PARTITIONING A MONOLITH: DIFFERENTIAL RACIALIZATION AMONG PEOPLE OF

ASIAN DESCENT IN THE U.S.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, whose unconditional love and unyielding support made this journey possible. I dedicate this work to my paternal grandparents, Nelia and Resurreccion; my maternal grandparents, Norma and Dominador; and my sisters, Jasmin and Dannah. Most importantly, this dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Danilo Pagayon and Winnie Baluran, who built new lives in a foreign country, driven by the hope that their hardships and sacrifices will someday pay off for their children. Thank you for nurturing my curiosity, supporting my passion, and inspiring my work.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Hateful as racism may be as a historical fact, it is nevertheless also a *system of meaning*, a way of organizing and meaningfully classifying the world.

- Stuart Hall[1]

As I try to move beyond the stereotypes to express my inner consciousness, it's clear that *how* I am perceived inheres to *who* I am.

- Cathy Park Hong[2]

There is a general understanding among scholars today that race is socially constructed—that it is a product of social, cultural, and historical processes, not biological fact. According to Stuart Hall (2017:63), race is a *sliding signifier* of "an invisible code that writes difference" upon people's bodies and shapes how they interact with each other. As it is shaped by various social and historical processes, the meanings and consequences of race are also ever-changing; in short, it is a dynamic construct. But while race is conceptualized as a dynamic social construct, it is often presented, utilized, and interpreted in scientific research as a static variable (Stewart and

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[1] Pp. 33 in *The Fateful Triangle: Race, Ethnicity, Nation*. 2017. Kobena Mercer (editor). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
[2] Pp. 64 in *Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning*. 2020. Cathy Park Hong. New York, NY: Penguin Random House.

Sewell 2011; Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva 2008). Notably, extant scholarship often overlooks the processes that make and re-make racial categories in the first place (Zuberi, Patterson, and Stewart 2015). In most quantitative studies, race is accounted for through the addition of race/ethnic categories as control variables in statistical models. However, this approach conceptualizes race as static and takes its meaning for granted (Zuberi 2001; Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva 2008). This issue is also present in qualitative studies, though perhaps to a lesser extent (Morris 2007; Twine and Warren 2000). Thus, a large portion of existing scholarship fails to fully capture and demonstrate how the meanings of race and the consequences of racialization vary across space (i.e., contextual fluidity) and time (i.e., temporal fluidity). Paying close attention to these contexts, however, is invaluable to the endeavor of unmasking the American racialization system and addressing its consequences on people's lives (Twine and Warren 2000; Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva 2008). In this dissertation, I task myself with addressing some of these gaps by exploring how boundaries of group membership and community shift across various contexts to uncover what those shifts mean for people's life outcomes.

Specifically, I focus on the experiences of the people subsumed under the monolithic Asian/Asian American umbrella, and I show that centering their lived experiences is instructive in understanding how race operates in American society today. In order to underline the dynamic nature of race, I interrogate the incoherent nature of racialization, or *differential racialization*. Critical race theorists refer to differential racialization as the ways in which the dominant society racializes different minority groups at different times, in response to their needs (Delgado and Stefancic 2017; Gotanda 2000). This traditional conceptualization of differential racialization largely focuses on the meanings that are attached to certain groups of people and the dominant society's reaction to the people who are so categorized (Delgado and Stefancic 2004, 2007;

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Gotanda 1991, 2000; Johnston-Guerrero 2016). Thus, it helps explain why groups such as Japanese during World War II or Middle Easterners and South Asians after 9/11 became targeted and treated as threats (Gotanda 2010, 2011; Selod 2015, 2018). Differential racialization also explains the construction of people of Asian ancestry in the United States as permanent foreigners (Gotanda 2000).

Such cases highlight how society's assessment of members of certain racial categories of people shifts in tandem with the political environment. Nevertheless, the traditional view of differential racialization does not describe who gets to be categorized under certain racial labels in the first place, how that process occurs, and how it influences the lives of racialized people. I confront these existing limitations by extending the notion of differential racialization and utilizing it to reframe how we interpret observed inequalities within existing monolithic race categories using the case of the Asian/Asian American category. This dissertation therefore re-imagines the concept of *differential racialization*[3] to illustrate that racial stratification does not only differentiate people between existing race categories but also within them. This project is not simply another attempt to argue that race is socially constructed. Rather, it is a concerted effort to elucidate how individuals and communities experience racialization; how racialization varies across space and over time; how formal institutions, such as policing, aid in that process; and why it all matters. Before I offer an overview of the substantive chapters that constitute this dissertation, I first discuss below the motivation for studying people of Asian descent.

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[3] Throughout this dissertation, I use the italicized '*differential racialization*' to refer to my re-conceptualization of the traditional differential racialization idea.

1.1   Why Study People of Asian Descent?

Concentrating on *differential racialization* as experienced by people of Asian descent is advantageous for this project. The communities encompassed by the Asian/Asian American label are some of the fastest growing subgroups in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau 2021). Yet, even with their rapid growth, people of Asian descent remain marginalized, or altogether excluded, in scholarly and popular discourse on race in the United States (Lee and Ramakrishnan 2021; Yi et al. 2022). Given their rapid growth, it is imperative that they be included in research, notably on race. Failure to do so will leave a large and ever-widening gap in our understanding of social inequality in U.S. society. Moreover, while data scarcity—on the aggregated Asian racial group and of disaggregated national-origin groups alike—has historically limited investigations into these different communities' experiences, there is growing, albeit slow, availability of disaggregated data on these groups (Drouhot and Garip 2021; Lee and Ramakrishnan 2021). For example, in this dissertation, I take advantage of disaggregated mortality data from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) to examine the health of the United States' three largest Asian-origin groups. Thus, while disaggregated data remain rare and limited in terms of which groups are included, utilizing these recently available data sources helps us paint a fuller picture of racial inequality across various outcomes in this country.

There are also important theoretical benefits to including people of Asian descent in race-related research. Historically, the various national-origin groups now called Asian/Asian American did not all belong under one racial category. For example, Asian Indians were at different points in history racially categorized as Caucasian, Hindu, and later as Asian, while Filipinos had their own category in the Census separate from groups like Chinese (Lee and Ramakrishnan 2021; Okamoto 2014). In fact, as Okamoto (2014) notes, it was not until 1977 that

the United States government recognized *Asian* as an official racial category under which

previously separate groups like Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Asian

Indians, and others were then subsumed. But even following the formation of a pan-ethnic

Asian/Asian American category, questions concerning the belongingness of certain groups under

the monolithic Asian label persisted. Notably, groups like Asian Indians, Filipinos, and other

non-East Asian groups are often excluded from the American public's understanding of who is

Asian (Kibria 1998; Lee and Ramakrishnan 2020; Nadal 2019). Thus, while the concept of an

Asian/Asian American community secured many political victories for the people it

encompasses (Lee 2015; Okamoto 2014; Omi and Winant 2014), the meaningfulness, and the

very existence, of a shared Asian/Asian American racial status remain unsettled. It is this

unsettled discourse about who does and does not count as Asian that offers valuable ground for

studying the nature of racial boundaries and the notion of *differential racialization*.

Lastly, people of Asian descent warrant inclusion in race scholarship because as members

of American society, they too, endure the consequences America's racialized social hierarchy.

There is a long history of various Asian-origin groups living in the United States, being

victimized by, and also resisting, racialization and racism, in turn shaping the fabric of American

social life (Gotanda 1999; Lee 2015; Matsuda 1993; Ngai 2004). The legal conceptualizations of

whiteness and citizenship, for example, were challenged by people of Asian descent seeking to

hold accountable the nation's purported value of equality for all people[4] (Gotanda 2000; Haney-

Lopez 1996; Lee 2015). Moreover, the creation of immigration quotas and the discriminatory

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[4] See court cases Ozawa v. United States (1922) and Thind v. United States (1923). Both cases
helped shape the legal definition of whiteness and the requirements for citizenship (Haney-Lopez
1996).

exclusion of entire groups of people from entering the United States (e.g., The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882) were in response to the perceived racial threat posed by people of Asian descent in the past (Gotanda 1999; Kim 1994; Lee 2015).

Members of various Asian-origin communities also survived racial violence, including riots (e.g., Watsonville Riots in 1930) and forced confinement (e.g., Japanese Internment Camps) (DeWitt 1979; Nagata 1990). And the resurgence of violence against people perceived as Asian since the outbreak of COVID-19 in the United States in 2020 echoes the types of violence and antagonistic rhetoric that generations of people of Asian descent endured in the past[5]. Thus, while the problematic notion of people of Asian descent as model minorities facing few problems continues to shape the American public's imagination of an Asian/Asian American community, the lived experiences of the people confined within this category are more complex than that simplistic narrative. The challenges that these diverse communities faced throughout history, and the challenges they face today, underline the precarity of their social positions within the American racial hierarchy. It is therefore incumbent upon researchers to unpack the nuances of these communities' racialized experiences such that we gain a clearer picture of how race operates in U.S. society. It is with these reasons in mind that this project centers the racialized experiences of people of Asian descent. In the following section, I briefly discuss the dissertation's substantive chapters.

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[5] Scholars argue that the politicization of COVID-19 and political rhetoric that blames the pandemic on China has led to the revival of the "yellow peril" trope which portrays people of Asian descent as unhygienic disease carriers (Li and Nicholson Jr. 2021). Such rhetoric has led to physical violence and harassment directed at people perceived as Asian (Lee and Huang 2021).

1.2   Overview of Chapters

This dissertation contains three substantive chapters. The first substantive chapter, Chapter 2, bridges the disconnected literatures on racialization, racial and ethnic fluidity, and boundary-making to explain how individual and aggregate-level race processes produce stratification. Its principal aim is to make a theoretical contribution to race scholarship by articulating an extension of differential racialization as a mechanism that links micro and macro processes of racialization. Through the lens of *differential racialization*, we can imagine racial stratification processes producing inequality between and *within* existing racial categories. The expanded conceptualization of *differential racialization* that I present in Chapter 2 explains how population-level changes in the racial stratification system of the United States are tied to individuals' daily experiences of racialization and racism on the ground. I present the key tenets of *differential racialization* and describe their implications for research. Because race is a 'master category' (Hughes 1945; Omi and Winant 2015/1986) that determines the life trajectories of people in the United States, the process of differential racialization should be observable along different aspects of social life. As such, after establishing an expanded conceptualization of *differential racialization* in Chapter 2, I then apply the *differential racialization* lens to two important outcomes, health and experiences with social control.

In the third chapter, I demonstrate the macro-level consequences of *differential racialization* by illustrating how the *differential racialization* lens can explain the temporal trends in population health inequalities between groups subsumed under the Asian racial category. There is a small but growing literature that underscores the divergent racialized experiences of the different groups that are included under the Asian label (Lee and Ramakrishnan 2020; Nadal 2019; Ocampo 2016; Selod 2018). Much of the research in this line

of inquiry focuses on the qualitative differences in how groups like South Asians, Filipinos, and other groups of non-East Asian origin experience race (e.g., Islam 2000; Ocampo 2013, 2014; Selod 2018; Shahms 2020). However, few studies explore the implications of these disparate racialization experiences on health. Chapter 3 addresses that gap by incorporating the foregoing literature to hypothesize the relationship between racialization and health within the monolithic Asian category. Moreover, considering the scholarship that posits the emergence of new racial lines that will re-categorize the groups currently under the Asian category (Bonilla-Silva 2014), I posit that the *differential racialization* of these groups will manifest, in part, as widening health inequalities.

As such, Chapter 3 is driven by two research questions: (1) How have the mortality levels of disaggregated Asian-origin groups changed since the beginning of the 21st century? And (2) how can we utilize the concept of *differential racialization* to understand the health and mortality trends among these disaggregated groups? To address these questions, I analyzed data from the National Center for Health Statistics and the American Community Survey to study the long-term trends in life expectancy at birth and life disparity among the three largest groups under the Asian/Asian American umbrella—Chinese, Asian Indians, and Filipinos. Generally speaking, I found evidence of growing inequalities between Chinese and Asian Indians and Chinese and Filipinos and narrowing inequality between Filipinos and Asian Indians. These gaps were largely attributable to improving mortality among Chinese, worsening mortality among Asian Indians, and worsening or stagnating mortality among Filipinos. In light of these findings that point to diverging life chances that may be attributable to these groups' changing racial statuses, I argue that we have evidence of the process of the formation of new racial lines between these three groups. These findings, therefore, underscore the temporal fluidity of race.

Following the macro-level application of *differential racialization*, the fourth chapter explores how individuals experience *differential racialization* at the micro-level. Located at the intersections of race, status construction, crime, law, and deviance, Chapter 4 reveals how *differential racialization* affects how people of Asian descent interact with the law and people associated with the law. I analyzed original qualitative data from one-on-one interviews with young adults of Asian descent from across the United States to understand how others' perceptions of their identities shape their experiences with the law and law enforcement. As such, Chapter 4 addresses two research questions: (a) How do young adults of Asian descent experience *differential racialization*? (b) How does differential racialization shape how young adults of Asian descent think about and experience police interactions?

The narratives that I relay in Chapter 4 draw attention to how inclusion or exclusion from the boundaries of 'Asian-ness' shape how young adults of Asian origin experienced and navigated police encounters. Respondents' accounts suggest that being racialized as *Asian* guarded against aggression and disrespectful tone and behaviors from the police, attributing neutral police treatment to generalizations about Asians as docile, law-abiding, and non-threatening. However, those who described being racialized as something other than Asian reported more negative police treatment. I argue that the *differential racialization* of these young adults led to divergent policing experiences via status construction. How individuals interact with each other is partly shaped by their perceived racial-ethnic status; but, how one's racial-ethnic status is classified by others does not necessarily follow the ethno-racial pentagon. Chapter 4, therefore, describes what *differential racialization* looks like and how it is experienced by individuals in micro-level interactions.

Altogether, these three substantive chapters cohere around five central arguments. First, race is socially constructed. Second, the meanings of race and racial categories are in constant flux, and the concept of *differential racialization* captures these shifts. Third, *differential racialization* determines who gets to belong under certain labels, and not merely what assumptions are made regarding those categories of people. This is a re-conceptualization of the traditional differential racialization idea and differs from how it is commonly expressed in extant literature. Fourth, *differential racialization* is empirically observable. Lastly, existing racial categories (i.e., White, Black, Asian, Native American, etc.) fail to fully capture shared experiences among the people they encapsulate.

CHAPTER 2

Extending Differential Racialization: Capturing the Evolving Forms of Racial Stratification

Durkheim's ([1895] 1982) first rule of the sociological method is to break with prenotions. He impelled sociologists to examine, analyze, and scrutinize social phenomena beyond merely commonsense understandings. Yet, the discordance between social scientists' conceptualization of race and the way it is commonly presented, utilized, and interpreted in research bespeaks a break from that rule. While there is now a general understanding among social scientists that race is socially constructed, extant scholarship often does not capture the processes that make and re-make racial categories (Zuberi, Patterson, and Stewart 2015). Researchers often take a variable approach that presents race as a fixed entity that produces some measurable outcome (Emirbayer 1997). This approach, however, is problematic because it overlooks the dynamic nature of social reality and takes the meaning of race and race categories for granted (Emirbayer 1997; Emirbayer and Desmond 2015; Monk 2022; Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva 2008). Moreover, it conceptualizes race as static and overlooks the processes that make people's experiences of racialization and racism vary across different spatial and temporal contexts. Consequently, the gap between our conceptualization and application of race leads to important shortcomings in our theoretical understanding of racial stratification in the United States.

