a weaker belief in the importance of the American identity, and are older in age are more likely to perceive whites as hardworking, all else equal.

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<sup>25</sup> The reliability of the overall scale of these items for the measure of general view of human nature is  $\alpha = 0.72$ . A principal component factor analysis of the items produced a single factor.

**Table 5.5 Ordered Logistic Regression Analyses of Lazy-Hardworking Dimension Models of the Four Racial/Ethnic Groups**

	Asians	Whites	Blacks	Hispanics
<b>Context</b>				
Percent Group Population (county-level)	0.031 (1.45)	0.006 (1.15)	-0.011 (-1.24)	0.012** (1.99)
<b>Self-interest</b>				
Employment Status	-0.230 (-1.47)	-0.251 (-1.59)	0.054 (0.34)	-0.083 (-0.53)
Family Income	0.089** (2.16)	0.067 (1.57)	0.005 (0.11)	0.049 (1.16)
Social Class	0.057 (0.57)	-0.260** (-2.54)	-1.246** (-2.42)	-0.129 (-1.29)
<b>Symbolic Politics</b>				
American Identity	-0.084 (-1.16)	-0.148** (-2.01)	-1.164** (-2.23)	-0.056 (-0.78)
Political Ideology	-0.027 (-0.28)	0.091 (0.94)	-0.102 (-1.04)	0.005 (0.05)
Partisanship	0.257*** (3.02)	0.090 (1.05)	-1.136 (-1.55)	0.071 (0.82)
<b>Socio-demographic Attributes</b>				
Education	0.091* (1.92)	-0.064 (-1.36)	0.075 (1.56)	-0.056 (-1.19)
Age	-0.005 (-1.25)	0.012*** (2.70)	-0.001 (-0.14)	-0.012*** (-2.69)
Female	0.022 (0.17)	0.165 (1.26)	-0.017 (-0.12)	-0.014 (-0.11)
Asian	--	0.386 (0.90)	-0.941** (-1.99)	-1.090** (-2.42)
White	-0.177 (-0.64)	--	-0.760*** (-3.80)	-0.622*** (-2.73)
Black	-0.498 (-1.52)	-0.322 (-1.45)	--	-0.252 (-0.89)
Hispanic	0.119 (0.32)	0.260 (0.91)	-0.774** (-2.42)	--
Positive View of Human Nature	-0.008 (-0.11)	0.061 (0.83)	0.232*** (3.13)	0.137* (1.87)

**(Table 5.5 continued)**

Constant1	-5.154	-5.004	-5.505	-6.788
Constant2	-3.751	-4.016	-3.694	-4.977
Constant3	-2.580	-2.330	-2.364	-3.152
Constant4	-0.325	0.495	-0.156	-1.120
Constant5	0.798	1.778	1.019	-0.051
Constant6	2.404	3.395	2.302	1.171
<hr/>				
N	810	821	818	810
LR $\chi^2$	47.79	40.40	63.74	35.72
Prob ( $\chi^2$ )	0.0000	0.0002	0.0000	0.0011
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.01

Note: The z-scores are in parentheses.

Source: 2004 ANES.

\*\*\*  $p \leq .01$ ; \*\* $p \leq .05$ ; \*  $p \leq .10$

The results for blacks in the third column also show that different measures significantly affect the stereotyping of blacks relative to that of Asians on the lazy-hardworking dimension. Social class, American identity, race (Asian, white, and Hispanic), and positive view of human nature strongly influence the evaluations of blacks, although some of the measures (i.e., social class and American identity) are not in the hypothesized direction. Unexpectedly, Americans who are in lower levels of the U.S. social class and have a weaker belief in the importance of the American identity are more likely to view blacks as hardworking, all else equal. As predicted, Americans who have a more positive view of human nature are more likely to view blacks as hardworking, other conditions being equal. Compared to individuals of black descent, those of Asian, white, and Hispanic origins are less likely to perceive blacks as hardworking. These results of the effects of race are consistent with the findings of the evaluations of blacks by respondents' race along the lazy-hardworking dimension in Table 5.2.

The findings for Hispanics in the last column of Table 5.5 reveal that the measures that significantly influence the stereotyping of Hispanics on the lazy-hardworking dimension do not

affect that of Asians. Percent group population, age, and race (Asian and white) are strong determinants of the dependent variable. Unexpectedly, Americans who reside in counties with a higher population of Hispanics are more likely to view Hispanics as hardworking, all else equal. Holding other factors constant, as expected, older people are less likely to perceive Hispanics as hardworking. Compared to individuals of Hispanic descent, those of Asian and white origins are less likely to perceive Hispanics as hardworking. These findings of the effects of race are comparable to the results of the evaluations of Hispanics by respondents' race along the lazy-hardworking dimension in Table 5.2. The positive view of human nature variable also significantly and positively (as expected) affects respondents' evaluation of Hispanics but only at the .10 level of significance.

Table 5.6 reports the ordered logistic regression results of the unintelligent-intelligent dimension models of Asians, whites, blacks, and Hispanics. The findings of the evaluation of Asians on the unintelligent-intelligent dimension in the first column of Table 5.6 show that family income, social class, partisanship, and race (Hispanic) have strong effects on the dependent variable. Holding other factors constant, individuals who have higher income levels and identify more with the Republican Party have a higher likelihood of viewing Asians as intelligent. Unexpectedly, individuals who are in lower levels of the U.S. social class are more likely to perceive Asians as intelligent. Compared with individuals of Asian descent, those of Hispanic origin have a greater likelihood of viewing Asians as intelligent. This finding of the effect of race is consistent with the results of the evaluations of Asians by respondents' race along the unintelligent-intelligent dimension in Table 5.2. Age is also significantly and negatively related to the evaluations of Asians but at only the .10 level of significance. In nine

**Table 5.6 Ordered Logistic Regression Analyses of Unintelligent-Intelligent Dimension Models of the Four Racial/Ethnic Groups**

	Asians	Whites	Blacks	Hispanics
<b>Context</b>				
Percent Group Population (county-level)	0.017 (0.79)	0.003 (0.58)	-0.002 (-0.28)	0.005 (0.85)
<b>Self-interest</b>				
Employment Status	-0.078 (-0.50)	-0.010 (-0.06)	0.026 (0.16)	-0.002 (-0.01)
Family Income	0.081** (1.98)	0.026 (0.62)	0.027 (0.63)	0.011 (0.26)
Social Class	-0.296*** (-2.93)	-0.238** (-2.34)	-0.331*** (-3.17)	-0.186* (-1.77)
<b>Symbolic Politics</b>				
American Identity	-0.041 (-0.56)	-0.140* (-1.88)	-0.103 (-1.35)	-0.148** (-1.96)
Political Ideology	-0.036 (-0.37)	0.021 (0.22)	-0.003 (-0.03)	-0.031 (-0.31)
Partisanship	0.232*** (2.74)	0.194** (2.30)	-0.101 (-1.16)	0.126 (1.41)
<b>Socio-demographic Attributes</b>				
Education	0.022 (0.46)	-0.141*** (-2.93)	0.037 (0.77)	0.022 (0.44)
Age	-0.008* (-1.68)	0.008* (1.71)	-0.009* (-1.90)	-0.001 (-0.23)
Female	0.164 (1.26)	0.180 (1.38)	0.203 (1.52)	0.135 (0.99)
Asian	--	0.321 (0.76)	-1.383*** (-2.84)	-1.470*** (-3.00)
White	0.064 (0.24)	--	-0.694*** (-3.45)	-0.830*** (-3.48)
Black	0.061 (0.19)	-0.248 (-1.11)	--	-0.450 (-1.54)
Hispanic	0.745** (2.09)	0.899*** (3.21)	-0.067 (-0.22)	--
Positive View of Human Nature	0.069 (0.96)	0.039 (0.54)	0.195*** (2.60)	0.177** (2.32)

**(Table 5.6 continued)**

Constant1	-6.804	-5.997	-6.332	-6.804
Constant2	-4.485	-4.485	-4.722	-4.379
Constant3	-3.026	-3.289	-3.093	-2.590
Constant4	-0.626	-0.276	-0.679	-0.112
Constant5	0.361	0.812	0.365	1.058
Constant6	1.876	2.448	1.786	2.507
<hr/>				
N	808	817	815	804
LR $\chi^2$	35.45	50.96	60.47	32.26
Prob ( $\chi^2$ )	0.0013	0.0000	0.0000	0.0037
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.01

Note: The z-scores are in parentheses.  
Source: 2004 ANES.

\*\*\*  $p \leq .01$ ; \*\* $p \leq .05$ ; \*  $p \leq .10$

out of ten times, as expected, individuals who are older in age are less likely to perceive Asians as intelligent, all else equal.

The results of the stereotyping of whites in the second column of Table 5.6 reveal some similarities to that of Asians on the unintelligent-intelligent dimension. Social class, partisanship, and race (Hispanic) have a strong influence on the dependent variable. Americans who are in lower levels of the U.S. social class and identify more with the Republican Party have greater odds of perceiving whites as intelligent, other conditions being equal. Compared with individuals of white descent, those of Hispanic origin are more likely to view whites as intelligent. This finding of the effect of race is consistent with the results of the evaluations of whites by respondents' race along the unintelligent-intelligent dimension in Table 5.2. Similar to that of Asians, age has a significant but unexpectedly positive effect on the evaluation of whites at the .10 level of significance. There are also a few differences. Education has a strong but unexpectedly negative effect on the evaluation of whites. Individuals with more education are less likely to view whites as intelligent, all else equal. American identity also has a significant

but unexpectedly negative association with the evaluation of whites, albeit at a less stringent .10 level of significance. Nine times out of ten, individuals who have a weaker belief in the importance of the American identity are more likely to perceive whites as intelligent.

The results of the stereotyping of blacks in the third column of Table 5.6 show few similarities to that of Asians on the unintelligent-intelligent dimension. Only social class strongly affects the stereotyping of blacks as it does that of Asians. Unexpectedly, Americans who are in lower levels of the U.S. social class are more likely to view blacks as intelligent, other conditions being equal. Other strong predictors of the stereotyping of blacks on the unintelligent-intelligent dimension include race (Asian and white) and positive view of human nature. As expected, Americans who have a more positive view of human nature are more likely to view blacks as intelligent, other conditions being equal. Compared to individuals of black descent, those of Asian and white origins are less likely to perceive blacks as intelligent. These results of the effects of race are comparable to the findings of the evaluations of blacks in terms of the unintelligent-intelligent dimension in Table 5.2. Similar to that of Asians, age also has a significant and expectedly negative effect on the evaluation of blacks, albeit at only the .10 level of significance.

The results of the stereotyping of Hispanics in the last column of Table 5.6 reveal no similarities to that of Asians on the unintelligent-intelligent dimension. The exception is social class, but this variable is significantly and negatively related to the evaluation of Hispanics only at a less stringent .10 level of significance. The strong predictors of the stereotyping of Hispanics on the unintelligent-intelligent dimension include American identity, race (Asian and white), and positive view of human nature. As hypothesized, Americans who have a weaker belief in the importance of the American identity and a more positive view of human nature are



more likely to perceive Hispanics as intelligent, all else equal. Compared to individuals of Hispanic descent, those of Asian and white origins are less likely to view Hispanics as intelligent. These results of the effects of race are consistent with the findings of the evaluations of Hispanics in terms of the unintelligent-intelligent dimension in Table 5.2.

Table 5.7 presents the ordered logistic regression results of the untrustworthy-trustworthy dimension models of Asians, whites, blacks, and Hispanics. The findings of the evaluation of Asians on the untrustworthy-trustworthy dimension in the first column of Table 5.7 show that partisanship and positive view of human nature have strong effects on the dependent variable. Other conditions being equal, Americans who identify more with the Republican Party and hold a more positive view of human nature have a greater likelihood of viewing Asians as trustworthy. Family income is significantly and, as expected, positively related to the evaluation of Asians but only at the .10 level of significance.

The results of the stereotyping of whites in the second column of Table 5.7 show few similarities to that of Asians on the untrustworthy-trustworthy dimension. Similar to that of Asians, only positive view of human nature has a strong influence on the evaluation of whites; partisanship also has an effect but at a less stringent .10 level of significance. All else equal, as predicted, Americans with a more positive view of human nature are more likely to view whites as trustworthy. Other strong predictors of the evaluation of whites are education, age, gender, and race (black). Unexpectedly, individuals with lower levels of education and who are older in age are more likely to perceive whites as trustworthy, other conditions being equal. Females have a greater likelihood of viewing whites as trustworthy, all else equal. Compared to individuals of white descent, those of black origin are less likely to view whites as trustworthy.

**Table 5.7 Ordered Logistic Regression Analyses of Untrustworthy-Trustworthy Dimension Models of the Four Racial/Ethnic Groups**

	Asians	Whites	Blacks	Hispanics
<b>Context</b>				
Percent Group Population (county-level)	-0.006 (-0.25)	0.007 (1.41)	0.001 (0.09)	0.009 (1.43)
<b>Self-interest</b>				
Employment Status	0.118 (0.72)	0.098 (0.61)	0.262 (1.62)	0.275* (1.69)
Family Income	0.080* (1.86)	0.038 (0.91)	0.046 (1.07)	0.060 (1.38)
Social Class	-0.087 (-0.85)	-0.062 (-0.60)	-0.134 (-1.29)	0.002 (0.02)
<b>Symbolic Politics</b>				
American Identity	-0.085 (-1.14)	-0.081 (-1.11)	-0.141* (-1.90)	-0.028 (-0.38)
Political Ideology	-0.128 (-1.28)	0.067 (0.69)	-0.020 (-0.20)	-0.074 (-0.73)
Partisanship	0.201** (2.28)	0.143* (1.68)	-0.035 (-0.40)	0.097 (1.07)
<b>Socio-demographic Attributes</b>				
Education	0.076 (1.56)	-0.105** (-2.18)	0.071 (1.46)	0.005 (0.10)
Age	0.007 (1.48)	0.018*** (3.97)	0.004 (0.83)	0.008* (1.75)
Female	0.060 (0.45)	0.298** (2.25)	0.193 (1.43)	0.132 (0.97)
Asian	--	0.415 (1.01)	-0.817* (-1.76)	-0.762 (-1.55)
White	-0.082 (-0.30)	--	-0.668*** (-3.31)	-0.684*** (-2.81)
Black	-0.286 (-0.85)	-0.653*** (-2.79)	--	-0.313 (-1.05)
Hispanic	0.425 (1.13)	0.432 (1.48)	-0.598* (-1.85)	--
Positive View of Human Nature	0.320*** (4.24)	0.351*** (4.65)	0.461*** (6.00)	0.468*** (6.05)