This gap is evident in the disconnect between macro level and micro level scholarship on race. At the macro level[6] scholars argue that new systems of racial ordering are taking shape in the United States that question our continued use of what Hollinger (2006/1995) called the ethno-racial pentagon (Treitler 2013; Bonilla-Silva 2002, 2004, 2018; Lee and Bean 2010; Portes, Fernandez-Kelly, and Haller 2005). They contend that the distinctions that we make between existing racial categories (e.g., Black, white, Asian, etc.) are becoming less meaningful than the distinctions between white/non-white, Black/non-Black, or between whites, honorary whites, and collective Blacks. While these macro-level perspectives are compelling, they stop short of explaining how these population-level processes are tied to individual-level (or micro-level) experiences. Race is not only experienced at the group-level, it is also experienced by individuals on the ground (Davenport 2020; Roth 2018; Saperstein and Penner 2012). As such, Emirbayer and Desmond (2015:71) argue that scholars must study race from above and from below to fully understand the American racial order. Therefore, the emergence of new racial orders, like a white/non-white, Black/non-Black, or Bonilla-Silva's (2002, 2004, 2018/2003) tri-racial system, must be tied to processes at the micro-level.

I address these theoretical gaps in this chapter by re-examining and extending the conceptualization of the Critical Race Theory idea of differential racialization to describe the discordance between existing understandings of group membership (e.g., the general understanding of who is white, Black, Asian, Native American, etc.) and how these understandings are employed in social interactions. Critical race theorists refer to differential racialization as the ways in which the dominant society racializes different minority groups at

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[6] By macro-level scholarship I mean the literature that focuses on large-scale, long-term, population-level processes.

different times, in response to their needs (Delgado and Stefancic 2017: 9-10; Gotanda 1999; 2011). This traditional conceptualization of differential racialization largely focuses on the meanings that are attached to certain groups of people and the dominant society's reaction to the people who are so categorized. Thus, it helps explain why groups such as Japanese during the second World War or Middle Easterners and South Asians after 9/11 became targeted and treated as threats (Gotanda 2011; Selod 2015, 2018). It also describes the changing assumptions to people racialized as Asian (Gotanda 1999, 2000). Those cases highlight how society's assessment of members of certain categories of people shifts in tandem with the political environment. However, this view of differential racialization does not describe who gets to be categorized under certain racial labels, how that process occurs, and how it influences the lives of racialized people. By extending the meaning of *differential racialization*, I posit that racial stratification does not only differentiate between existing race categories but also within them (Obasogie 2014).

In the following sections, I merge and discuss the literatures upon which I develop five arguments regarding the nature of race in America. I then present these five arguments as the key tenets of a reimagined differential racialization. First, race is socially constructed. Second, the meanings of race and racial categories are in constant flux, and these shifts are captured by the concept of *differential racialization*. Third, *differential racialization* determines who gets to belong under certain labels, and not merely what assumptions are made regarding those categories of people. Fourth, *differential racialization* is experienced on the ground and at the population level, and it is empirically observable at both levels. Lastly, that existing monolithic racial categories (i.e., white, Black, Asian, Latinx, Native American.) cannot fully capture meaningful shared experiences among the people they encapsulate. While discussing these

tenets, I also briefly describe their implications for research. Although this is not the first paper to underline how individuals experience inconsistent racialization (see, for example, Campbell and Troyer 2007; Saperstein and Penner 2012), it expands on the extant literature by re-imagining the concept of differential racialization and presenting it as a link between micro and macro processes of race and racialization.

2.1   The Study of Race in the United States

Race, as it is understood today, developed with the expansion of European imperialism and colonialism (Cox 1948; Graves Jr. 2003; Hall 2021; Painter 2010). Along with it, the racial order, or the hierarchical ranking of people in a society, was developed to justify colonization and slavery of chosen populations; that is, the racial order is a tool of social control and permits the discrimination, dehumanization, and exploitation of 'non-white' bodies (DuBois [1920]1999; Drake 1987; Zuberi 2001). Thus, at its core, racialization—or the process of assigning individuals to races—is a process of domination (DuBois [1920]1999; Zuberi 2001). As such, most scientists in the early years of the social scientific study of race understood and wrote about race through a biological lens that allowed them to justify slavery, anti-immigrant policies, and the subordination of certain groups of people (Gould 1996; Zuberi 2001; Graves Jr. 2008/2001; Roberts 2011). These scientists promoted and defended a racist hierarchical order of human groups, largely based on phenotypic differences (Zuberi 2001; Graves Jr. 2008/2001; Roberts 2011; Duster 2003). Nonetheless, as Omi and Winant (2015/1986: 4-7) recount, some scholars at that time—most of them Black—challenged the dominant understanding of race. Perhaps most prominent among them was W.E.B. DuBois (1899), whose pioneering research empirically

demonstrated that social and structural factors—like color prejudice, residential segregation, lack of access to well-paying jobs, and lack of access to educational facilities—explain the divergent life outcomes between Black and white Americans. DuBois' (1899, [1903] 2017, [1920]1999) work, though largely marginalized in his time, is now considered foundational to our understanding of the relationship between social factors and racial disparities in life outcomes (Morris 2015).

Today, however, there is a consensus among social scientists that race is socially constructed. The social constructionist view suggests that racial meanings are unstable, inconsistent, and largely serve the interests of the dominant groups (Omi and Winant 2015/1986). This is evident, for example, in the constantly changing categories of the United States Census (Nobles 2000; Zuberi 2001). It can also be seen in how some immigrant ethnic groups became categorized as 'white' over time (e.g., Italians, Irish) (Treitler 2013; Omi and Winant 2015/1986; Roediger 2005). The social constructionist understanding of race posits that social forces—like the dominant economic system, political forces, and inter-group dynamics— shape racial categories and their meanings (Omi and Winant 2015/1986; Obasogie 2014; Bonilla-Silva 2018). Moreover, because these social forces reflect the power dynamics within a society, racial groupings and their meanings are heavily influenced by those in power (i.e., whites) (Omi and Winant 2015/1986; Delgado and Stefancic 2017; Gonzalez-Sobrino and Goss 2019). Thus, the problem of the 'color line' (DuBois [1903]2017) reflects the power dynamics in American society.

The social constructionist perspective is the foundation of the literature on racialization. In their seminal work on racial formation, Omi and Winant (2015/1986) called for a new approach to the study of race that goes beyond the conceptualization of race as merely a product

of other social phenomena (Gonzalez-Sobrino and Goss 2019; Saperstein, Penner, and Light 2013). They advocated a research agenda that centered on the processes involved in the making and re-making of racial categories, and the attachment of racial meanings to previously non-racial things. Today, scientists acknowledge that because race is a social construct, its meanings and categories also change across time and place. Therefore, focusing on racialization as a process, rather than race as a static concept, better captures the complexities of identity and identity formation. Nevertheless, a cursory look at the existing literature reveals that scholars continue to take an uncritical approach to the study of race (Bonilla-Silva 1997; Zuberi et al. 2015). Much of this issue is attributable to the faulty interpretation of data (Stewart 2008; Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva 2008). Critics argue that scientists often interpret observed racial differences (e.g., in health, education, income, etc.) as 'race effects' rather than effects of social processes of domination (Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva 2008). In doing so, researchers advocate a social constructionist view while simultaneously promoting a static conceptualization of race.

2.2   The Fluidity of Race

Although the social constructionist view has upended the assumption that race is innate, the dominant discourse on its dynamism largely focuses on macro-level and/or long-term (i.e. occurring over decades) shifts. As such, the social constructionist view is invoked when scholars describe the process of Italians and Irish becoming 'white,' the addition of new racial categories in the census, or the emergence of new racial boundaries as new waves of immigrants enter the country (Alba and Nee 2003; Treitler 2013; Lee and Bean 2012; Roediger 2005; Saenz and Douglas 2015; Zuberi 2001). In this dominant understanding, racial boundaries may shift but an

individual's membership to a race is assumed to remain fixed once they are labeled (Saperstein and Penner 2012; Zuberi 2000). Even in instances when racial boundaries—and the meanings attached to racial labels—change or shift suddenly, individual membership to certain groups are assumed to remain stable (e.g., Selod 2013; Selod and Embrick 2013). In these cases, the concept of racialization is used to describe the process whereby racial meanings are attached to a group of people (e.g., Muslims being perceived as terrorists following 9/11).

Other researchers demonstrate how broad categories of people—like Asian or Latinx—are racialized such that they are perceived as foreigners or 'illegal' (Ancheta 2006/1998; Armenta 2016; Ng, Lee, and Pak 2007; Saenz and Morales 2015). However, because these studies do not interrogate the processes that determine who gets to belong in those broad categories, they overlook the possibility that the racial meanings attached to these categories may not actually be applied to all the people that they encapsulate. Therefore, with some exceptions (e.g., Freeman et al. 2011; Leibler et al. 2017; Saperstein and Penner 2012; Saperstein 2012), much of the race literature acknowledges the fluidity of race at the macro-level but not at the individual level.

2.3   Race Versus Ethnicity

The literature also largely assumes that a rigid boundary exists between race and ethnicity. Race today is generally understood as a construct produced by social processes, while ethnicity is often understood in terms of cultural characteristics and national heritage (Jenkins 2008/1997; Saenz and Morales 2019; Wimmer 2008a). But this inflexible distinction is problematic. Ethnicity, like race, is a product of social processes of external ascription, self-

identification, and power dynamics (Roth 2016; Saperstein et al. 2013; Waters 2002). For example, work on pan-ethnic group formation shows that the development of labels like 'Asian American' and 'Latinx American' is tied to political power (Espiritu 1992; Omi and Winant 2015/1986). Other researchers have shown that many groups, including Italians, Irish, Chinese, and West Indians, emphasize their ethnic identities to secure a higher position in the racial hierarchy (Treitler 2013; Warren and Twine 1997; Waters 1999). Also, to think of race and ethnicity as dichotomous, or to think of race as dynamic and ethnicity static, overlook the fluidity of identity.

Racial and ethnic identities are both filled with inconsistencies, ambiguities, and are subject to change depending on context (Obach 1999; Waters 2002). To illustrate, Waters (1999) describes that for West Indian immigrants, identity is a combination of national origin, which we might think of as ethnicity (e.g., Haitian, Dominican, and Trinidadian), subnational identity, which we might think of as race (e.g., Black), and regional identity (West Indian). Other scholars have also invoked the ambiguity and fluidity of race and ethnicity in describing how different ethnic groups may be racialized depending on time and space. Warren and Twine (1997) note that while the Chinese in Mississippi were once considered neither white nor Black, they were later accepted as white. Further, Hoetink's (1967) work—as described by Wimmer (2008b)— shows that an individual who may be considered 'white' in Puerto Rico may be considered 'colored' in Jamaica and 'Negro' in Georgia.

Perhaps the most prominent example of the blurred line between ethnicity and race is the case of Latinx/Hispanics. In the United States, Hispanic or Latinx is officially considered an ethnicity. However, this classification conflicts with many Hispanics' perception that being Hispanic or Latinx is both an ethnic and a racial identity (Taylor et al. 2012). For example, when

Liebler and colleagues (2017) examined linked individual responses to questions regarding racial identification between the 2000 and 2010 censuses, they found that only 41% of people who identified as Hispanic in 2000 also identified as Hispanic in 2010. Davenport (2020: 224) also notes that data from the American Community Survey reveal that the majority of people in the U.S. who identify as "some other race" also identified as Hispanic, and that nearly 30% of those who identified as Hispanic also identified as "some other race." The blurred distinction between ethnicity and race is also evident in the ways that other immigrant groups—like Filipinos and Asian Indians—locate themselves within the United States' racial system (Baldoz 2004; Kibria 1996; Lee and Ramakrishnan 2019; Nadal 2019; Ocampo 2016). These studies evince that the divide between race and ethnicity is not obvious, and the false dichotomy between the two concepts limits our understanding of how stratification functions in American society.

2.4   Race Beyond Black and White

2.4.1   Emerging Macro-Level Theoretical Perspectives on Race

The extant literature is limited by the lack of theorization beyond the Black-white racial binary (Gonzalez-Sobrino and Goss 2019). In his "Address to the Nations of the World" at the Pan-African Conference, W.E.B. DuBois (1900) famously posited that "the problem of the twentieth-century [will be] the problem of the color line." In the 21st century, however, that color line is no longer just drawn between Black and white (Lee and Bean 2010; Bonilla-Silva 2015). Immigration from Asia and Latin America continues to produce an increasingly diverse society. In this context, scholars produced three main macro-level theoretical perspectives on the color line. First, some social scientists believe that a *white-nonwhite divide* is emerging. In this view,

Asians join Latinx and Blacks in the nonwhite category. Proponents of this perspective contend that the enduring physical differences between people of European descent and Asians, Latinx, and Blacks will continue to hinder the latter three groups' attempts to reach economic and social status parity with whites (Portes et al. 2005). There is historical precedence for this view.

Asian-origin groups have faced many forms of state-sanctioned discrimination and exclusion that Europeans did not have to endure to the same extent, or at all (Fox and Guglielmo 2012). The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 barred Chinese from entering the country for a decade, and Japanese Americans were forcefully interned in camps during World War II (Lee 2015; Takaki 1979). In addition, Supreme Court decisions in Takao Ozawa v. United States (1922) and United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind (1923) labeled Asians as nonwhite and unassimilable (Haney-Lopez 1996; Ichioka 1988; Jensen 1988; Kim 1999). These examples support the case that Asians will not be able to enter the white category. As such, proponents of the white-nonwhite perspective contend that because of their non-European origin, Asians will continue to be subordinated as a racialized minority whose experiences are more akin to Black and Latinx groups than whites (Takaki 1989; Portes et al. 2005).

Alternately, others argue that a *Black-non-Black divide* is emerging. Supporters of this view hold that groups like Latinx and Asians will eventually enter the white category, much like the southern and eastern European immigrants of the past (Yancey 2003; Lee and Bean 2010; Perlmann 2000). This perspective is also influenced by the notion of African American exceptionalism, or the idea that blackness will always be recognized as 'other' in America (Gans 2005; Warren and Twine 1997). Those who hold this view argue that the construction and expansion of whiteness in America relies on the existence of blackness because African Americans are the foundation of the American racial paradigm (Treitler 2013: 168). Lee and

Bean (2010), citing trends in intermarriage and multi-racial identification, posit that the future of

American racial stratification looks to be a Black-non-Black divide. They note that Asians or

Latinx individuals who choose to marry white partners are less likely to face opposition from

family members than those who choose to marry Black partners. In general, this position

suggests that while Asian and Latinx groups may not all acquire whiteness, they can, and will

likely, distance themselves from African Americans such that they can move up the racial

hierarchy (Treitler 2013). Consequently, the most important and impactful distinction will be

between Black and everyone else.

Unlike the other two views, the *tri-racial divide* posits that the future of the American

racial system will resemble that in Latin America and the Caribbean (Bonilla-Silva 2004).