**(Table 5.7 continued)**

Constant1	-4.567	-3.543	-4.977	-4.413
Constant2	-2.784	-2.410	-2.864	-2.684
Constant3	-1.261	-0.972	-1.324	-1.226
Constant4	1.190	1.476	1.016	1.202
Constant5	2.306	2.657	1.996	2.266
Constant6	4.510	4.662	4.142	4.353
<hr/>				
N	798	816	813	804
LR $\chi^2$	60.92	90.67	72.49	68.90
Prob ( $\chi^2$ )	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.03

Note: The z-scores are in parentheses.  
Source: 2004 ANES.

\*\*\*  $p \leq .01$ ; \*\* $p \leq .05$ ; \*  $p \leq .10$

This finding of the effect of race is consistent with the results of the evaluations of whites on the untrustworthy-trustworthy dimension in Table 5.2.

The results of the stereotyping of blacks in the third column of Table 5.7 reveal that only positive view of human nature has a strong influence on the evaluations of both blacks and Asians along the untrustworthy-trustworthy dimension. Holding other factors constant, as expected, Americans with a more positive view of human nature are more likely to view blacks as trustworthy. Race (white) is also a strong predictor of the evaluation of blacks. Compared to individuals of black origin, those of white origin are less likely to view blacks as trustworthy. This finding of the effect of race is consistent with the results of the evaluations of blacks on the untrustworthy-trustworthy dimension in Table 5.2. American identity and race (Asian and Hispanic) have significant and negative effects on the stereotyping of blacks but only at the .10 level of significance.

The findings of the stereotyping of Hispanics in the last column of Table 5.7 also show that only positive view of human nature has a strong effect on the evaluations of both Hispanics

and Asians along the untrustworthy-trustworthy dimension. As expected, Americans with a more positive view of human nature are more likely to view Hispanics as trustworthy, other conditions being equal. Race (white) is also a strong predictor of the evaluation of Hispanics. Compared to individuals of Hispanic origin, those of white descent are less likely to view Hispanics as trustworthy. This finding of the effect of race is consistent with the results of the evaluations of Hispanics on the untrustworthy-trustworthy dimension in Table 5.2. Employment status and age are significantly and positively associated with the stereotyping of Hispanics but at a more relaxed .10 level of significance.

In sum, the findings of Tables 5.5, 5.6, and 5.7 indicate that the stereotyping of Asians and that of the other groups in terms of the lazy-hardworking, unintelligent-intelligent, and untrustworthy-trustworthy dimensions, respectively, have little common antecedents. For example, partisanship is the most consistent and strong determinant of the evaluations of Asians, whereas race (white) is the strongest and most consistent predictor of the evaluations of both blacks and Hispanics, across the three trait dimensions. There are a few explanatory factors, however, that highly influence the racial stereotyping of Asians and that of the other groups. For instance, positive view of human nature is the strongest predictor (at the .01 level of significance) of the evaluations of all the groups relative to the untrustworthy-trustworthy dimension. The overall results of the three trait dimension models confirm the significant effects of some of the key measures, particularly those of self-interest (family income) and symbolic politics (partisanship), on the evaluations of Asians. The effects of self-interest and symbolic politics measures, however, are mixed on the evaluations of the other groups. The other key measure—the context measure (percent group population)—has no impact on the evaluations of Asians, as well as those of whites and blacks, across the three trait dimensions. The context

measure is significantly related to only the stereotyping of Hispanics on the lazy-hardworking dimension, but the effect is not in the hypothesized direction. These findings do not support the group threat argument that augmented contacts between different racial groups in counties with high proportions of a minority population, such as Asians, increase expressions of negative stereotypes (in terms of specific factual attributes) of the out-group.

#### Predicting Patterns of Group Stereotypes, 2004 ANES

Table 5.8 reports the OLS regression results of the group stereotype models of Asians, whites, blacks, and Hispanics from the 2004 ANES. The measure of each group stereotype is a factor scale comprised of the lazy-hardworking, unintelligent-intelligent, and untrustworthy-trustworthy dimensions whose higher values signify more positive assessments of the respective group. Turning first to the stereotype model of Asians in the first column, the self-interest (family income) and symbolic politics (partisanship) measures are the strongest predictors of general stereotyping of Asians at the .01 level of significance. Americans who possess higher income levels (as expected) and identify more with the Republican Party are more likely to have positive stereotypes of Asians, other conditions being equal. The positive view of human nature variable also has a strong effect on general stereotyping of Asians. As expected, individuals who have a more positive view of human nature have greater odds of holding flattering stereotypes of Asians, all else equal. Neither the context measure (percent group population) nor any of the socio-demographic variables may independently influence racial stereotyping of Asians.

The results of the group stereotype of whites in the second column of Table 5.8 reveal that general stereotyping of whites and that of Asians have hardly any common antecedents. Only positive view of human nature is strongly related to the evaluations of both whites and Asians. As expected, individuals who have a more positive view of human nature are more likely to have

**Table 5.8 OLS Regression Analyses of Group Stereotype Models, 2004 ANES**

	Asians	Whites	Blacks	Hispanics
<b>Context</b>				
Percent Group Population (county-level)	0.012 (1.06)	0.002 (0.98)	-0.002 (-0.38)	0.007** (2.16)
<b>Self-interest</b>				
Employment Status	-0.025 (-0.31)	-0.045 (-0.56)	0.068 (0.83)	0.048 (0.57)
Family Income	0.059*** (2.65)	0.028 (1.28)	0.013 (0.59)	0.025 (1.14)
Social Class	-0.074 (-1.36)	-0.122** (-2.31)	-0.148*** (-2.78)	-0.094* (-1.74)
<b>Symbolic Politics</b>				
American Identity	-0.047 (-1.22)	-0.079** (-2.12)	-0.080** (-2.13)	-0.064* (-1.67)
Political Ideology	-0.023 (-0.45)	0.047 (0.95)	-0.017 (-0.33)	-0.027 (-0.52)
Partisanship	0.120*** (2.61)	0.072 (1.62)	-0.046 (-1.04)	0.067 (1.48)
<b>Socio-demographic Attributes</b>				
Education	0.037 (1.45)	-0.060** (-2.41)	0.030 (1.19)	-0.006 (-0.22)
Age	-0.002 (-1.01)	0.007*** (2.84)	-0.002 (-0.64)	-0.001 (-0.52)
Female	0.060 (0.85)	0.154** (2.26)	0.077 (1.13)	0.075 (1.07)
Asian	--	0.231 (1.03)	-0.656*** (-2.66)	-0.707*** (-2.87)
White	-0.034 (-0.24)	--	-0.433*** (-4.19)	-0.443*** (-3.67)
Black	-0.142 (-0.83)	-0.229** (-2.04)	--	-0.226 (-1.52)
Hispanic	0.250 (1.31)	0.325** (2.24)	-0.289* (-1.80)	--
Positive View of Human Nature	0.082** (2.13)	0.096** (2.54)	0.184*** (4.82)	0.168*** (4.37)