According to Bonilla-Silva (2002, 2004, 2018), in the tri-racial system the three main racial

categories will be whites, honorary whites, and collective Black. This new racial division will be

primarily guided by differences in socioeconomic status and a logic of 'pigmentocracy,' wherein

skin tone will be the index by which groups of people will be classified. Whites will include

those of European descent, 'assimilated' white Latinos, some Asian-origin groups, 'assimilated'

Native Americans, and some multiracial people. Honorary whites will include light-skinned

Latinos, most multiracial Americans, Middle Easterners, Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, and Asian

Indians[7]. Lastly, the collective Black includes Black Americans, Vietnamese, Hmong, Laotians,

African Immigrants, reservation-bound Native Americans, dark-skinned Latinos, and West

Indians. These classifications are what Bonilla-Silva (2002, 2004, 2018/2003) expects to see in

an American tri-racial system. However, there is variability in his expectations. In particular, in

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[7] The high socioeconomic status of Asian Indians— who have darker skin tones relative to East
Asians—may facilitate their entry into the 'honorary white' group.

early versions of the theory he placed Filipinos under honorary whites (Bonilla-Silva 2002, 2004) but has recently placed them under the collective Black (Bonilla-Silva 2018). Nevertheless, while much work remains to clarify the hypotheses and delineate the mechanisms that produce the tri-racial system, this perspective promises a more nuanced understanding of race that goes beyond a dichotomous paradigm.

2.4.2   Racial Boundaries

The foregoing theoretical perspectives generally describe the macro-level changes in the United States' racial order. They partly address the issues concerning the race literature's myopic focus on the Black-white binary. Rarely have these theories been tied, however, to the emerging research on micro-level changes in racial processes (Emirbayer and Desmond 2015; Saperstein and Penner 2012). I advance that the literature on racial boundaries is useful in connecting the micro-level processes associated with racial and ethnic fluidity and the processes tied to macro-level changes in the racial hierarchy. Some scholars argue that the fluidity of racial and ethnic identities is also observable at the micro-level (Davenport 2020; Roth 2018; Saperstein and Penner 2012). Drawing on the literature on social boundaries (Alba 2005; Lamont and Molnar 2002; Wimmer 2008a; Zolberg and Long 1999), they hold that boundaries between racial and/or ethnic groups can be "bright" or "blurred."

Bright boundaries are distinctions between groups of people that are unambiguous and widely recognized, such that individuals never question their location in the divide (Fox and Guglielmo 2012; Alba 2005; Lamont and Molnar 2002). On the other hand, blurred boundaries are less recognized and more ambiguous (Alba 2005). Considering this information, scholars

have identified multiple types of racial fluidity: temporal, contextual, referential, and categorical (Roth 2016; Telles and Paschel 2014; see Davenport 2020 for review). Temporal fluidity refers to how individuals identify or are classified over time within the same context (Telles and Paschel 2014, Roth 2016; Liebler et al. 2017). Contextual fluidity refers to changes across different conditions or contexts within a limited period (Roth 2016; Telles and Paschel 2014; Harris and Sim 2002; Loveman, Muniz, and Bailey 2012). Referential and categorical fluidity refer to the inconsistency of who belongs in which racial categories and the inconsistency of the location of racial boundaries, respectively (Telles and Paschel 2014). In general, Davenport (2020: 223) describes the changes in racial boundaries throughout U.S. history (i.e., macro-level) as examples of referential and categorical fluidity.

Roth (2016), on the other hand, posits that temporal and contextual fluidity are at play in micro-level fluctuations in race. This is corroborated by research showing the fluctuations in how individuals and groups of people identify their race in national surveys (Harris and Sim 2002; Hitlin, Brown, and Elder 2006). Others show the inconsistency between respondent self-identification and observer classification of race (Bailey, Loveman, and Muniz 2013; Penner and Saperstein 2015; Vargas and Kingsbury 2016; Vargas and Stainback 2016). Temporal fluidity is also clear in Liebler and colleagues' (2017) findings on how Hispanics/Latinx individuals change their racial self-identity over time.

Still, Roth (2018: 1097) argues that these studies remain limited because they do not consider how the ambiguities of race influence how other people classify members of a group. Thus, she advocates a research agenda that centers on racial appraisals, pointing to how others classify the race of individuals and groups of people (Roth 2018: 1094). In her view, the temporal and contextual fluidity of race result from the interaction and discrepancies between

observed race (i.e., the race others classify you as), reflected race (i.e., the race that you believe others assume you to be), racial self-classification (i.e., the race you check on an official form), and racial identity (i.e., your subjective self-identification that is not limited by pre-set categories) (Roth 2018, 2016). Moreover, others have shown that the racialization of individuals 'on the street' is associated with the likelihood of experiencing discrimination across multiple domains of social life (Lopez et al. 2018; Vargas et al. 2019). I expand on this body of research by merging the literatures on macro and micro-level processes of racialization, boundary formation, and racial stratification.

2.5   Expanding on the Literature: Re-Imagining Differential Racialization

I advance a conceptualization of the relationship between, ethnicity, race, and racialization that rests on the understanding that race captures the accumulation of shared experiences of a group of people. This perspective builds on the understanding that race is more than just skin tone (Hall 2017; Sexton 2008); in fact, races are historical categories that outline the distribution of wealth, rights, opportunities, and burdens within the political system that is racism (Mills 1997:3). This view also draws from Zuberi and colleagues (2015:110), who contend that race captures "the experience of shared social relations rather than a unitary (i.e., individual), shared subjective characteristic such as skin color." They stay true to the social constructionist view by presenting race as a dynamic social process that draws on racial classifications to produce and reproduce inequality (Zuberi et al. 2015: 110). An important point in their presentation of race is the role that racial classification plays in determining who gets access to rewards and opportunities (i.e., privilege) in society (Zuberi et al. 2015; Stewart 2008).

Racial classification in this sense is like Roth's (2018) concept of racial appraisals, or the way

that people determine and assign the race of individuals and large groups of people. I build on

this research by demonstrating that a key mechanism of the race process at work is through

differential racialization.

Differential racialization is a key concept from Critical Race Theory (CRT) that describes

how the dominant society racializes different minority groups at different times, in response to

their needs (Delgado and Stefancic 2004, 2017: 9-10; Gotanda 19991, 2000). This understanding

of differential racialization presents the process of racialization, and the concept of race, as tied

to power dynamics in a society. It suggests that the dominant way of understanding social

relations in the United States perpetuates the racial hierarchy in which whites maintain their

position at the top (Gotanda 1991). Although this traditional understanding of differential

racialization is helpful in thinking about racial fluidity at the macro-level (e.g., South and Eastern

Europeans becoming white), the concept is generally not used to describe micro-level racial

fluidity. For example, differential racialization can be invoked to describe how young Black and

Latinx men are perceived as violent or deviant (Baumgartner, Epp, and Shoub 2018; Hinton and

Cook 2021; Pager 2008; Rios 2011; Sanchez and Adams 2011), or how Muslim Americans are

perceived as terrorists (e.g., Gotanda 2011; Kibria, Watson, and Selod 2018; Selod 2015), but it

is rarely invoked to explain who gets to be Black, or Latinx, or Asian. Consequently, scholars

calcify the boundaries between existing racial categories.

In response, I extend the differential racialization idea by re-conceptualizing it to capture

the brightness or blurriness of racial boundaries across space and time, at the individual and

group levels. This re-conceptualization is grounded on the idea that observed differences

between categories of people result from daily social interactions whereby individuals'

characteristics are used to classify or appraise their racial group membership (Bonilla-Silva 1997; Emirbayer 1997; Reskin 2003; Roth 2018; Zuberi et al. 2015). While this view of racialization is not wholly new, it differentiates itself by recognizing that the labels under which individuals or groups are classified are not limited to existing racial categories (e.g., white, Black, Asian, Native American, etc.). It avoids what Brubaker (2002) calls 'groupism' by not taking pre-defined racial groups as discrete and internally homogenous entities. Through this lens, an individual who identifies as Asian Indian—a group that is officially categorized under Asian—may be appraised and racialized by others as non-Asian, honorary white, Black, or Muslim. Similarly, Filipinos—a group that is also officially considered Asian—may be racialized as non-Asian, Latinx, collective Black, Pacific Islander, or honorary white, depending on temporal and contextual factors.

Moreover, because the re-conceptualized *differential racialization* views race as capturing the shared experiences of a group of people within a specific spatial and temporal context, it allows a blurred boundary between existing racial-ethnic categories. For instance, Obasogie (2014) describes that it was not until after the attack on Pearl Harbor that a concerted effort was made to distinguish Japanese Americans from other Asian groups. Obasogie (2014: 11-20) notes that in an effort to differentiate Japanese Americans and label them as potential traitors to the United States, *Life* magazine described them as having "more massively boned head and face, flat, often pug, nose, yellow-ocher skin and heavier beard" relative to Chinese Americans. Thus, Japanese Americans were differentially racialized from other Asians. In this way, *differential racialization* re-frames group stratification within existing racial categories as another form of racial stratification. Therefore, *differential racialization* is a mechanism through which new racial orders emerge, whether it is white-non-white, Black-non-Black, tri-racial, or

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some other hierarchy. Lastly, if we interpret observed racial or ethnic differences in any outcome through the lens of *differential racialization*, we will see that so-called 'race effects' are actually capturing the accumulation of advantage or disadvantage allocated to a group based on how others classify them.

2.6   Key Tenets and Implications of *Differential Racialization*

      Differential racialization captures the shifts in individual and group membership, self-identification, and external classification. It refers to the discordance between existing understandings of group membership (e.g., the general understanding of who is white, Black, Asian, Native American, etc.) and the employment of these understandings in social interactions. It occurs at the population level when groups like Irish and Italians 'become white.' It also occurs at the micro-level when an individual of Filipino ancestry is perceived, and therefore treated, as Latinx, rather than Asian American (see Ocampo 2016 for an example). Whereas *differential racialization* at the macro-level may take years or decades to occur and be noticed by most members of a society, it can also be a common experience for individuals on the ground during daily interactions. The accumulation of individuals' experiences of *differential racialization* in their daily interactions may then lead to large-scale changes in how members of society (including those within the pre-defined category and those outside of it) come to understand who gets to belong under which label. In this way, *differential racialization* links the micro and macro processes of racialization. Below, I describe the key tenets of *differential racialization*.

      First, it is grounded on the idea that race is socially constructed. It has no basis in biology or genetics. Racial labels are historical categories that are supposed to signal the shared

experiences and history of a people (Hall 2019). These categories are also used to distribute the

material wealth, opportunities, rights, benefits, burdens, and duties within a society (Bonilla-

Silva 1997; Hall 2019; Mills 1997:3).

Second, the meanings of race and racial categories are in constant flux, and these shifts

are captured by the concept of *differential racialization*. We know that some groups have crossed

racial boundaries over time. There is also emerging evidence that individuals can cross the

sometimes-blurry boundaries of race (Freeman et al. 2011; Leibler et al. 2017; Saperstein and

Penner 2012). These fluctuations reflect the fact that identity is a process that is always in

formation (Hall 2019). More importantly, these fluctuations reflect the inconsistency and

incoherence of racial reasoning, or the logic of justifying the hierarchical ordering of people

(Memmi 1999). The rules that guide these shifts are shaped by the particular temporal and spatial

contexts under which social interactions take place. As such, the meaning of race and race

categories in New York City in 2020, for example, will be different from the meaning of such

concepts in Tennessee in 1990. Moreover, because the available research methods to study race

are all weighed down by significant limitations (for detailed examples, see Stewart and Sewell

2011), it is imperative that investigators situate and interpret their findings within the proper

context (social, historical, political, etc.) (Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva 2008).

Third, *differential racialization* indicates who gets to belong under certain labels, and not

merely what assumptions are made regarding those categories of people. This is a re-

conceptualization of differential racialization as it is commonly expressed in extant literature. As

Jared Sexton (2008:30) notes, race is more than just skin tone. One's ascribed race points to

others' perception and assumptions of her shared history with a particular 'category' of people

(Hall 2019). It also signals others' assessment of an individual's or group's worthiness to access

the limited material and political resources of society (Bonilla-Silva 1997; Mills 1997).

Moreover, because individuals do not carry a single standard conceptualization of race (Morning 2009), it is likely that in some contexts ethnic boundaries suffice to exclude some people from membership into the racial category under which they are 'supposed' to belong (e.g., Lee and Ramakrishnan 2019). The exclusion or inclusion of some people from these groups also entail the expansion or contraction of privileges, access to material wealth, political power, and access to opportunities. Thus, *differential racialization* allows us to think of racial stratification as functioning between and in some cases within existing racial categories.

Fourth, *differential racialization* is experienced on the ground and at the population level, and it is empirically observable at both levels. A race label is not 'self-acting' (Emirbayer 1997; Dewey and Bentley 1949). Such labels only have observable effects insofar as they shape interactions between people (Zuberi et al. 2015). As such, racial stratification at the population level must be tied to racialized, and thus unequal, social relations between individuals. As I noted previously, race captures the accumulation of shared experiences among people deemed to be alike. The differential treatment of individuals in their daily interactions will manifest in poorer outcomes in health, wealth, and education, and other social indicators. Consequently, the collective experiences of these individuals will begin to differentiate them from other members of their supposed racial category. However, the nature of social relations and its consequence on the form that racial stratification takes at the population level is contextually dependent. Some of the contextual factors that shape social relations include the existing political and economic systems, the availability of resources, and the dominant group's sense of security in their position. Regardless of the form that racial stratification takes, the divergence in the lived experiences of different members of existing racial categories will become observable. They will

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be reflected in population-level differences in health outcomes, economic outcomes, level of state surveillance, and rates of intermarriage, among other outcomes (Bonilla-Silva 2018/2003; Lee and Bean 2010; Selod 2015). In this way, *differential racialization* that originates with small-scale individual interactions gradually becomes a lived reality for an entire section of a group of people, or vice versa. Thusly, differential racialization links micro processes to macro-level changes.

Lastly, an important implication of *differential racialization* is that existing monolithic racial categories (i.e., white, Black, Asian, Native American, etc.) cannot fully capture meaningful shared experiences among all the people they encapsulate. As American society continues to diversify with the arrival of immigrants and the growth in number of people who identify as having more than one race or ethnicity, it is imperative that race scholarship not remain mired in the racial understandings of the past (Alba 2020). By limiting our discussion of racism and racial stratification only within the narrow confines of the ethno-racial pentagon (Hollinger 2006/1995) we undercut one of the most important aspects of the social constructionist perspective—that race is dynamic.

2.7   Discussion and Conclusion

Researchers study race to paint a picture of how 'like groups' experience life in our society. It also entails the study of how 'different groups' are differentially treated. The purpose of this chapter was to address the theoretical gaps in social scientists' conceptualization of race as a social construct and how they employ the race concept in practice by introducing a re-conceptualized *differential racialization*. *Differential racialization introduces* new ways of thinking about and investigating racial stratification in the United States. Drawing on largely

siloed literatures on race, racialization, racial fluidity, and racial boundaries, it presents a new theoretical understanding of how micro processes of race are linked to macro-level changes in racial stratification.

The five key tenets of *differential racialization* that I presented above should serve as a guide for re-thinking how race operates in American society. Notably, they impel researchers to situate their studies within the proper context to truly capture the dynamism of race. This means that the form that racial stratification takes in a particular geographic area and time does not necessarily match that in another space and time. They also reject the rigid boundaries that have often been used to distinguish between race and ethnicity. Rather than focusing on the ontological definitions of these concepts, the *differential racialization* lens contends that focusing on such differences is not useful because the process of racial stratification occurs both between and within existing racial categories. Lastly, the *differential racialization* lens frames the evolution of racial stratification systems as a process that ties the micro and macro levels.

However, much work remains to identify the specific contextual factors the impact the racialized relations between peoples. Also, while *differential racialization* posits that racial stratification processes can occur within existing race groups, future scholarship must examine when racial stratification processes should be invoked to explain within-group stratification. Moreover, future research must explore the specific mechanisms through which differential racialization at the micro-level may manifest at the macro-level, or vice versa. Lastly, to fully understand systems of racial domination requires the theorization of social structures and agency, of the racialized and the 'racializer' (Emirbayer and Desmond 2015:130; Gans 2017). The *differential racialization* perspective that I presented in this paper mainly focused on the power of 'outsiders' or 'racializers' (Gans 2017) to assign one's race. However, the racialized are not

passive observers of their racialization. Thus, future scholarship must theorize the role of agency in the relation between the racialized and the 'racializer' (Gans 2017). Nonetheless, as the demographic make-up of American society continues to evolve with the continued influx of immigrants from Asia, Latin America, Africa, and some parts of Europe, *differential racialization* offers a new theoretical perspective and opens new directions for the empirical study of inter and intra-group stratification.

CHAPTER 3

Differential Racialization at the Macro Level:

Reframing Health Inequality Through a Differential Racialization Lens

Today, comparisons between broad racial categories (i.e. Black, white, Asian, Latinx, and Native American) dominate racial disparities research, particularly on the topic of health. While comparing broad racial groups against each other yields important insights into how people's location within the American racial hierarchy shapes their health (Arias et al. 2021; Bailey et al. 2017; Williams, Lawrence, and Davis 2019; Woolf and Schoomaker 2019), such an approach also takes for granted the 'group-ness' (Brubaker 2002, 2004) of the people subsumed under these broad-ranging categories, consequently obfuscating the inequalities within them. The issue of hidden inequalities is especially pertinent to the health of the diverse peoples subsumed under the Asian/Asian-American umbrella. The groups under this label are some of the fastest growing populations in the United States, yet they remain largely excluded from the race and health literature (Đoàn et al. 2019; Shimkhada, Scheitler, and Ponce 2021; Yi et al. 2022). Moreover, while recent research highlights the heterogeneity of some of these disaggregated groups' health outcomes (Baluran and Patterson 2021), researchers have yet to fully explore and theorize the implications of such heterogeneity on how race is understood and experienced in U.S. society. Notably, while some prominent race scholars emphasize the inconsistency, fluidity, and dynamism of race (e.g., Omi and Winant 2014; Saperstein and Penner 2012; Zuberi, Patterson,

and Stewart 2015; Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva 2008), existing race and health research still largely relies on the ethno-racial pentagon (Hollinger 2006) to describe racial health disparities. In other words, there is a gap between the theorization of race as a dynamic social construct and its application in health disparities research as a static variable.

I address that gap in this chapter by applying *differential racialization* to the study of health inequality within the monolithic Asian/Asian American racial category[8] in order to reframe the observed inequalities within the Asian category as widening 'between-race' inequalities, rather than just 'within-race' variations. To be clear, by *differential racialization* I mean the discordance between existing 'official' understandings of group membership (i.e., the legally defined understanding of who is white, Black, Asian, Native American) and how these understandings are remolded and deployed to classify individuals or groups of people in social interactions. As I discuss throughout this chapter, the *differential racialization* lens allows for examinations of health disparities between groups while centering the impact of group boundary formation processes on those disparities.

This chapter, thus, elucidates the population-level consequences of *differential racialization*, advancing it from a purely theoretical argument, as I articulated in Chapter 2, to an empirically observable phenomenon. To that end, I draw on the race and racialization literatures to frame my investigation of the long-term trends in population health outcomes among the three largest Asian-origin groups in the Unites States—Chinese, Asian Indians, and Filipinos. In doing so, I specifically address two research questions. First, how have the mortality levels of Asian-origin groups (Chinese, Asian Indians, and Filipinos) changed since the beginning of the 21st

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[8] Hereafter referred to as the Asian category or Asian racial category.

century? Second, how can we utilize the concept of *differential racialization* to understand health and mortality disparities between disaggregated Asian groups?

By examining the health disparities between Chinese, Asian Indians, and Filipinos through the differential racialization lens, I eschew the assumption that they share a common racial status as Asian/Asian American. As I discuss in further detail later, existing race scholarship highlights the disparate racialization experiences of these three groups and their (dis)connection to the Asian/Asian American racial status (Kibria 1998; Lee and Ramakrishnan 2020; Ocampo 2016). That existing body of scholarship, coupled with the fact that Chinese, Asian Indians, and Filipinos make up nearly 65% of all people categorized under the Asian umbrella (ACS 2019), make these three groups fit for exploring the consequences of increasingly rigid underlying racial group boundaries (i.e., different racial statuses between Chinese, Asian Indians, and Filipinos) within already-existing monolithic racial categories (e.g., Asian/Asian American). I posit that the temporal trends in these groups' health reflect not only their already disparate racial statuses, but also the intensification of ongoing racial boundary formation processes between them—processes that scholars like Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2004, 2018) have previously theorized.

My main analyses consists of estimating the life expectancy and lifespan variation among Chinese, Asian Indians, and Filipinos, by educational attainment, between the years 2005-2019 using data from the NCHS and the American Community Survey (ACS). My findings reveal the gradual divergence in health between the three groups during the period under study, offering evidence of the divergent and diverging racialized experiences of these three communities and supporting the idea of *differential racialization*. However, to further strengthen the case for *differential racialization*, I also present findings from a supplementary analysis that decomposed

the life expectancy gap between Chinese and Filipinos for the period 2012-2016. In this cross-sectional analysis, I specifically highlight the implications of *differential racialization* between Chinese and Filipinos on the distribution of the burden of causes of deaths that contribute to their longevity gap.

Whereas the main analyses reveal widening gaps between groups within the Asian category, the supplementary analysis uncovers the underlying nature of those gaps. Given what we know about status characteristics as fundamental causes of health (Link and Phelan 1995; Phelan and Link 2015), I illustrate that the disparate racial statuses between Chinese and Filipinos leads to differential access to flexible resources to delay *preventable* deaths. As such, a larger proportion of deaths that contribute to the life expectancy gap between the two differentially racialized groups will be attributable to preventable causes[9].

Altogether, my findings contribute to the race and health literature by demonstrating the utility of the *differential racialization* framework to describe macro-level health disparities between racialized groups. This study also challenges the meaningfulness of using a term like Asian/Asian American to describe the lived experiences and life outcomes of the people subsumed under such a broad category. That is, it speaks to the extant scholarship on the plasticity of social categories like race at the macro level over time (Omi and Winant 2014) by highlighting the widening gaps in longevity among the three groups. The supplementary analysis elucidates how differential racialization can help researchers untangle the mechanisms through which racialization produces health disparities. Lastly, the findings in this chapter establish a

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[9] By preventable causes I mean causes of death for which access to already existing treatment and prevention measures are stratified by racial status.

foundation for future health disparities research that looks beyond the ethno-racial pentagon as a categorization scheme for understanding social inequality.

In the following sections I describe the pertinent literature on race and health that undergird this study. I begin by discussing the research on the health of people of Asian descent, paying particular attention to the three groups of interest. Next, I explore the research on the relationship between race, racialization, racism, and health. I then introduce *differential racialization* as an alternative lens to understand the relationship between race and health, specifically foregrounding evidence of differential racialization at work among Chinese, Asian Indians, and Filipinos. Following those discussions, I articulate the connections between *differential racialization* and health and their implications for how we can re-frame and re-interpret health disparities between differentially racialized groups. After describing the relevant background literature, I then outline the data and methods used for my analyses, followed by a discussion of the key findings. I end by presenting the implications of my results, the limitations of the analyses, and directions for future research.

3.1   Background

3.1.1   The Health of People of Asian Descent

When aggregated, people of Asian descent exhibit better health than any group in the United States, including non-Latinx whites (Acciai et al. 2015). As many researchers argue, however, the aggregation of these diverse groups in health research masks meaningful between-group variation (Gordon Rau, and Lo 2019; Holland and Palaniappan 2012; Koh and Park 2017; Ng et al. 2014; Obra et al. 2021). They note in particular that the aggregation of diverse groups

into a monolithic category leads to invalid extrapolation of findings based on Asians as a group to specific national-origin groups (Holland and Palaniappan 2012; Obra et al. 2021). In fact, recent studies on disaggregated Asian groups underline striking heterogeneity in their health outcomes, including mortality and life expectancy (Baluran and Patterson 2021; Hastings et al. 2015; Iyer et al 2019). In a study of health disparities among disaggregated groups in California, for example, Adia and colleagues (2020) find that while Asians as a monolithic group appear healthier than their non-Latinx white counterparts, every national-origin group exhibits at least one disparity when compared to their white counterparts, with Filipinos experiencing the most disparities. Becerra and Becerra (2015) also find that Filipinos, South Asians, and Vietnamese in California are diagnosed with type 2 diabetes more than 8 years earlier than their non-Latinx white counterparts. Moreover, a study of disaggregated Asian American men in California finds national-origin group inequalities in self-rated health, diabetes, hypertension, and disability (Mui et al. 2017). But while the foregoing studies underscore the heterogeneous health outcomes of many disaggregated national-origin groups, no study has explored the long-term trends in life expectancy and lifespan inequality among them. As such, while we now have evidence of health inequalities between some of the largest Asian groups in the United States, we do not know the extent to which these inequalities have widened or narrowed over time. Addressing this gap is a key goal of this study and the focus of the main analyses. Examining the temporal shifts in these inequalities is instrumental in understanding how social factors, like racialization, pattern the health of some of the United States' fastest growing communities.

In this study, I specifically focus on the three largest groups that comprise the Asian racial category—Chinese, Asian Indians, and Filipinos. Research shows that of these three groups, Chinese have the longest life expectancy, followed by Asian Indians, then Filipinos

(Baluran and Patterson 2021). Moreover, we know that between 2003 and 2011, cancer was the leading cause of death for Chinese men and women and Filipina women, while Asian Indian men and women and Filipino men experienced higher mortality rates attributable to heart disease (Hastings et al. 2015). In fact, Filipino men and Asian Indian men and women suffered from a greater proportionate mortality burden attributable to ischemic heart disease, when compared to their non-Latinx white counterparts during the period 2003 to 2010 (Jose et al. 2014). Notably, Jose and colleagues (2014) also found that while the standardized mortality rate for all cardiovascular diseases declined slowly between 2003 and 2010 among Chinese and Filipinos, it increased among Asian Indian men and women.

Other studies on disaggregated Asian groups in Canada also have similar findings, showing that South Asians, including Asian Indians, are more likely to have a documented history of diabetes, coronary heart disease, and cardiovascular disease, and have higher cardiovascular disease mortality rates compared to their Chinese counterparts (Ananand et al. 2000; Shet et al. 1999). Further, studies conducted in Northern California found that significantly larger proportions of Filipinos and Asian Indians are overweight and obese relative to Chinese, and Filipinos are at higher risk for hypertension compared to non-Latinx whites (Zhao et al. 2015). This research, therefore, makes clear the existence of marked health disparities between the groups contained within the Asian racial category. Generally speaking, these studies also indicate that Asian Indians and Filipinos have worse health than their Chinese counterparts across multiple outcomes, including diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, stroke, and others (Frank et al. 2014; Gordon et al. 2019; Holland et al. 2011; Karter et al. 2013; Wang et al. 2011). But as Yi and colleagues (2022:296) point out, the drivers of these health disparities

remain unclear. Nevertheless, I posit that examining the extensive literature on race and health

can offer powerful explanations for these observed disparities.

3.1.2   Race and Health

Existing research underscores the detrimental consequences of racialization processes on

health (Acciai et al. 2015; Arambula-Solomon et al. 2022; Firebaugh et al 2014; Hastings et al.

2015; Homan and Brown 2022; Sabado-Liwag et al. 2022; Williams, Priest, and Anderson

2016). We know, for example, that sizeable mortality gaps between monolithic race-groups

persist at the national level, with non-Latinx Black and non-Latinx Native Americans faring

worse than other groups (Arias et al. 2021; Woolf and Schoomaker 2019). Additionally, not only

do non-Latinx Black Americans have shorter lifespans than their white counterparts, they also

experience greater variability in life expectancy (Firebaugh et al. 2014). Health disparities

researchers attribute these inequalities to different race-related processes, including various

forms of racism—such as structural, institutional, cultural, and interpersonal racism (Bailey et al.

2017; Homan and Brown 2022; Paradies et al. 2015; Williams, Lawrence, and Davis 2019).

Increased exposure to discrimination in particular, is linked to poorer mental and physical health

and higher mortality (Cobb et al. 2021; Monk 2015; Morey 2018; Morey et al. 2018; Williams et

al. 2019; Wu, Qian, and Wilkes 2021).

Racism and discrimination also influence health and mortality by shaping access to health

services, housing, and other flexible resources that can be employed to prevent illness and delay

death (Ben et al. 2017; Phelan and Link 2015; Williams and Collins 2016). This is in line with

race scholars' position that people's racial status reflects societal assumptions about which

people share common histories and which peoples deserve access to limited resources like material wealth and political power (Hall 2019; Mills 1997). What this research tells us is that people's position in the racial hierarchy (i.e., their racial status) is a fundamental cause of health inequality—it shapes their ability to access knowledge, financial resources, network connections, and power, all of which can be activated to promote health and longevity (Gee and Ford 2011; Link and Phelan 1995; Phelan and Link 2015; Pirtle 2020). And as with socioeconomic status (SES), the link between racial status and health inequality is durable and occurs through multiple pathways (Phelan and Link 2015).

That racialization, racial status, and racism impact health is evident in the substantial literature on racial health disparities, particularly the inequalities between non-Latinx Black and non-Latinx white populations. While people of Asian descent are still largely absent in this literature, a small but growing body of research does show that the link between racial status and health inequality also holds among these various national-origin groups (Gee and Ponce 2010; Gee et al. 2009; Gee et al. 2007; Lee and Waters 2021; Nadimpalli and Hutchinson 2012; Wu et al. 2021; Yoo, Gee, and Takeuchi 2009). For instance, Sabado-Liwag and colleagues (2022) argue that the interactions between colonialism and racism shape the mental and physical health of people of Filipino descent in the United States by making them invisible, limiting their access to resources to address community health issues, and shaping their labor market opportunities and trajectories, thus putting them in more stressful and vulnerable positions. Another study shows that exposure to anti-immigrant prejudice and discrimination increases mortality risks among immigrant groups in the U.S., including those originating from Asia (Morey et al. 2018). Relatedly, Gee and Ford (2011) contend that discriminatory immigration policies (e.g., the

'Muslim Ban') and anti-immigrant rhetoric function as structural-level racialized stressors for certain groups.