**(Table 5.8 continued)**

Intercept	-0.217 (-0.93)	-0.358 (-1.33)	0.533*** (2.67)	0.358* (1.75)
N	791	814	810	790
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.04	0.06	0.07	0.04

Note: The *t*-scores are in parentheses.

\*\*\*  $p \leq .01$ ; \*\* $p \leq .05$ ; \*  $p \leq .10$

positive views of whites, holding other factors constant. Social class, American identity, education, age, gender, and race (black and Hispanic) are also strong predictors of general stereotyping of whites. Unexpectedly, Americans who are in lower levels of the U.S. social class, have a weaker belief in the importance of the American identity, are less educated, and are older in age have a greater likelihood of holding flattering stereotypes of whites, all else equal. Females are more likely than males to have positive views of whites, other conditions being equal. Compared to those of white descent, individuals of Hispanic origin are more likely, while those of black origin are less likely, to possess positive stereotypes of whites. These results of the effects of race are consistent with the results of the group stereotype measures of whites from the ANES in Table 5.4.

The results of the group stereotype of blacks in the third column of Table 5.8 also show that only positive view of human nature has a strong impact on the evaluations of both blacks and Asians. As expected, individuals who have a more positive view of human nature are more likely to have positive perceptions of blacks. Social class, American identity, and race (Asian and white) are also strongly related to general stereotyping of blacks, while race (Hispanic) has a significant and negative effect on the dependent variable but at a more relaxed .10 level of significance. Other conditions being equal, unexpectedly, Americans who are in lower levels of

the U.S. social class and have a weaker belief in the importance of the American identity are more likely to hold flattering views of blacks. Compared to individuals of black descent, those of Asian and white origins are less likely to have positive views of blacks. These results of the effects of race are comparable to the findings of the group stereotype measures of blacks from the ANES in Table 5.4.

The findings of the group stereotype of Hispanics in the last column of Table 5.8 also indicate that only positive view of human nature has a strong effect on the evaluations of both Hispanics and Asians. As expected, Americans who have a more positive view of human nature are more likely to have positive views of Hispanics, other conditions being equal. Percent group population and race (Asian and white) are also strong determinants of general stereotyping of Hispanics. Surprisingly, individuals who reside in counties with a higher proportion of Hispanics are more likely to have positive stereotypes of Hispanics, all else equal. Compared to individuals of Hispanic descent, those of Asian and white origins are less likely to possess flattering views of Hispanics. These findings of the effects of race are comparable to the results of the group stereotype measures of Hispanics from the ANES in Table 5.4. Social class and American identity have significant and negative effects on general stereotyping of Hispanics, albeit at only the .10 level of significance.

The overall findings in Table 5.8 indicate that most factors that influence general stereotyping of Asians are not likely to affect that of whites, blacks, and Hispanics. The exception is positive view of human nature, but this variable has a stronger impact on general stereotyping of particularly blacks ( $b=0.184, p \leq .01$ ) and Hispanics ( $b=0.168, p \leq .01$ ) than that of Asians ( $b=0.082, p \leq .05$ ). The overall results also reveal that some of the key measures, especially those of self-interest (family income) and symbolic politics (partisanship), strongly



influence general stereotyping of Asians, while the self-interest measure of social class and the symbolic politics measure of American identity significantly affect general stereotyping of whites and blacks, and to a lesser degree, Hispanics. The other key measure (the context measure [percent group population]), however, does not independently influence general stereotyping of Asians or that of whites and blacks. The exception is its effect on general stereotyping of Hispanics, although the effect is not in the expected direction.

#### Predicting Patterns of Group Stereotypes, 2004 NPS

The results of the group stereotype models of Asians, whites, blacks, and Hispanics from the 2004 NPS are reported in Table 5.9. Starting with the stereotype model of Asians in the first column of Table 5.9, workplace contact, employment status, education, and race (white, black, and Hispanic) are strongly related to general stereotyping of Asians. Unexpectedly, having more Asians in one's workplace and being employed are associated with a weaker likelihood of having positive stereotypes of Asians, holding other factors constant. As expected, Americans with higher levels of education attainment are more likely to hold flattering views of Asians. Compared with those of Asian descent, individuals of white, black, and Hispanic origins are less likely to have positive perceptions of Asians. These findings of the effects of race are comparable to the results of the group stereotype measures of Asians from the NPS in Table 5.4. Place of worship contact is also significantly and (as expected) positively related to general stereotyping of Asians, but the effect is modest.

Compared with that of Asians, general stereotyping of whites in the second column of Table 5.9 is strongly affected by only job competition. Other conditions being equal, as expected, Americans who feel less threatened by job competition with whites are more likely to have flattering views of whites. Although the effect is small, residential neighborhood contact

**Table 5.9 Ordered Logistic Regression Analyses of Group Stereotype Models, 2004 NPS**

	Asians	Whites	Blacks	Hispanics
<b>Personal Contact</b>				
Residential Neighborhood	0.223 (1.20)	-0.176* (-1.89)	-0.178 (-1.19)	0.055 (0.36)
Workplace	-0.403** (-2.16)	-0.017 (-0.18)	0.061 (0.43)	0.296** (2.11)
Place of Worship	0.303* (1.83)	-0.126 (-1.28)	0.328* (1.90)	-0.190 (-0.89)
Friendship	0.227 (1.16)	0.082 (0.76)	0.159 (0.87)	0.236 (1.21)
<b>Self-interest</b>				
Job Competition	-0.115 (-1.16)	-0.176** (-2.41)	-0.196** (-1.98)	-0.022 (-0.23)
Political Competition	0.116 (1.32)	0.073 (1.06)	-0.355*** (-3.50)	-0.220** (-1.98)
Employment Status	-0.368** (-2.28)	-0.185 (-1.34)	-0.345* (-1.80)	-0.646*** (-3.54)
Family Income	-0.041 (-0.83)	0.002 (0.04)	-0.092* (-1.70)	-0.056 (-1.07)
<b>Symbolic Politics</b>				
American Identity	-0.089 (-0.91)	0.103 (1.39)	-0.204** (-2.09)	0.031 (0.35)
Political Ideology	0.131 (1.56)	0.059 (0.79)	0.286*** (2.93)	0.293*** (2.71)
Partisanship	-0.084 (-0.85)	-0.123 (-1.32)	-0.317*** (-2.71)	-0.186* (-1.73)
<b>Socio-demographic Attributes</b>				
Education	0.251*** (3.78)	0.022 (0.34)	0.122 (1.60)	0.141* (1.79)
Age	0.003 (0.63)	0.006 (1.30)	0.005 (0.83)	-0.008 (-1.46)
Female	0.208 (1.44)	0.137 (1.01)	0.477*** (3.10)	0.177 (1.16)
Asian	--	-0.341 (-1.57)	-0.850** (-2.28)	-0.993*** (-3.56)

(Table 5.9 continued)

White	-0.752*** (-2.81)	--	-0.648** (-2.00)	-0.663** (-2.38)
Black	-0.528** (-2.10)	-0.332 (-1.56)	--	0.169 (0.67)
Hispanic	-0.702*** (-2.82)	-0.282 (-1.40)	-0.494 (-1.48)	--
Constant1	-5.036	-3.772	-4.882	-6.000
Constant2	4.466	-3.560	-3.797	-5.240
Constant3	-3.868	-2.980	-2.549	-3.796
Constant4	-1.549	-1.011	-0.651	-1.701
Constant5	-0.712	-0.213	0.431	-0.876
Constant6	0.397	0.662	1.583	0.368
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N	1581	1313	1358	1348
LR $\chi^2$	50.92	32.74	101.98	78.30
Prob ( $\chi^2$ )	0.0000	0.0122	0.0000	0.0000
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.02	0.01	0.04	0.03

Note: The z-scores are in parentheses.

\*\*\*  $p \leq .01$ ; \*\* $p \leq .05$ ; \*  $p \leq .10$

has a significant but unexpectedly negative influence on general stereotyping of whites. Nine times out of ten, individuals who have more whites in their residential neighborhood are less likely to hold positive perceptions of whites.

The results of the stereotype model of blacks in the third column of Table 5.9 reveal much more differences than similarities to those of the stereotype model of Asians. The only significant common antecedents of general stereotyping of both blacks and Asians include place of worship and employment status; however, these variables are significantly associated with general stereotyping of blacks at a less stringent .10 level of significance. Although the effects are modest, Americans who have more blacks in their place of worship are more likely, while, unexpectedly, those who are employed are less likely, to hold positive stereotypes of blacks, all

else equal. Compared with that of Asians, job competition, political competition, American identity, political ideology, partisanship, gender, and race (Asian and white) are strong predictors of general stereotyping of blacks. Other conditions being equal, as expected, Americans who feel less threatened by job competition and political competition with blacks are more likely to have positive views of blacks. Unexpectedly, individuals who have a weaker belief in the importance of the American identity are more likely to possess flattering perceptions of blacks, all else equal. Interestingly, individuals who are more conservative in political ideology and are female are more likely, while those who identify more with the Republican Party are less likely, to hold positive stereotypes of blacks. Compared with those of black descent, individuals of Asian and white origins are less likely to have positive views of blacks. These findings of the effects of race are consistent with the results of the group stereotype measures of blacks from the NPS in Table 5.4. Family income is significantly and negatively related to general stereotyping of blacks, but the effect of this variable is small.

The results of the stereotype model of Hispanics in the last column of Table 5.9 reveal some similarities to those of the stereotype model of Asians. Workplace contact, employment status, and race (white) are strongly associated with general stereotyping of both Hispanics and Asians, although the direction of the workplace contact's coefficient differs from that of the coefficient in the stereotype model of Asians. As expected, Americans who have more Hispanics in their workplace are more likely to possess flattering views of Hispanics, all else equal. Unexpectedly, individuals who are employed are less likely to have positive views of Hispanics, holding other factors constant. Compared with persons of Hispanic descent, as expected, those of Asian and white origins have a weaker likelihood of holding positive perceptions of Hispanics. Education also significantly and (as expected) positively affects

general stereotyping of Hispanics, but the effect is much smaller ( $b = 0.141$ ;  $p \leq .10$ ) than that of Asians ( $b = 0.251$ ;  $p \leq .01$ ). There are also some differences. Compared with that of Asians, general stereotyping of Hispanics is strongly influenced by political competition and political ideology. Individuals who feel less threatened by political competition with Hispanics and are more conservative in political ideology have a stronger likelihood of holding flattering views of Hispanics. Although the effect is small, those who identify more with the Republican Party are less likely to have positive perceptions of Hispanics.

In sum, the findings in Table 5.9 indicate that general stereotyping of Asians has no common antecedents with that of whites but has some mutual antecedents with that of Hispanics (such as employment status and race [white]) and blacks (such as place of worship and employment status, although the effects of these variables are small). The overall results reveal that the strongest explanatory factors influencing general images of Asians, whites, blacks, and Hispanics vary. The strongest predictors of general stereotyping of Asians are education and race (white and Hispanic); the strongest determinant of that of whites (albeit at the .05 level of significance) is job competition; the strongest determinants of that of blacks are political competition, political ideology, partisanship, and gender; and the strongest predictors of that of Hispanics are employment status, political ideology, and race (Asian). The overall results also indicate that some of the key measures, particularly measures of personal contact (workplace) and self-interest (employment status), strongly influence general stereotyping of Asians. However, the other key measures, i.e., those of symbolic politics, have no effects on general stereotyping of Asians (or that of whites). Moreover, the personal contact measures have only mixed effects on the evaluations of Asians and the other groups. For example, workplace contact alone has a strong impact (at the .05 level of significance) on general stereotyping of

only Asians and Hispanics, but the direction of the workplace contact's coefficient is not the same for both models as expected. These findings reveal that working with Hispanics increases positive stereotypes of Hispanics (as hypothesized), whereas working with Asians increases negative stereotypes of Asians (not as hypothesized).

## **Conclusion**

What light do the findings in this chapter shed on Americans' cognition-relevant responses to Asians? How do the evaluations of Asians compare to those of other racial/ethnic groups? Judging from the results of Tables 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4 at the aggregate level, Americans (including those of Asian, white, black, and Hispanic origins) have a greater likelihood of viewing Asians as hardworking and intelligent and of evaluating Asians in general with positive impressions. The overall evaluations of Asians tend to be flattering even across different survey samples and instruments. For example, compared with those of Asians at the aggregate level, the overall assessments of whites tend to be somewhat less positive (in terms of the mean [or median] scores) relative to especially the lazy-hardworking dimension (see Tables 5.1 and 5.2) and the group stereotype measure from the NPS (see Tables 5.3 and 5.4). The overall evaluations of Hispanics and blacks from the NPS also tend to be less flattering than those of Asians (see Tables 5.3 and 5.4). Moreover, the overall assessments of blacks and Hispanics from the ANES are more likely than those of Asians to be neutral across all three trait dimensions (see Tables 5.1 and 5.2). These results suggest that the popular stereotype of the Asian American community as a model minority is not altogether unfounded, assuming there may be a small tendency for respondents from various racial/ethnic origins to underreport negative sentiments toward Asians.