Racialized immigration-related stressors are particularly pertinent to the health of people of Asian descent, given that a considerable majority of them are foreign-born (ACS 2019). These indicators of structural racism shape these groups' health by contributing to experiences of stress and illness (Gee and Ford 2011:9). For example, studies show that exposure to Islamophobia is significantly associated with poorer health outcomes and poorer health-seeking behaviors among targeted groups (Bakhtiari 2020; Samari et al. 2018). Targets of such discrimination include people who are Muslim or those who are perceived as Muslim, including people of Asian Indian descent.

Considering the foregoing discussion, it should be clear that differential treatment based on people's racial status significantly influences the health of people of Asian descent. In light of renewed attention on violence against people perceived as Asian since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, researchers have again called for more attention to be paid to how racialization shapes the health outcomes of disaggregated national-origin groups (Dee et al. 2021; Yi et al. 2022). Studying such relationships, these scholars argue, will help us better understand the wide-ranging influence of race on health and aid in addressing underlying disparities within the monolithic Asian category (Adia et al 2020; Gee et al. 2009; Yi et al. 2022). Nevertheless, I contend that exploring the relationship between race and health among people of Asian descent will still paint an incomplete picture of racial inequality unless scholars do away with the presupposition that these disaggregated national-origin groups are the same. In the following section, I briefly discuss the *differential racialization* lens and describe the extant evidence pointing to how it shapes the lives of Chinese, Asian Indians, and Filipinos in the United States.

3.1.3   *Differential Racialization* Among Chinese, Asian Indians, and Filipinos

Differential racialization refers to the processes through which actors remold existing

generalized understandings of racial group membership (i.e. the 'official' and legal definitions of

who is white, Black, Asian, Latinx, and Native American) to classify others under new and/or

modified categorization schemes. The *differential racialization* lens posits that the notion of

grouping people into one of five neat and mutually exclusive racial categories overlooks the

complexities of boundary formation and fails to capture the nuances of how people experience

race. In light of this perspective, it is clear that a key limitation of existing health disparities

research on people of Asian descent is that these studies take for granted the groupness of the

people they study, despite race scholarship underlining the inconsistencies of who counts as

Asian in the United States (Kibria 1998; Lee and Ramakrishnan 2020; Ocampo 2016).

Alternately, I use the *differential racialization* frame in this study to highlight the processes of

inclusion or exclusion from the broader Asian racial status as mechanisms that produce health

inequality, rather than focusing on some shared *Asian experience* among Chinese, Asian Indians,

and Filipinos in the United States.

3.1.3.1 Historical Racialization

Chinese, Asian Indians, and Filipinos all share a history of exclusion from the white

racial category in the U.S. (Gotanda 1999; Lew-Williams 2018; Lopez 2006; Ngai 2004; Portes

and Rumbaut 2014), but they did not always share a common racial category as Asian/Asian

American. A survey of the race categories used in previous censuses illustrates this point.

Beginning in 1870, the U.S. Census included Chinese as a separate category to enumerate the

growing Chinese laboring class and differentiate them from the white and Black populations

(Lee and Ramakrishnan 2021). By 1920, Filipino and Hindu were also included as separate race

categories, with the latter referring to people originating from South Asia (Lee and

Ramakrishnan 2021). The different national-origin groups that now fall under the Asian/Asian

American category were therefore not historically legally recognized as one race group. In fact, it

was not until 1977 that the federal government recognized 'Asian' as a racial category, following

the mobilization of community leaders and organizers that called for a united Asian political

identity (Lee 2019; Okamoto 2014; Omi and Winant 1994). The mobilization efforts of, and

negotiations between, community leaders, state actors, and ethnic entrepreneurs to develop and

legitimize a pan-ethnic Asian/Asian American category following the Civil Rights Movement

resulted in greater political power and visibility of people of Asian descent in the United States

(Espiritu 1992; Lopez and Espiritu 1990; Nadal 2019; Okamoto 2014). But the popularization of

the pan-ethnic category also led to the assumption that people like Chinese, Asian Indians,

Filipinos, and others all compose a single racial community and status. This is evident today in

the lack of disaggregated data on various Asian-origin groups in most national surveys (Holland

and Palaniappan 2012; Yi et al. 2022). In addition, even though the Census now collects data on

some disaggregated national-origin groups (e.g., Chinese, Asian Indians, Filipinos, Vietnamese,

Koreans, Japanese), it still enumerates these groups under the Asian umbrella.

3.1.3.2 Evidence of Differential Racialization

There is growing quantitative and qualitative evidence, however, that contradict the

notion of a shared racial status among the groups subsumed under the Asian label (Lee and

Ramakrishnan 2020; Ocampo 2016, 2013; Ramakrishnan et al. 2018; Shrankar and Srikanth 1998). Consider the study by Ramakrishnan and colleagues (2018) that finds that only 57 percent of people grouped under the Asian American category consider themselves to have a common racial identity. Looking at specific groups' experiences of race provides further evidence of differential racialization at work. In a recent study, Lee and Ramakrishnan (2020) highlight the disjuncture between official and generalized definitions of Asian/Asian American (i.e., the U.S. Census Bureau's definition) and the general public's opinion on who belongs in that category. They find that East Asians, particularly Chinese, are most likely to be assigned by others as Asian, while South Asians, including Asian Indians, are less likely to be incorporated under the Asian label.

Ocampo's (2014, 2016) research on Filipinos highlights the ambiguity of their racial status, whereby they are viewed as falling somewhere between Latinx and Asian. A key factor that contributes to the hazy racialization of Filipinos goes back to the historical and cultural ties between the Philippines and Latin America resulting from centuries of Spanish colonialism. As Ocampo (2016) notes, the legacy of Spanish colonization substantially influenced Filipino culture (e.g., language, Catholicism, and family names), and those influences continue to shape how Filipinos in the United States may self-identify and are externally classified as Latinx, rather than Asian. Other studies also echo the foregoing phenomenon by highlighting the challenges that people of Filipino descent confront with regards to their racial identity, how others classify them, and how they align themselves racially, wavering between Asian, Latino, and sometimes Pacific Islander (Ocampo 2013; Spickard, Rondilla, and Wright 2002; Tiongson, Gutierrez, and Gutierrez 2006). For instance, in her study of how race shapes the secondary educational experiences of Filipino American youth in New York City, Chutuape (2016) relays Filipino

youths' narratives of how their Asian-ness was disputed by peers. In response, some of the youths describe themselves as 'Chinese-Mexicans' or the 'Blackest Asians' (Chutuape 2016). People of Filipino descent therefore experience marginalization and exclusion from the Asian label because they are often perceived as "not Asian enough" (Nadal 2009; Nadal et al. 2012).

Likewise, Asian Indians also experience exclusion from the Asian racial category. Even prior to the events of September 11, 2001, Asian Indians, and South Asians in general, experienced inconsistent racialization including white, Hindu, Muslim, and Asian (Nadal 2019; Sharma 2016). The United States Census Bureau once racially categorized Asian Indians as 'Caucasian', and it was not until the 1980 Census that the term 'Asian Indian' was created and categorized under the Asian label (Kurien 2003; Nadal 2019; Prema 2017). Some scholars in the pre-9/11 era focused on the confusion surrounding South Asian racial identity, given that they did not fit established American notions of Asian phenotype (Fisher 1980; Kibria 1998). For instance, Kibria (1996) discussed the uncertain racial positioning of South Asians, including Asian Indians, as people who were perceived as neither white, Black, or Asian. However, whereas Asian Indians and South Asians were largely at the margins of the academic and public discourse on race in the pre-9/11 United States, their race, religion, and racialized religions were on notice following 2001 (De 2016).

The continuation of the War on Terror and the precipitous rise of islamophobia following 9/11 further exacerbated the racial outcasting of Asian Indians and other South Asians either because they were Muslim or 'Muslim-looking', regardless of actual religious identity (Garner and Selod 2015; Gotanda 2011; Maira 2009; Selod 2018; Sharma 2016). But as Cainkar and Selod (2018) note, the racialization of Muslims, Arabs, and South Asians preceded 9/11 and was part of existing War on Terror processes to other these groups of people to benefit the broader

project of a global white supremacy. As they and several scholars argue, 9/11 did not create

racialized Muslims, Arabs, and South Asians; rather, it expanded and deepened these groups

experiences of exclusion and marginalization (Cainkar 2009; Cainkar and Selod 2018; Grewal

2014; Perry 2014; Rana 2016). Like their Filipino counterparts, Asian Indians have been

historically, and are contemporarily, excluded from Asian and Asian American narratives. This

suggests that both groups experience race differently than people of Chinese descent, who are

perceived by the general public as the dominant voice and representation of an Asian American

identity (Ignacio 1976; Nadal 2019).

Thus, it is reasonable to argue that Chinese, Asian Indians, and Filipinos do not share a

common racial status in the United States. Perhaps, in part, because of these already visible

fractures in the racialization experiences of people of Asian descent, Bonilla-Silva (2004, 2018)

posits that a new racial order is emerging in the United States, whereby the different ethnicities

currently understood to belong under the Asian umbrella will be classified as whites, honorary

whites, or collective Blacks. Importantly, he suggests that Chinese, and most East Asian-origin

groups, fall under 'honorary whites,' while Southeast Asian-origin groups fall under the

'collective Black' racial status. However, it remains unclear where Filipinos and Asian Indians

fall within this tri-racial system. Different versions of Bonilla-Silva's theory propose different

positions for these groups, moving between honorary white or collective Black. Regardless of

the particular future racial statuses of Chinese, Filipinos, and Asian Indians, Bonilla-Silva (2018)

questions the meaningfulness of the existing monolithic group boundaries that researchers use

today. Bonilla-Silva's (2018) focus on the *emergence* of the tri-racial system suggests that these

changing racialization schemes are part of a temporal process that may be facilitated by the

differential racialization of individuals and groups—in this case Chinese, Asian Indians, and

Filipinos—in social interactions. While it may still be early in the emergent process of the tri-racial system formation to conclusively identify the new racial positions of the various national-origin groups, we may be able to observe their divergence along different racial lines.

3.1.4 The Current Study: Differential Racialization and Health Inequality

Recall that the principal aims of this study are to (a) document the long-term trends in life expectancy and mortality among Chinese, Asian Indians, and Filipinos in the United States, and (b) to demonstrate the utility of the *differential racialization* lens to explain the trends in these macro-level outcomes. Inclusion or exclusion from the Asian racial status, or any racial status, also entails the expansion or contraction of privileges and access to resources that shape life outcomes, in particular health. As Erving (2020:10) notes, "health is one way individuals 'embody' social status." Although people racialized as Asian/Asian American (e.g., Chinese) remain excluded from white membership (Lee and Kye 2016), they may nonetheless benefit from their proximity to whiteness and distance from blackness (Treitler 2013; Bonilla-Silva 1997, 2003; Bonilla-Silva and Lewis 1999). In fact, Nee and Holbrow (2013) argue that Asian Americans, as a racial group, have become 'mainstream'—enjoying more access today to institutions and resources that allow for assimilation to the American mainstream. However, such broad observations overlook the possibility that groups like Filipinos and Asian Indians may not be able to access the same privileges and resources as their Chinese counterparts due to their increasingly tenuous relation to, or total exclusion from, the Asian racial status. A consequence of this divergence is the widening of population-level health inequalities between the three groups. As such, examining the population-level health trends among these three groups offers

preliminary suggestive evidence to bolster *differential racialization* as a means to understand

racial disparities.

To that end, I estimated life expectancy at birth (e_0) and lifespan variation for each

national-origin group, by sex and bachelor's degree attainment, for five three-year periods.

Although life expectancy is the most frequently used indicator of population health, research

suggests that using average age at death as the only measure of health may mask significant

underlying inequalities (van Raalte, Sasson, and Martikainen 2018). Lifespan variation—

measured by the life disparity[10] ($e^\dagger$) in this study—captures the uncertainty in age at death

within a population (Aburto et al. 2020; Aburto and van Raalte 2018; van Raalte, Sasson, and

Martikainen 2018; Sasson 2016). Specifically, life disparity measures the average years of life

lost due to death, or "the average remaining life expectancy at the ages when death occurs"

(Vaupel, Zhang, and van Raalte 2011: 2). Moreover, because life disparity is weighted by the

number of deaths at each age-group, mortality improvements in 'early ages' (i.e. premature

deaths) narrows the life disparity in a population. On the other hand, mortality reductions in

'late' ages widens the life disparity measure as it increases the average remaining lifespans of

survivors (Vaupel et al. 2011). Lastly, in addition to the main analyses, I also conducted a

supplementary analysis using an age and cause decomposition of the life expectancy gap

between Chinese and Filipinos for the five-year period 2012-2016. The supplementary analysis

bolsters the *differential racialization* framework by illustrating how disparate racial experiences

between two groups—in this case Chinese and Filipinos—shape the contributions of different

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[10] Life disparity ($e^\dagger$) is one of many options to calculate lifespan variation (for other options, see Aburto and van Raalte 2018; Edwards and Tuljapulkar 2005). For a technical description of the life disparity measure, see Vaupel and Romo (2003) and Zhang and Vaupel (2009).

causes of death to their longevity gap. I discuss the data and methods for these analyses in the following section.

3.2   Data and Methods

3.2.1   Overview of Analyses

I compared life expectancy at birth (e_0) and life disparity ($e^\dagger$) by sex, following convention (Preston, Hueveline, and Guillot 2000). I also compared e_0 and $e^\dagger$ by educational attainment, measured as bachelor's degree attainment. A large body of research documents the relationship between socioeconomic status (SES) and population health (Case and Deaton 2017; Link and Phelan 1995; Mackenbach et al. 2015; Nandi, Glymour, and Subramanian 2014; Phelan and Link 2013). We know that education in particular is a robust indicator of SES and has a strong link to health and mortality (Brown et al. 2012; Case and Deaton 2021; Hendi 2017; Leopold 2018; Montez et al. 2019). Nonetheless, prior research shows that despite having lower median household income and educational attainment than their Asian Indian counterparts (ACS 2019; Musu-Gillete 2017), Chinese outlive Asian Indians at the national level (Baluran and Patterson 2021). Moreover, while a substantially larger proportion of Asian Indians than Filipinos have at least a bachelor's degree, Asian Indian women have the same life expectancy as their Filipina counterparts (Baluran and Patterson 2021). These patterns suggest that SES differences alone cannot explain the health gaps between Chinese, Asian Indians, and Filipinos. As such, I estimated population health indicators by bachelor's degree attainment to control for life expectancy and lifespan variation differences that may be attributable to socioeconomic status (SES) inequality.

Following the main analyses described above, I conducted a supplementary analysis

using an age and cause decomposition of the life expectancy gap between Chinese and Filipinos.

Analyzing cross-sectional data for the period 2012-2016, I estimated life expectancy at birth by

bachelor's degree attainment for Chinese and Filipinos. I then decomposed the differences in life

expectancy between the two groups by grouping the causes of death by their preventability—low

preventability, medium preventability, and high preventability—using a modified version of

Phelan and colleagues' (2004) cause-of-death preventability ranking scheme. The health

literature described in the previous sections underscore that people's social status—including

their racial status—shapes their access to resources to prevent illness and delay preventable

deaths, or deaths by causes for which treatment or prevention knowledge is already available.