The multivariate analyses of the antecedents of these beliefs indicate mixed results for the key explanatory factors, including those of context, personal contact, self-interest, and symbolic politics, that are expected to influence Americans' stereotyping of Asians. Relative to the stereotype measures from the ANES, only the symbolic politics measure of partisanship and the self-interest measure of family income have consistent effects on evaluations of Asians. Only the workplace contact measure and the self-interest measure of employment status are significantly associated with Asian stereotyping from the NPS, although the effects of these variables on the dependent variable are not in the hypothesized direction. The context measure (percent group population), however, has no influence on Asian stereotyping (or on stereotyping of whites and blacks), while it has a significant but unexpectedly positive impact on Hispanic stereotyping. These findings suggest that, in contrast to the argument of the group threat hypothesis, racial animosity toward another group may not be based simply on that group's size in larger geographic environments like counties. The null contextual effects on Asian stereotyping also suggest that context is less likely to be an important factor in explaining and understanding racial stereotyping with respect to Asians. It may be, as Gay (2006) suggests, more, for instance, the relative economic status of racial groups—and less the relative size of racial groups—that influences Americans' attitudes toward Asians. In fact, economic self-interest measures (such as family income) are found to have a significant impact on Asian stereotyping in this study. Moreover, the personal contact measures have surprisingly mixed effects on Asian stereotyping (from the NPS). Only workplace contact has a strong impact, while the other personal contact measures (i.e., residential neighborhood, place of worship, and friendship contacts) have little to no effects, on the dependent variable. It is particularly surprising that friendship contact has no influence on Asian stereotyping (or on general

stereotyping of any of the other groups). One would expect that having more Asian friends to be strongly associated with positive perceptions of Asians, but it is not the case in this study.

The effects of the key explanatory factors on racial stereotyping of Asians also vary across different survey samples and instruments. For instance, unlike the independent impact of symbolic politics (partisanship) on general stereotyping of Asians from the ANES, symbolic politics has no effects on general stereotyping of Asians from the NPS. The self-interest measure of family income is significantly associated with Asian stereotyping from the ANES, while the self-interest measure of employment status is significantly associated with Asian stereotyping from the NPS (although the effect of employment status on the dependent variable is not in the hypothesized direction).

The multivariate regression results also reveal that Americans' stereotyping of Asians has little, if any, common antecedents with that of whites, blacks, and Hispanics across all stereotype measures from the ANES and NPS. For example, the strongest predictors of general stereotyping of Asians from the ANES are family income and partisanship, while the strongest predictor of that of whites is age. The strongest determinant of stereotyping of Asians on the lazy-hardworking dimension is partisanship, whereas the strongest determinants of that of blacks are race (white) and positive view of human nature. Education and race (white and Hispanic) have the strongest influence on general stereotyping of Asians from the NPS, while employment status, political ideology, and race (Asian) are the strongest determinants of that of Hispanics.

In conclusion, the overall findings suggest that stereotyping of Asians is fairly distinctive from that of other racial/ethnic groups across different survey samples and instruments.

Although Americans are more likely to have positive views of Asians as well as whites, blacks, and Hispanics, the evaluations of Asians in general at the aggregate level have a tendency to be



somewhat more positive than those of the other groups. Furthermore, the types of individuals who are most likely to have such beliefs about Asians tend not to hold such views of whites, blacks, and Hispanics. The findings also validate some aspects of the personal contact, self-interest, and symbolic politics hypotheses, as well as those of the socio-demographic and general view of human nature hypotheses; while they contest the validity of such hypotheses as those relating to context. By drawing on various explanatory factors likely to influence cognition-based perceptions of Asians, this study heeds Allport's (1954) warning that racial stereotyping of groups is more likely to have complex determinants and less likely explained by a single sovereign cause.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

With significant population growth of Asian Americans—a multiethnic, relatively socioeconomically prosperous, and immigrant-dominated population—in recent years, the political impact of the evolving Asian community in the racial landscape of the United States is likely to garner increasing attention from scholars, the media, and politicians. Yet, as Chapters 1 and 2 conveyed, Asian Americans are in many ways still misunderstood. For example, a number of scholars have noted that Asian Americans as a whole tend to be viewed through stereotypical lenses of popular myths and perceptions of them, such as their image as a model minority. The Asian community today, however, cannot be easily understood as an amalgamated population with shared history, identity, culture, and politics, since it is diverse in terms of such attributes as national origins and languages and multiple concerns distinctive to each ethnic group, such as naturalization and socioeconomic progress. Understanding Americans' attitudes toward Asians, hence, is important in light of the changing face of the American electorate, whose recent additions comprise largely of immigrants from Asia and Latin America, and the likelihood that Americans' beliefs or thoughts about race and ethnicity will be altered beyond the black-white divide in U.S. politics. As an attempt to gain such understanding, this dissertation's principal goal is to provide a systematic study of Americans' perceptions of Asian Americans in terms of affect- and cognition-relevant responses. In this chapter, I first review the major findings of affect- and cognition-based perceptions of Asians by assessing the effectiveness of the conceptual frameworks discussed in Chapter 3 on these perceptions, and discuss possible future research on attitudes toward Asians. Then I discuss the implications of the findings relative to how Americans' evaluations of Asians might affect political empowerment for Asians, such as in coalition building across race and political representation.

## **Major Findings of the Contours and Sources of Perceptions of Asian Americans**

The key findings of the contours of Americans' affect- and cognition-based assessments of Asians indicate that, in general, favorability toward and closeness to Asians and Asian stereotyping, respectively, tend to be positive. Nonetheless, there are some variations in these values compared with those of whites, blacks, and Hispanics. In terms of both affect-based measures of the respective groups, Americans are somewhat less likely to feel warm toward and close to Asians than they do whites, blacks, and Hispanics. In contrast, relative to the cognition-based measures of the respective groups, Americans are likely to have more flattering views of Asians than those of the other groups.

The findings of the key sources of Americans' perceptions of Asians, however, resist simple formulations. Starting with personal contact, the impact of personal contact on affect-based (i.e., closeness) and cognition-based (i.e., group stereotype) perceptions of Asians tends to be mixed and inconsistent. Of the contact measures used in this study, including friendship, residential neighborhood, place of worship, and workplace contacts, friendship contact is the strongest predictor of closeness to Asians. Individuals with more Asian friends have greater odds of feeling close to Asians. In contrast, friendship contact surprisingly has no effects on general stereotyping of Asians. Workplace contact also has a strong influence on closeness to Asians as well as Asian stereotyping, but its effect on these dependent variables is not in the same expected direction. Individuals who work with more Asians are more likely to feel close to Asians, but they are less likely to have positive views of Asians. The other measures (i.e., residential neighborhood and place of worship) have little to no effects on affect- or cognition-based perceptions of Asians. These results suggest that the contact theory better explains affect-based perceptions of Asians than cognition-based perceptions of the group.