However, access to the available means to delay such deaths is stratified by one's social location.

In this supplementary analysis, I contend that as knowledge improves regarding treatment and

prevention of certain causes of death, the benefits of such knowledge will be disproportionately

harnessed by those of higher status.

Extending that logic, and assuming that Chinese and Filipinos experience differential

racialization, the health inequality between the two groups should be widest for causes that are

more preventable and/or manageable (e.g., cardiovascular diseases, obesity, accidents, self-

inflicted harm, etc.) than those that are less preventable (e.g., malignant neoplasms of the brain,

multiple sclerosis, leukemia, etc.) (Phelan et al. 2004). Furthermore, that gap should be

observable even when other axes of inequality, like gender and SES, are accounted for.

Therefore, while this chapter is mainly concerned with the life expectancy and longevity trends

among Chinese, Asian Indians, and Filipinos, I supplement those analyses with an age-cause

decomposition of the Chinese-Filipino longevity gap to further elucidate how *differential*

racialization can explain health gaps between groups occupying different racial statuses.

3.2.2   Data

The analyses for this study primarily relied on age-specific death rates ($_nm_x$) for Chinese,

Asian Indians, Filipinos, and an aggregated Asian group[11] which I used as a reference category. I

calculated $_nm_x$ values at the national level. The $_nm_x$ is computed by dividing the total number of

deaths in a specific age group by the population estimate for that each age group. I obtained

death counts (the numerator) from the Multiple Cause of Death File (MCDF) and population

estimates (the denominator) from the American Community Survey (ACS). The MCDF is a

dataset collected and made available by the National Vital Statistics System, the Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). It

contains all officially recorded deaths in the United States, including the District of Columbia,

Puerto Rico, and all other United States territories. The records also provide information based

on death certificates completed jointly by a medical examiner and a licensed funeral director.

The death certificate includes information such as the underlying cause of death, age, gender,

country of birth, state of residence, county, race, Hispanic ethnicity, and ethnicity for Asian

decedents. Mortality data are coded by individual states and are then submitted to the NCHS

through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program or coded by NCHS based on copies of original

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[11] The aggregated Asian group includes all people of Asian descent in the United States, not just
Chinese, Asian Indians, and Filipinos.

death certificates provided by state registration offices[12]. In this study I examine only the deaths that occur within the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Furthermore, I obtained the population denominators from the Public Use Micro Sample (PUMS) data file of the American Community Survey (ACS) population estimates, which contains data on disaggregated Asian ethnic groups. As part of the United States' Census Bureau's Decennial Census Program, the ACS provides current demographic, social, economic, and housing estimates throughout the period between each census. The survey randomly samples approximately 3.5 million addresses in the United States and Puerto Rico every year. Thus, the data are representative of the United States' population. It asks respondents a range of questions, ranging from socio-demographic information (e.g., age, sex, country of birth, and income) to subjects such as language spoken at home and shelter costs. Furthermore, population denominators for each ethnic group include only single-race individuals. That is, population estimates for people who reported more than one ethnicity and/or race were excluded in order to avoid over-estimation of population denominators. I analyzed data for the following three-year periods at the national level: 2005-2007, 2008-2010, 2011-2013, 2014-2016, 2017-2019.

3.2.2.1 Education Level

To estimate age-specific death rates by sex and bachelors' degree attainment I recoded the educational attainment information from the ACS and the MCDF to differentiate between those with less than a bachelor's degree and those with at least a bachelor's degree. Although the

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[12] For more information on the Multiple Cause of Death File, please see Multiple Cause of Death on CDC Wonder Online Database and the National Center for Health Statistics website.

MCDF suffers from previously documented limitations—notably that educational attainment information is reported by someone other than the decedent—it is still the most comprehensive mortality data source in the United States that contains educational attainment information (Sasson 2016). Concerning the denominators, the ACS is the largest national household survey in the United States. It also addresses some of the concerns expressed by other researchers regarding the capacity of other data sources (primarily the Current Population Survey) to accurately estimate the educational attainment of the U.S. population, particularly racial and ethnic minorities (Olshansky et al. 2012; Sasson 2017).

Because all education levels cannot be observed for younger ages, and because education levels are top-coded for those aged 75 and above, I followed other researchers' approach and calculated age-specific death rates for age groups below 25 and 75 and over only by age, ethnic group, and sex (Case and Deaton 2021; Olshansky et al. 2012). For age groups between 25 and 74, I computed age-specific death rates by ethnic group, sex, age, and educational attainment (i.e., those with a college degree and those without), using the observed deaths from the MCDF and the population estimates in the ACS. It is important to note that I excluded some observed deaths from the MCDF (numerator) for which no educational level was recorded. The proportion of deaths for which no educational attainment was specified varied by national-origin group, but they ranged between one to four percent of deaths that occurred between ages 25-74 (see appendix A1).

3.2.3   Methods

3.2.3.1 Life Expectancy at Birth and Life Disparity

I utilized two key measures of population health in my analyses: life expectancy at birth (e_0) and life disparity ($e^\dagger$). Both measures were computed from values in a life table, which is a demographic tool that summarizes the mortality experience of a population during a specific time period (i.e., period life table), or of an entire generation over their lifetime (i.e., cohort life table) (see Preston, Hueveline, and Guillot 2001). In this study, I used abridged period life tables, which use five-year age-groups to estimate age-specific death rates rather than one-year age-groups. However, the first age-group includes ages below one, the second includes ages one to four, and the last is the open-ended age-group (85+). Given the age-specific death rates, I estimated e_0 using life table methods, as described by Preston and colleagues (2001). This value can be interpreted as the average age of death for a hypothetical cohort if it were to experience the mortality schedule that is observed in a given period. I also computed 95 percent confidence intervals for life expectancy estimates following Chiang's (1984:153-164) approach, which makes use of the central limit theorem to derive formulas to calculate standard errors.

After computing life expectancy, I then estimated lifespan disparity. The life disparity ($e^\dagger$) measure is computed using quantities in the lifetable as

$$e^\dagger = \frac{\sum_0^\omega (e_x * d_x)}{l_x},$$

where e_x is the life expectancy at age x, and d_x is the number of life table deaths at age x, and ω is the open age interval (85+ in this case). Life disparity is the average number of years lost due to death. A smaller life disparity value means that there is less heterogeneity in age at death

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within a population, and a decrease in life disparity over time suggests a reduction in premature mortality.

Life disparity, and other lifespan variation measures, have important implications. For example, a group that experiences low life expectancy and high lifespan variation experiences a 'double burden of inequality' (van Raalte, Sasson, and Martikainen 2018:1003). Moreover, as van Raalte and colleagues (2018) argue, lifespan variation has micro and macro level impacts. At the micro level, lifespan variation may influence an individual's assessment of their survival, consequently shaping how they manage life course expectations—such as when to start a family, timing retirement, and experiencing death of close family members (Edwards 2013; Umberson et al. 2017; van Raalte et al. 2018). At the macro level, greater lifespan variation signals heterogeneity in mortality patterns (van Raalte et al. 2018). Additionally, while life expectancy increases have historically been associated with lifespan variation decreases, new evidence reveals that this is not a foregone conclusion (van Raalte et al. 2018). Indicators of lifespan variation—life disparity in this case—therefore capture health disparities that are hidden by life expectancy comparisons alone. Lastly, after computing the above indicators by national-origin group, sex, and bachelors' degree attainment for each time period, I conducted a series of sensitivity analyses to examine the effect of the removal of deaths with missing education on the life expectancy and life disparity estimates.

3.2.3.2 Supplementary Analysis: Age and Cause Decomposition

The supplementary analysis consisted of a cross-sectional age-cause decomposition analysis of the life expectancy gap between Chinese and Filipinos for the period 2012-2016,

controlling for sex and bachelor's degree attainment. The first step in this analysis is to compute

the life expectancy at birth for Chinese and Filipinos for the five-year period 2012-2016, by sex,

and bachelor's degree attainment. I relied on the same data sources and methods as in the above

analyses to estimate age-specific death rates and life expectancy, pooling five years of data rather

than three in order to capture sufficiently large numerators.

Because I was interested in the contribution of differences in age-specific death rates by

the preventability of the causes of death to the overall life expectancy gap between Chinese and

Filipinos, I categorized causes of death into one of four preventability categories—high,

medium, low, and others. The three main groups (i.e., high, medium, and low) were based on the

categories originally developed by Phelan and colleagues (2004) to rate the preventability of

specific causes of death. They divided the causes of death into nine groups based on physicians'

rankings. Each cause of death was rated between one (low preventability) to five (high

preventability), in 0.5 increments. As an example, they ranked malignant neoplasms of

gallbladder and bile ducts as the least preventable causes of death, while accidental poisoning,

chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and tuberculosis are all considered highly preventable.

However, because of small samples for Chinese and Filipinos (even for five years of pooled

data), I re-categorized the causes of death into three groups rather than nine, and I added a fourth

group for all other causes of death. In this new categorization, causes that were rated 1.0, 1.5,

and 2.0 by Phelan and colleagues (2004) were considered to have low preventability; those rated

2.5, 3.0, and 3.5 were under medium preventability; those rated 4.0, 4.5, and 5.0 were highly

preventable; and the fourth group contains all other causes of death that were not categorized by

Phelan and colleagues (2004). I used the 358 causes recode based on the ICD-10 codes in the

MCDF.

I used the above data to calculate age-specific death rates by ethnic group, sex, and cause of death category for those between 25-74years old. After computing life expectancies at birth for Chinese and Filipinos by sex and bachelor's degree attainment, I conducted an age and cause decomposition of the difference in life expectancy at birth between the two national-origin groups using Arriaga's (1984) method as described by Preston et al. (2001). In this decomposition analysis, I used the four categories of causes of death—low, medium, and high preventability, and a fourth category for all other causes—that I described above. All calculations were conducted using SAS 9.4 and Microsoft Excel

3.3   Results

3.3.1   Key Population Characteristics

[Table 1 here]

Table 1 shows the total population size for each national-origin group by sex and time period, as well as the proportion of each of population between ages 25 and 74 who have at least a bachelors' degree. Along with the aggregated Asians group, the Chinese, Asian Indian, and Filipino populations all increased between the 2005-2007 and 2017-2019 periods. For example, the population of Asian Indian men grew from approximately 1.3 million people in the 2005-2007 period to nearly 2.2 million people in 2017-2019, representing a 68.1 percent increase in population size (Table 1). Asian Indian women exhibited an even larger percent increase in population, increasing by 76.7 percent between 2005-2007 and 2017-2019. This means that of the three main groups of interest, Asian Indians experienced the greatest relative increase in population size during the periods under study. Filipinos, on the other hand, had the smallest

relative change in population size between the 2005-2007 and 2017-2019 periods—increasing by 23.2 percent among men and 31.8 percent among women (Table 1).

The proportion of people between 25 and 75 years old in each national-origin-sex group with at least a bachelors' degree also increased over the same period. Notably, the percentage of Chinese women with at least a bachelor's degree increased from 51 percent in 2005-2007 to 59 percent in 2017-2019 (Table 1). Likewise, among Asian Indian women, the percentage of the population with at least a bachelor's degree increased from 65 percent to 74 percent during the same period. However, unlike their Chinese and Asian Indian peers, Filipina women saw only a small increase in the percentage of the population who completed bachelor's degrees, from 52 percent in 2005-2007 to 54 percent in 2017-2019. Similar trends were also observed among men. Moreover, it is also important to note that substantially larger portions of Asian Indian men and women completed bachelor's degrees compared to their Filipino and Chinese counterparts. For example, 79 percent of Asian Indian men had at least a bachelor's degree, but only 61 percent of Chinese men and 46 percent of Filipino men completed the same level of education. Lastly, while a larger portion of men than women had bachelor's degrees among Chinese, Asian Indians, and the aggregated Asian group, the opposite was true for Filipinos (Table 1).

3.3.2   Life Expectancy and Lifespan Variation Over Time by National-Origin Group and

Bachelors' Degree Attainment among Males

[Table 2 here]

3.3.2.1 Life Expectancy

Table 2 presents the life expectancy at birth (e_0) and life disparity ($e^\dagger$) among men for

each national-origin group, by bachelors' degree attainment, for each of the three-year periods.

Among those with at least a college degree in 2005-2007, life expectancy at birth ranged

between 80.3 years for Filipinos and 85.1 years for Asian Indians, with Chinese men falling in

between. By the 2017-2019 period, Filipino men with a college degree still had the shortest life

expectancy (e_0=81.2), but Chinese men had the longest (e_0=85.7). For men with less than a

bachelor's degree, the aggregated Asian category had the shortest life expectancy (e_0=79.6) in

2005-2007 and Asian Indians the longest (e_0=82.5). By the 2017-2019 period, Chinese men with

less than a bachelor's degree surpassed their Asian Indian peers as having the longest life

expectancy (e_0=83.8), while the aggregated Asian category had the shortest life expectancy

(e_0=78.2).

In general, Chinese men saw a growing advantage over their Asian Indian and Filipino

counterparts between the 2005-2007 period and the 2017-2019 period. In fact, they experienced

an overall rise in life expectancy at birth between the periods under study by nearly 1.7 years

among those with a bachelors' degree and 1.4 years among those without. On the other hand,

while Asian Indian men benefited from a longevity advantage over their Chinese peers—a 1.1-

year advantage among the college-educated and a 0.9-year advantage among those with less than

a college degree—in the 2005-2007 period, they lagged behind them by the 2017-2019 period,

experiencing a 2.3-year disadvantage among those with a college degree and a nearly 3.5

disadvantage among those with less than a college degree. As such, while Asian Indian men's

life expectancy fluctuated—rising between the first two periods (2005-2007 and 2008-2010),

falling between 2008-2010 and 2014-2016, then rising again between the last two periods—they

were worse off in 2017-2019 than in 2005-2007, regardless of educational attainment. Filipino

men also experienced life expectancy fluctuations. While those without a bachelor's degree

experienced a 0.5-year decline, college-educated Filipino men saw a nearly one-year life

expectancy improvement between the first and last periods. Nevertheless, Filipino men

experienced a widening longevity disadvantage relative to their Chinese counterparts and a

narrowing gap relative to Asian Indian men in both educational attainment groups. In fact,

Filipino men never reached parity with their Chinese peers, such that college-educated Filipino

men in the 2017-2019 period still had a shorter life expectancy at birth than Chinese men without

a college degree in the 2005-2007 period (Table 2).

3.3.2.2 Life Disparity

Table 2 also highlights life disparity ($e^\dagger$) inequalities, helping paint a clearer picture of

how the variation of life expectancy within each national-origin group changed over time. Recall

that life disparity measures the average number of years of life lost due to death. In other words,

it captures the variation in the timing of death within a population. Although life disparity

fluctuated between each period, all three national-origin groups, along with the aggregated Asian

group, had higher life disparity in the 2017-2019 period than they did in the 2005-2007 period

among those with and without a college degree, suggesting an overall rise in heterogeneity in the

age of death within these different populations. For example, $e^\dagger$ ranged between 12.5 years (Filipinos) and 13.5 years (Chinese) among college-educated men in the 2005-2007 period. But by the 2017-2019 period, the $e^\dagger$ for men with bachelor's degrees ranged between 14.8 years (Filipinos) and 15.3 years (Chinese). For men with less than a college degree in 2005-2007, Filipinos also had the lowest life disparity ($e^\dagger$=13.1) but Asian Indian the highest ($e^\dagger$=16). In the 2017-2019 period Filipinos still had the lowest life disparity ($e^\dagger$=16) and Asian Indians the highest ($e^\dagger$=17) (Table 2).