The effects of self-interest on affect- and cognition-based perceptions of Asians are mixed and inconsistent as well. While the self-interest measures have little to no effects on favorability toward Asians or stereotyping of Asians in terms of the untrustworthy-trustworthy trait dimension, different measures of self-interest influence closeness to Asians and the other stereotype dependent variables. Individuals who feel less threatened by job competition with Asians are more likely to feel close to Asians. Those with higher levels of family income are more likely to hold positive stereotypes of Asians. Conversely, being employed and in higher levels of the U.S. social class are associated unexpectedly with a weaker likelihood of having flattering stereotypes of Asians.

The findings also reveal varied effects of symbolic politics on both affect- and cognition-based perceptions of Asians. American identity has a strong impact on both favorability toward and closeness to Asians, while it has no influence on Asian stereotyping. Individuals who have a weaker belief in the importance of the American identity are more likely to feel warm toward and close to Asians. These results are consistent with Stein et al.'s (2000) finding that American identity is negatively related to affect toward Hispanics, another immigrant-dominated group. Partisanship is strongly related to only closeness to Asians and the stereotype variables from the 2004 ANES, although the effect of partisanship on these dependent variables is in the opposite direction. People who identify more with the Democratic Party are more likely to feel close to Asians, whereas those who identify more with the Republican Party are more likely to have positive views of Asians. Political ideology, conversely, has mostly null effects on affect- and cognition-based perceptions of Asians.

In contrast, the context measure (i.e., percent group population) is not significantly related to either affect- or cognition-based perceptions of Asians. These findings do not support the

argument of the group threat/context hypothesis that the size of a minority population in larger geographic environments, such as counties, increases animosity toward the out-group, particularly with respect to Asians. The increasing diversity of neighborhoods and cities across the United States may not be a significant threat to intergroup amity, as the context literature suggests. In contrast to previous findings (e.g., Dixon and Rosenbaum, 2004) that whites' animosity toward minority out-groups, such as blacks, augments in direct proportion to the group size of the nearby minority population, for Asians size and propinquity alone do not necessarily incite racial animosity. The null contextual effects on both affect- and cognition-based responses to Asians, thus, suggest that context is less likely to be an important factor in understanding Americans' views of Asians.

In terms of the key measures, the findings also reveal that Americans' affect-based perceptions of Asians have some common antecedents with those of whites, blacks, and Hispanics. For example, friendship contact has the strongest and most consistent influence on closeness to all four groups. Job competition is significantly associated with closeness to all four groups as well, but the effect of job competition on the dependent variable of Asians is stronger (at the .01 level of significance) than that of the other groups. Conversely, Americans' cognition-based perceptions of Asians have no shared antecedents with those of whites, blacks, and Hispanics. For instance, family income and partisanship strongly affect only Asian stereotyping. There are, however, some key sources that influence racial stereotyping of both Asians and another group, such as Hispanics. For example, individuals who are employed are unexpectedly less likely to have positive views of both Asians and Hispanics.

Other non-key sources (i.e., socio-demographic indicators and a general view of human nature measure) also are strong predictors of affect- and cognition-based perceptions of Asians.

For instance, people with more education have greater odds of feeling both warm toward and close to Asians. Individuals who have a more positive view of human nature are more likely to have flattering stereotypes of Asians.

In sum, the major findings confirm some aspects of the personal contact, self-interest, and symbolic politics hypotheses discussed in past studies of political attitudes toward other racial groups in the United States, while they call into question the validity of such hypotheses as those relating to context. These results suggest that different explanations need to be sought to understand the sources of Americans' affect- and cognition-based responses to Asians and that perceptions of Asians, hence, are more likely to involve social and psychological processes that are less likely explained by a single sovereign cause.

#### Future Research

The major findings of this dissertation have provided some important insights into Americans' views of Asians, but some of the findings are conflicting to expectations discussed in previous research, suggesting that further research is warranted. Although problems, such as data limitations, prevented testing the effectiveness of the full sets of personal contact, context, self-interest, and symbolic politics measures on all the models, including all of these measures should be a high priority in future research to help better understand affect- and cognition-based attitudes toward Asians. With the benefit of more contemporary and larger sized samples of Asians (as well as whites, blacks, and Hispanics), future research may uncover more fully and conclusively the sources of Americans' perceptions of Asians.

Other future research examining perceptions of Asians would consider using survey experiments to determine the possible effects of the media, which is often described as having a major impact on cognitions and, ultimately, affect toward racial/ethnic groups. For example,

using experiments, several past studies (e.g., Valentino, 1999; Ramasubramanian and Oliver, 2007; Oliver, 2003) find that media portrayals of racial groups influence viewers' racial attitudes toward the groups. Hence, using survey experiments would be useful to determine, for instance, whether race plays a role in voters' preferences of Asian candidates versus candidates of other races.

Following past studies of intergroup relations, this dissertation examines affect- and cognition-based perceptions of Asians separately from each other. Yet, it is possible that, for example, Americans' stereotypes of Asians may influence their favorability toward Asians. Future research would explore as well the relationship between cognitions about Asians and other racial/ethnic groups and affect toward the groups by examining how stereotypes of these groups influence affect-relevant responses toward them.

### **Implications**

Junn and Matto (2008) note that American democracy has continuously been marked by dynamism, such as the constant alterations to the makeup of its electorate as minorities, women, and young adults are admitted as eligible voting citizens. With the recent influx of immigrants from largely Asia (and Latin America) into the American polity that affects especially the changing face of the voting public as well as Americans' likely changing attitudes toward race and ethnicity, Asian Americans present an ideal opportunity for researchers to examine and validate competing theories of racial attitudes, including context, personal contact, self-interest, and symbolic politics. These theories have been developed to explain the relationship largely between white and black Americans (and more recently views toward Hispanic Americans), but they provide a useful framework from which to explore systematically attitudes toward Asians. The findings reviewed in the previous section of this chapter indicate mixed effects of the key

explanatory factors on the negative/positive evaluations and the perceptions of factual attributes of Asian Americans. Nonetheless, they provide some understanding of the patterns and sources of Americans' views of Asians. What do these findings suggest about political opportunities for Asians, such as prospects for cross-racial coalition building between Asians and other groups in the United States? Do the findings reveal possibilities for increased Asian representation? These questions are examined below.

### Prospects for Cross-racial Coalition

Some scholars, such as Lien et al. (2001) and Gay (2006), suggest that coalition building with other groups in the United States is a critical step to achieve political empowerment in mainstream American society for minority groups, such as Asian Americans. The Asian community makes up a comparatively small percentage of the current U.S. population (about 5 percent as estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau in 2009); therefore, cooperation and alliance with other major racial groups would greatly help to gain political empowerment for Asian Americans. Even in places where Asians have a significant presence, such as New York City and Los Angeles as reported in the 2000 Census, the Asian population lacks the numbers to attain such empowerment on its own (Lien et al., 2001). Gay (2006) indicates that history has demonstrated the importance of cross-racial coalition building in such issues as bringing the minority vote to the forefront of political elites' attention and making it count in elections.