Examining these life disparity trends in relation to changes in life expectancy underscores different implications for each group. For college-educated Chinese, Filipino, and aggregated Asian men, the overall rise in life disparity accompanied a rise in life expectancy at birth (Table 2). Thus, while the variation in lifespans within these populations increased over time, that increased variation was due to reductions in 'late' or older-age mortality. That college-educated Asian Indian men saw a drop in life expectancy while simultaneously experiencing a rise in life disparity, however, suggests that they experienced an overall rise in pre-mature or 'early' mortality. Asian Indian men with college degrees were therefore in a less advantageous position in 2017-2019 than in 2005-2007, unlike their Chinese and Filipino counterparts.

In addition, men without a college degree had lower life expectancy at birth and higher life disparity than their college-educated co-ethnics during each period (Table 2). Like their co-ethnics with college degrees, men without a college degree also exhibited a general rise in life disparity over time. But unlike their college-educated peers, all but one group—Chinese—experienced a life expectancy decline. This means that while Chinese men without a college degree enjoyed a life expectancy increase attributable to reductions in old-age mortality, their

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Asian Indian and Filipino counterparts experienced worsening premature mortality leading to a drop in life expectancy and rise in life disparity (Table 2). Taken together, these findings unmask the expanding disparities between Chinese, Asian Indian, and Filipino men that are obscured by aggregate level (i.e., Aggregated Asians) trends.

3.3.3   Life Expectancy over Time by National-Origin Group and Bachelors' Degree Attainment among Females

[Table 3 here]

3.3.3.1 Life Expectancy

By and large, women in both educational attainment groups exhibited similar trends as their male co-ethnics, but their life expectancy and life disparity were larger in magnitude than those found in men (see Table 2 for men and Table 3 for women). For instance, e_0 for college-educated women during the 2005-2007 period ranged between 85.8 years (aggregated Asians) and 92.1 years (Asian Indians). By the 2017-2019 period, life expectancy ranged between 86.2 years (aggregated Asians) and 89.3 years (Chinese). Among women with less than a college degree in 2005-2007, aggregated Asians had the shortest life expectancy (e_0=84.9) and Asian Indians the longest (e_0=91). And like their counterparts with college degrees, by 2017-2019 Asian women overall still had the shortest life expectancy (e_0=84.4), while Chinese had the longest (e_0=88.5) (Table 3).

As with college-educated men, Chinese, Filipina, and Asian women as a whole with college degrees experienced an overall rise in life expectancy, albeit with some fluctuations.

Unlike men, however, the gap between college-educated Chinese and Filipina women in 2017-2019 was the same as their gap in 2005-2007. In fact, their longevity gaps narrowed between the first (2005-07) and third periods (2011-13) before rising again during the fourth time period (2014-16) (Table 3). Asian Indian women with bachelor's degrees, on the other hand, went from having a 3.5-year longevity advantage over their Chinese peers in 2005-2007 to lagging behind them by nearly three years in 2017-2019. Asian Indian women without college degrees also experienced a life expectancy decline over time, during which their advantage over Chinese women also turned into a disadvantage, as found among their male counterparts. Moreover, Chinese women without college degrees exhibited an overall rise in life expectancy following a period of decline between 2005-2007 and 2008-2010 (Table 3). In addition, as Chinese women without a college education's life expectancy rose over time, their Asian Indian and aggregated Asian women counterparts experienced longevity declines. Filipina women experienced a longevity rise between 2005-2007 and 2008-2010, followed by a decline to their 2005-2007 level by the 2017-2019 period.

3.3.3.2 Life Disparity

Life disparity oscillated over time for all groups of women with and without college degrees; but all women, except Asian Indians, experienced higher life disparity in the 2017-2019 period compared to the 2005-2007 period (Table 3). Among college-educated women in 2005-2007, Aggregated Asians had the lowest life disparity ($e^\dagger$=14.7) and Asian Indians had the highest ($e^\dagger$=20.2), with Filipinos and Chinese falling in between the two groups. In 2017-2019, Asian Indian women with college degrees had the lowest life disparity ($e^\dagger$=14.9) and Filipinas

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the highest ($e^\dagger$=16.8). Among those with less than a college degree in 2005-2007, Aggregated Asians also had the lowest life disparity ($e^\dagger$=15.2) and Asian Indians the highest ($e^\dagger$=20.7). And like their counterparts with college degrees, Asian Indian women without college degrees in 2017-2019 also had the lowest life disparity ($e^\dagger$=15.7), while their Filipina counterparts had the highest ($e^\dagger$=17.3) (Table 3).

For Chinese women with and without college degrees, life disparity generally increased with life expectancy, except between 2011-2013 and 2014-2016. That a general life disparity increase accompanied an overall rise in life expectancy among Chinese women suggests that their life expectancy rose due to improvements in mortality at older ages. Filipina women, likewise, experienced life expectancy improvements along with life disparity increases, suggesting that they, too, benefited from reductions in late-life mortality. Unlike Chinese and Filipina women, Asian Indian women experienced sizeable life expectancy declines accompanied by five and 5.3-years reductions in life disparity among those with college degrees and those without, respectively (Table 3). In all, I found growing disparities between Chinese and Asian Indian women, in both education groups, and between college-educated Chinese and Filipina women.

3.3.4   Sensitivity Analyses for Life Expectancy and Life Disparity Trends

[Table 4 here]

[Table 5 here]

To inspect the robustness of the main findings, I conducted a series of sensitivity analyses to examine whether the observed inequalities in the life expectancy and life disparity analyses (see Table 2 and Table 3) were substantively influenced by missing death data (i.e., numerator bias). Because I estimated life expectancy and life disparity by education group, I excluded from the numerator all observed deaths between ages 25-74 that had no specified educational attainment information. The proportion of deaths excluded from the main analyses varied by national-origin group, ranging from one percent to four percent of total deaths between ages 25-74 for each group (see appendix A1). As such, I conducted sensitivity analyses according to three different scenarios: (1) Half of the excluded death data were in the 'with a bachelor's degree' group and the other half in the 'no college degree' group; (2) all excluded death data were in the 'with a bachelor's degree' group; and (3) all excluded death data were in the 'no college degree' group. For the first scenario, in cases where there were odd number of deaths, I randomly categorized one death into one of the two education categories.

The inclusion of the missing death data decreased the life expectancy values for the different national-origin groups, but the general trend of widening gaps between Chinese and Asian Indians and Chinese and Filipinos held. Tables 4 and 5 present the life expectancy and lifespan disparity over time among the different national-origin groups, under the assumption that half of the previously excluded deaths occurred among those with no college degrees and the other half among those with at least a college degree. With some small reductions in each national-origin group's life expectancy, the trends in within-group life expectancy and between-group life expectancy gaps did not substantially differ from the main analyses. Among those with at least a bachelor's degree, Chinese and Filipino men experienced overall improvements in life expectancy, while Asian Indian men's longevity decline (Table 4). Among those with less

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than a college degree, only Chinese men were better off in the 2017-2019 period than they were in the 2005-2007 period (Table 4). Moreover, although life expectancy fluctuated between each period for all three groups, the Chinese life expectancy advantage over Asian Indians and Filipinos widened over time, notably during the last two periods (2014-2016 and 2017-2019). The widening gaps between the three groups is attributable to an overall increase in Chinese life expectancy, an overall decline in Asian Indian longevity, and a slow life expectancy rise or stagnation in Filipino life expectancy.

The general trends also did not substantially change among women (Table 5). For example, whereas college-educated Chinese women lagged 3.5 years behind their Asian Indian counterparts in 2005-2007, they enjoyed a 2.8-years advantage over Asian Indians by the 2017-2019 period (Table 5). Like men, the longevity gaps between Chinese and Asian Indians and Chinese and Filipinos were also notably clear during the last two periods of study in both educational attainment categories. Furthermore, the life disparity trends among men and women in each national-origin-bachelor's attainment groups also did not substantially change from the main findings. Sensitivity analyses based on the second and third scenarios did not yield substantively different outcomes (not presented). Taken together, the sensitivity analyses results underline the robustness of the findings regarding widening health inequalities between Chinese, Asian Indians, and Filipinos in the United States.

3.3.5 Supplementary Analysis: Age-Cause Decomposition of Life Expectancy Gap between

Chinese and Filipinos

[Table 6 here]

[Table 7 here]

The life expectancy and life disparity analyses (Table 2 and Table 3) show that longevity

gaps between Chinese, Asian Indians, and Filipinos persisted over time, even with accounting for

sex and educational attainment. These findings are in line with the *differential racialization*

perspective. To further bolster the case for *differential racialization*, however, I conducted a

supplementary age and cause decomposition analysis of the life expectancy gap between Chinese

and Filipinos for the five-year period 2012-2016. As expected, I found that the life expectancy

for college educated Filipinos (male e_0=80.4; female e_0=86.5) and Chinese (male e_0=84.9; female

e_0=87.9) were longer than that of their co-ethnics without college degrees. After estimating life

expectancy at birth, I then conducted an age and cause decomposition using Arriaga's (1984)

method to see whether the mortality differences by cause of death preventability between

Chinese and Filipinos aligned with the assumptions of fundamental cause theory. Table 6 shows

the age and cause decomposition of the difference in life expectancy at birth between Chinese

and Filipinos without a college degree by sex. Recall that because of the nature of the data, I was

only able to calculate age-specific death rates by educational attainment and cause of death

preventability for ages 25-74. Nonetheless, the mortality differences in ages 25-74 contributed

over 39 percent[13] to the life expectancy gap between Chinese and Filipino men and nearly 80

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[13] I computed the percent contribution by dividing the contribution of ages 25-74, denoted by
$n\Delta x$ (25-74) by the total difference in life expectancy at birth between Chinese and Filipinos.

percent to the gap between women (Table 6). Moreover, the contribution of mortality differences between the two ethnic groups to the longevity gap was largest for high preventable causes—contributing one year among men and 0.6 years among women (Table 6). Broadly speaking, Table 6 reveals that Chinese experience a mortality advantage over Filipinos, and that the largest proportion of that advantage is attributable to lower death rates in the high preventable causes of death across most age-groups, but particularly among men aged 55-74 and women aged 60-74.

Likewise, the findings for those with college degrees suggest that the Chinese-Filipino longevity gap is largely attributable to disparities in mortality due highly preventable causes of death (Table 7). Mortality disparities in highly preventable causes of death occurring in ages 25-74 account for over 60 percent of the life expectancy gap between college-educated Chinese and Filipino men and approximately 50 percent of the gap among college-educated women. On the other hand, mortality differences in low-preventable causes of death in ages 25-74 account for only two percent of the longevity gap among men and seven percent of the gap among women. Mortality differences in persons aged 65-74, in particular, make sizeable contributions to the inequality between college-educated Chinese and Filipino men and women. It should be noted, however, that deaths classified as 'other' category make notable contributions to the life expectancy gaps between Chinese and Filipinos; but, they are still lower than the contributions of highly preventable deaths. In all, these supplementary analyses aligned with my expectations regarding the influence of *differential racialization* on the influence of cause-of-death mortality differences on the life expectancy gap of two differentially racialized groups.

3.4   Discussion

3.4.1   Life Expectancy and Life Disparity

The findings that I presented in this chapter provide further evidence of health disparities within the Asian category, and they reveal that those health inequalities have widened over time. The results of the life expectancy and life disparity analyses (Table 2 and Table 3), along with the sensitivity analyses (Table 4 and Table 5), show that although Chinese, Asian Indian, and Filipino life expectancy rose and dropped between each period between 2005 and 2019, those oscillations contributed to an overall widening advantage for Chinese over their Asian Indian and Filipino counterparts, regardless of bachelor's degree attainment. In contrast to their Chinese counterparts, Asian Indians experienced a general downward longevity trajectory, having worse life expectancy in the 2017-2019 period than they did in the 2005-2007 period, across both sexes and bachelor's degree attainment groups. Asian Indians' downward trend is especially notable considering that they enjoyed a sizeable longevity advantage over their Chinese and Filipino peers in the 2005-2007 period, especially among men. Unlike Asian Indians, on the other hand, Filipino men and women with bachelor's degrees experienced small overall life expectancy increases, while their non-college educated co-ethnics experienced a decline (as with men) or stagnation (as with women).

Moreover, the life disparity analyses point to greater lifespan variation in the 2017-2019 period than the 2005-2007 period across sex, national-origin group, and bachelor's degree attainment groups, except for Asian Indian women. These life disparity trends provide an additional perspective regarding the different groups' mortality experiences. Broadly speaking, that Chinese life disparity rose while life expectancy increased suggests that they experienced

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improvements in old-age mortality. The same can be said of Filipina women in general and Filipino men with college degrees. Furthermore, Asian Indians, regardless of educational attainment, experienced worsening life expectancy over time along with greater heterogeneity in age at death. This means that not only did Asian Indian men's longevity shorten over time, they also experienced increasing variation regarding age at death. Asian Indian women's life disparity trends suggest that they experienced worsening old-age mortality. Considering these trends as a whole points to worsening health of Asian Indians and a growing disadvantage compared to their Chinese counterparts; however, Asian Indians by and large are better off and/or on par with their Filipino peers. Put simply, the findings show the convergence of Asian Indians and Filipinos life expectancy, largely attributable to Asian Indian decline, and these two groups' divergence from Chinese, attributable to Chinese mortality improvements over time.

      To my knowledge, these findings are the first to document the longevity inequalities between any groups subsumed under the Asian umbrella over time. Although extant research shows that life expectancy for Asians as an aggregate increased over the last three decades while simultaneously augmenting their longevity advantage over other monolithic race groups (Singh et al. 2017; Woolf and Schoomaker 2019), this study lays bare the fact that those mortality improvements do not apply to all people under the Asian category. That the declining health of Asian Indians had not been previously documented further underscores the important limitations of using monolithic race groups in health disparities research. These findings, therefore, contribute to the growing call for disaggregating data on people of Asian descent (Yom and Lor 2021), such that inequalities like the ones I presented here do not get overlooked and are addressed.

Nevertheless, disaggregating data in and of itself still paints an incomplete picture of social inequality and its corollaries, notably health disparities. Disaggregated health data and findings must be placed within the context of the social conditions that produce inequalities, namely race/racialization/racism. As I argued in the beginning of this chapter, the widening inequalities between the United States' three largest Asian-origin groups cannot be understood simply as intra-group variation occurring within the Asian racial umbrella. Some race scholars focusing on people of Asian descent have long highlighted the unclear boundaries of Asian-ness and Filipinos and Asian Indians' tenuous ties to Asian racial status (Ocampo 2016; Kibria 1997). The findings I presented above speak to that literature, illustrating that Chinese, Asian Indians, and Filipinos do not share a common health experience, evincing their disparate racial status.