An essential feature of coalition building is having common interests (Sonenshein, 1993). The minority politics literature has largely accentuated the shared interests of minority groups and particularly the role of political elites as the positive bases for alliance (Browning, Marshall, and Tabb, 1984; see also Gay, 2006). Yet, as Tedin and Murray (1994) indicate, cooperation at the mass level is more likely to involve attitudes and beliefs that direct the behavior of average



Americans. For example, a group perceived as “lazy” or “unintelligent” is less likely to be seen as a potential partner in coalition building.

The major findings of Americans’ affect- and cognition-based perceptions of Asians indicate that, relative to shared interests with other racial groups, Asians are likely to find some common ground with Hispanics, whites, and blacks. Asians may connect with Hispanics through their common interests concerning immigration-related policies and issues because both are immigrant-dominated groups in America. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Asians and Hispanics currently comprise the majority of the immigrant U.S. population. Hence, it might be expected that these two groups would band together around policies that are important to immigrants and their needs, such as bilingual government services (Lien et al., 2001).

Asians may also form an alliance with both Hispanics and blacks based on common racial minority interests, such as those involving experiences with discrimination and hate crime and policy attitudes (Lien et al., 2001). For example, Asians might unite with both groups in support of affirmative action, although differences among these groups may exist in particular areas of the policy (Lien et al., 2001). Bobo and Johnson (2000) also note that a coalition comprised of black, Hispanic, and Asian community leaders was formed in the aftermath of the 1992 riots in Los Angeles to develop long-term solutions to intense ethnic conflict among the three groups.

It is also possible for Asians to forge a coalition with white Americans based on socioeconomic or class interests (Lien et al., 2001). The findings in Chapter 2 reveal that Asians are more likely to have similar socioeconomic attributes with whites than with both blacks and Hispanics. For instance, both Asians and whites tend to outperform blacks and Hispanics in terms of such socioeconomic attributes as higher levels of education attainment, homeownership, high-skill occupation, and median family income.

## Prospects for Asian Representation

The key findings of the contours and sources of Americans' attitudes toward Asian Americans also have important implications in the prospects for increasing Asian representation in elective office. Moreover, increasing Asian representation is another important step in achieving political empowerment for Asian Americans.

Compared with their proportion of the U.S. population, racial and ethnic minorities remain relatively underrepresented among elected officials at local, state, and national levels. For example, Asian Americans comprise about five percent of the current U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009), and three percent of members of the current 112<sup>th</sup> U.S. Congress are Asian (or 13 members). Yet, compared with Asians, blacks and Hispanics are somewhat more underrepresented in the current Congress in comparison with their current respective U.S. population sizes. Black Americans make up approximately 13 percent of the U.S. population and eight percent of current members of Congress (or 44 members), while Hispanic Americans constitute about 16 percent of the U.S. population and six percent of current members of Congress (or 31 members).

Past research indicates that Asian candidates in the U.S. mainland are more likely than candidates from other racial minority groups to be elected by non-Asian voters (Uhlener et al., 1989; Lai, 2000b). Although there are currently no Asian majority political districts in the U.S. mainland states, some researchers note that Asian American candidates have been successful in districts where Asians comprise a relatively small proportion of the population. Lai et al. (2001) indicate that many recent Asian elected officials emerge from political districts with low levels of Asian constituents. In fact, most mainland Asian elected officials at the state and national levels represented non-Asian districts (Lai et al., 2001). For example, as Lawrence (2008) notes,

Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal, who is Indian American, represents a state with a majority white population (64 percent according to the 2000 Census) and only one percent Asian population (according to the 2000 Census). In contrast to recent black and Hispanic officials who were elected from districts composed of 40 percent or more of the respective racial groups, Asian elected officials on the U.S. mainland predominantly come from political districts where Asians comprise much less than 50 percent of the population (Lai et al., 2001).

The ability of Asian American candidates to have mainstream or crossover appeal in today's American politics challenges traditional notions of racial/ethnic cleavages that were part of multiracial coalitions during the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Rodriguez, 1998; see also Lai et al., 2001). Yet, since the Asian community is geographically dispersed and largely foreign-born, Asian American candidates at all levels, particularly those on the U.S. mainland, need to seek the support of mostly non-Asian constituents and concentrate on broader campaign issues in order to be victorious (Lai et al., 2001).

This dissertation argues that Asian Americans, a politically meaningful but understudied group, are a crucial part of the American political life. The literature on racial attitudes has concentrated largely on black-white relations and more recently on views toward Hispanics; yet, a better or fuller understanding of contemporary racial attitudes in American politics, as well as the dynamics of racial prejudice, requires focusing on all groups that are salient to politics, including Asian Americans. This dissertation hopes that focusing on Asian Americans has helped to gain such understanding.

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## APPENDIX A

### LETTER OF PERMISSION



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## APPENDIX B

### PRINCIPAL COMPONENT FACTOR ANALYSIS RESULTS FOR GROUP STEREOTYPES (2004 ANES)

#### Factor Scale for Group Stereotype of Asian Americans

Number of observations = 1010

Retained factors = 1

Factor 1: Eigenvalue = 2.018; proportion explained = 0.673

Variable	Factor Loading	Unique Variance
Lazy-hardworking	0.838	0.297
Unintelligent-intelligent	0.863	0.255
Untrustworthy-trustworthy	0.755	0.429

#### Factor Scale for Group Stereotype of White Americans

Number of observations = 1039

Retained factors = 1

Factor 1: Eigenvalue = 2.114; proportion explained = 0.704

Variable	Factor Loading	Unique Variance
Lazy-hardworking	0.849	0.279
Unintelligent-intelligent	0.857	0.265
Untrustworthy-trustworthy	0.811	0.342

#### Factor Scale for Group Stereotype of Black Americans

Number of observations = 1035

Retained factors = 1

Factor 1: Eigenvalue = 2.152; proportion explained = 0.717

Variable	Factor Loading	Unique Variance
Lazy-hardworking	0.843	0.289
Unintelligent-intelligent	0.844	0.288
Untrustworthy-trustworthy	0.854	0.271

Factor Scale for Group Stereotype of Hispanic Americans

Number of observations = 1009

Retained factors = 1

Factor 1: Eigenvalue = 1.968; proportion explained = 0.656

Variable	Factor Loading	Unique Variance
Lazy-hardworking	0.772	0.404
Unintelligent-intelligent	0.827	0.316
Untrustworthy-trustworthy	0.829	0.312

## VITA

Before enrolling in the political science graduate program at Louisiana State University in 2005, Nhung Kim Nguyen worked in the business sector for several years as a computer programmer and database analyst. Her major field of study is American politics. Her research interests include Asian American politics, racial and ethnic politics, the political implications of income inequality, public opinion, political behavior, and political participation. She has coauthored (with James Garand) an article entitled “Partisan Strength and Nonpartisanship among Asian Americans” in the journal *American Politics Research*.