That Asian Indians, in particular, experienced sizeable health declines between 2005-2007 and 2017-2019 perhaps reflects their rapid marginalization and racial exclusion following the events of September 11, 2001. As I previously noted, scholars studying the racialization of South Asians argue that the formation of South Asian and Muslim racialized identities began prior to 2001; but the othering of these groups intensified in tandem with the rise in islamophobia and the expansion of the War on Terror (Cainkar and Selod 2018; Sharma 2016). For instance, Selod (2018) documents the sudden and intense shift in the treatment of South Asians, including Asian Indians, because they are often perceived as Muslim and terrorists. Regardless of actual religious identities, being perceived as Muslim has in many ways become a more salient racial identity than being South Asian, and the perception of being Muslim exposed large numbers of people to discrimination (Selod 2018; Shahms 2020). During the years following 2001, South Asians, including Asian Indians, experienced increasing racial status precarity along with greater exposure to stressors like discrimination and prejudice (Shahms 2020; Sharma 2016; Garner and

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Selod 2015; Maira 2009). And in line with existing research on the relationship between discrimination, racial status, and stress (Carter et al. 2017; Gee et al. 2009; Krieger 2014; Williams et al. 2012), increased discrimination and stress worsened the health and well-being of South Asians in the United States and likely explain, in part, the decline in life expectancy (Kaduvettoor-Davidson and Inman 2013; McMurty et al. 2019; Nadimpalli and Hutchinson 2012).

These findings offer preliminary evidence to support *differential racialization*. Bonilla-Silva (2004, 2008, 2018) claims that a tri-racial system is emerging in the United States that would make the current ethno-racial pentagon scheme less meaningful. The emergence of this new racial scheme brings about changes in group boundaries along with changing racial statuses, privileges, and life outcomes. Perhaps the most fundamental of these life outcomes is length of life, because as van Raalte and colleagues (2018:1002) note, "every other type of inequality is conditional upon being alive." While Bonilla-Silva (2004, 2018) is clear about the emerging position of Chinese as 'honorary whites,' he is less clear about the racial positions of Asian Indians and Filipinos. The diverging health of these three ethnicities points to their increasingly different lived experiences in American society and offer early evidence of their changing life outcomes as a result of *differential racialization* and the gradual formation of new racial lines.

3.4.2   Supplementary Analysis: Age and Cause Decomposition Analysis

Integrating race theory in health research aids in explaining and contextualizing health disparities (Baluran and Winful 2021; Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva 2008). The supplementary analysis using the age and cause decomposition analysis exemplifies this point. The principal

aim of the supplementary analysis was to strengthen the *differential racialization* argument by illustrating how unequal racialization shapes how different categories of causes of death contribute to the life expectancy gap between groups occupying unequal racial statuses—in this case, Chinese and Filipinos. In doing so, I was able to test the utility of conceptualizing differential racialization as a fundamental cause to explain the health inequality between Chinese and Filipinos.

As I previously noted, people's ability (or inability) to access the resources needed to prevent and/or delay 'preventable' deaths is fundamentally influenced by their racial position (Link and Phelan 1995; Phelan and Link 2015). We know that one's position in the racial stratification system indicates the value that society places on a person or category of persons (Bonilla-Silva 1997; Mills 1997; Hall 2019; Hall 2021). How one is racialized consequently shapes their ability to access the resources needed to promote health. Therefore, health inequalities shaped by racial status will be widest for 'preventable' deaths because those are the causes of deaths for which treatment and prevention resources are available but are unequally distributed/accessible. The findings in the supplementary analysis support this position—mortality differences in high preventable causes of death accounted for a substantially larger portion of the life expectancy gap between Chinese (high racial status) and Filipinos (relatively lower racial status) than did low preventable causes. Also, the fact that a larger life expectancy gap was observed among college-educated than among those without a bachelor's degree further suggests that racialization-related processes, and not merely SES differences, explains the gap in life expectancy.

3.5   Conclusion

In this chapter, I investigated the macro-level implications of *differential racialization* through an examination of the health inequalities between the three largest groups of Asian descent in the United States—Chinese, Asian Indians, and Filipinos. Specifically, I documented the temporal trends in life expectancy and life disparity among these three groups between the years 2005-2019 and interpreted those trends through the differential racialization framework. Drawing on the literature that underscores the emergent racial lines within the Asian category, I argued that the expanding health gaps between the three groups reflect their (increasingly) disparate racial positions. Moreover, I situated these trends within the changing social and political contexts surrounding race in the United States during the same time period. Notably, I posited that the decline in Asian Indian health over time is at least partially attributable to their ongoing marginalization—a consequence of the War on Terror and rising islamophobia (Cainkar 2018; Cainkar and Selod 2018).

In addition to the life expectancy and life disparity analyses, I also conducted a supplementary analysis that decomposed the life expectancy gap between Chinese and Filipinos in the United States. Given what we know about how race functions as a fundamental cause of health (Phelan and Link 2015), I argued that *differential racialization* within the Asian category can reveal how racial status influences the contributions of different causes of death on the health gaps between two groups. As I expected, I found that mortality differentials in high preventable causes of death were the main contributors life expectancy gap between Chinese and Filipinos. This finding strengthens the *differential racialization* argument by suggesting that Chinese and Filipinos occupy unequal racial positions within the United States.

The analyses I presented in this chapter are not without limitations. The small number of deaths for each national-origin group, even with three years of pooled data per period, did not allow for educational attainment to be divided into more than two categories. By using only two educational attainment categories, my analyses may have obscured other inequalities. Relatedly, the data did not permit for analyses using other indicators of socioeconomic status. Other measures of SES may better capture the social positions of Chinese and Filipinos in the U.S. (Sabado-Liwag 2022; Yi et al. 2022). Moreover, while sensitivity analyses revealed that the exclusion of deaths due to missing education data from the numerator did not substantively alter the general inequality patterns and trends between the groups under study, they nonetheless impacted the magnitude of the life expectancy values, albeit only slightly. Additionally, a longer period of study would have been advantageous; however, the main analyses were limited only to 2005-2019 because disaggregated death data are not accessible for years before that period. Lastly, the analyses for this chapter focused only on the three largest Asian-origin groups; thus it remains unclear how the health of other groups have changed over time.

Notwithstanding the foregoing limitations, this chapter offers evidence underscoring the consequences of *differential racialization* at the macro-level. Additionally, it highlights the benefits of integrating race and health research to generate new theoretical explanations for emerging inequalities within existing monolithic race groups, opening new pathways for future research. As the United States' population continues to diversify, scholars must critically examine how our current approach to categorizing people obfuscates inequalities. However, while these findings suggest that people of Chinese, Asian Indian, and Filipino descent face different forms of racialization, I do not deny the possibility that people from these national-origin groups may also be racialized simply as Asian in certain contexts. The recent rise in

violence against people perceived as Asian since 2020 demonstrates that in many cases,

members of American society may still not be able to—or simply do not care to—distinguish the

diverse groups encapsulated by the Asian/Asian-American category. *Differential racialization*

and homogenization can both exist and be experienced by people of Chinese, Asian Indian, and

Filipino ancestry (and other groups) in the United States. As Albert Memmi (1999) long ago

noted, the logic of race and racism is incoherent and inconsistent because it is a social construct

not grounded on biological fact.

CHAPTER 4

Differential Racialization at the Micro Level:

Differential Racialization and Police Interactions among Young Adults of Asian Descent

In their discussion of racial domination, Desmond and Emirbayer (2009) caution against the assumption that official racial-ethnic categorizations correspond easily to how individuals self-identify. Such assumptions neglect the dynamism of race as a concept, and they overlook its inconsistency across time, place, and social-historical contexts (Desmond and Emirbayer 2009; Memmi 1999; Wacquant 1997). Nonetheless, although there is now a consensus among social scientists that race is socially constructed, much of the extant sociological literature still conceptualizes race as static and rarely captures the processes that make and re-make racial categories (Zuberi, Patterson, and Stewart 2015; Wacquant 1997). Thus, there remains a need for research that interrogates the complex processes of group-making that define racial-ethnic membership and how such meanings shape how individuals interact with each other (Emirbayer 1997; Emirbayer and Desmond 2015; Wacquant 1997; Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva 2008). As such, some race and ethnicity scholars focus on processes of boundary-making and social closure in the construction of racial-ethnic categories (Abascal 2020; Alba 2005; Loveman 1999; Wacquant 1997; Wimmer 2013). They underscore the importance of considering how actors create, recreate, and at times resist, the boundaries of racial-ethnic classifications (Desmond and Emirbayer 2009; Emirbayer and Desmond 2015). The present study expands on these

perspectives by illuminating how boundary-making processes produce and reproduce inequality at the micro level through an investigation of how differential racialization leads to divergent policing experiences, via status construction. To that end, I frame my analysis by merging the literatures on race and policing, racialization, and status construction.

Specifically, I examine how the *differential racialization* of young adults of Asian origin influences how the police treat them, and how they navigate police encounters. I use the term *differential racialization* to capture the variations in how racial-ethnic boundaries are drawn across different contexts. It refers to the dissonance between existing 'official' understandings of group membership (i.e., the legally defined understanding of who is white, Black, Asian, Native American) and how these understandings are remolded and deployed to classify individuals or groups of people in social interactions. At the micro-level, *differential racialization* refers to the process whereby individuals do away with the existing national-level and state-recognized racial-ethnic taxonomy in exchange for one that draws on national as well as localized understandings of racial-ethnic boundaries to assess and classify others', and their own, racial group membership.

I analyzed qualitative data from in-depth interviews with young adults of Asian descent from across the United States to address two research questions. First, how do young adults of Asian descent experience differential racialization at the individual level? Second, how does differential racialization shape their interactions with the police? The data revealed that racialization both protected and harmed individuals during police encounters. Specifically, the typified status beliefs (Ridgeway 1991, 1998, 2014) tied to racialized individuals shaped the protective and/or harmful consequences of racialization. Consequently, individuals'

understanding of their racial-ethnic status and the generalized beliefs associated with the *type* of people to which they were grouped affected how they interpreted police contact.

The narratives that I relay underline the fluidity and contextual dependency of the meanings of race and how individuals experience it. As I will show, the meanings of racial-ethnic identity shape the boundaries of group membership. Group membership, in turn, is tied to value connotations (i.e., status) that influence the possibility of conflict, competition, or cooperation between groups (Horowitz 1985; Huang 2021; Tajfel 1982). By drawing on status construction theory (Berger, Ridgeway, and Zelditch 2002; Ridgeway 1991, 2019), I show how the evaluation and classification of individuals in micro-level interactions reproduce inequality by tying types of bodies to different behavioral expectations. *Differential racialization* thus produces micro-level inequality through status construction. I therefore argue that the (differential) racialization of individuals guides how the police assess the level of threat that they present and their worthiness of protection. The respondents' narratives also highlight how actors experience and interpret groupness; how they experience imposed categories; and how they resist racial-ethnic classifications through the performance of race.

Altogether, this study contributes to the literature on race and racialization by revealing new insights into how racialization processes reproduce inequality within—not merely between—existing monolithic categories. This study also adds to research on the experiences of people of Asian descent in relation to state-sponsored systems of social control (e.g., policing), an area in need of further investigation. In the following sections, I discuss the literatures on race and policing, racialization, and status construction. Next, I describe the data and analytic approach that I used to address my research questions. I then describe the key themes that emerged from the data and end by discussing their implications.

4.1   Background

4.1.1   Race, Policing, and People of Asian Descent

A sizeable literature illuminates the relationship between racialization and unequal treatment under the law (Black 2010/1976; Garland 2012; Patterson and Dagadu 2016; Webster and Miller 2015; Weitzer 2017; Weitzer and Brunson 2015; Western 2006). These studies generally show that those who are furthest away from whiteness, and thus most marginalized, are also the ones who benefit least and are targeted most by the law and law enforcement (Black 2010/1976; Calavita 2016). In particular, this research underscores the unjust treatment of Black and Latinx young men, such that they are more likely to be stopped, arrested, and serve longer sentences than other groups (Alexander 2010; Epp, Baumgartner, and Shoub 2018; Freiburger and Sheeran 2017; Garland 2012; Rios 2009, 2011, 2017; Western 2006). But this line of research has yet to fully interrogate how perceptions of one's racial-ethnic membership influence treatment by agents of the law (for exception, see Selod 2018). Black and Latinx, like Asian and white, are socially constructed categories. Therefore, the rules concerning who gets to be Black or Latinx are just as incoherent as the rules that determine racial-ethnic categorization in general (Memmi 1991; Wacquant 1997). And these inconsistencies are consequential for people's lives (Roth 2018, 2016). Moreover, research also shows that one's 'street race', or the racial-ethnic category that others impose on an individual, affects how that person experiences discrimination, including racial profiling by the police (Lopez et al. 2018; Vargas et al. 2019). In fact, studies document how physical appearance, especially racialized physical features (e.g., skin tone, hair texture), affect the likelihood of someone being stopped, arrested, and punished (Johnson and

King 2017; King and Johnson 2016; White 2015). Other studies also attribute differential policing experiences to police officers' perceived variations of subjects' skin tone (Kizer 2017; Monk 2019; White 2015). Altogether, the literature points to how physical features mark one's racial status and paint some people as guilty and others as worthy of police protection. The present study explores the extent to which these patterns apply to people of Asian origin.

Very little of the extant research on race and policing incorporates the experiences of different Asian groups in the U.S. (Rojas-Goana, Hong, and Peguero 2016; Rosich 2007; Nopper 2014; Velez, Brunson, and Miller 2011; for exceptions see Johnson and Betsinger 2009; Zhuo and Zhang 2018). This lacuna is attributable to small population size, lack of data, and the persistence of the model minority myth (Le et al. 2001; Nopper 2014; Zhang 2002). The model minority myth constructs Asian Americans as academic overachievers, law abiding citizens, and successful small business owners who overcame adversity to achieve the American Dream (Espiritu 1992; Kao 1995; Kawai 2005; Kitano and Sue 1973; Shim 1998). It also suggests that Asian Americans overcome adversity and avoid delinquency by adhering to strict moral codes enforced by the ethnic community (Petersen 1971). However, research foregrounds growing disparities between Asian groups within the legal/criminal system (Hishinuma et al. 2015; Lai 2005; Magsaysay 2021; see Zhuo and Zhang 2018 for review). Specifically, groups like Vietnamese, Cambodians, Filipinos, and other Southeast Asians are more likely to be arrested and incarcerated compared to other Asian subgroups (Ahuja and Chlala 2013; Choi 2008; Goebert et al. 2013; Le and Wallen 2006; Mayeda et al. 2006; Nagasawa, Qian, and Wong 2001; Oh and Umemoto 2005; Saito 2020; Tam 2016). For instance, Ahuja and Chlala (2013) report higher arrest rates among Cambodian and Vietnamese youths, compared to other youths of Asian origin. Tam (2016) also highlights Southeast Asian youths' higher likelihood of being arrested

for property offenses, relative to other Asian groups. Further, an expanding literature focuses on

the racialized surveillance of South Asians (e.g., Asian Indians, Pakistanis) (Cainkar and Selod

2018; Selod 2019, 2018; Shahms 2020). In all, these studies underscore the heterogeneity of

Asian groups' experiences with crime, law, justice, and social control in the United States. I

further uncloak this heterogeneity by calling attention to the contrasting racialized policing

experiences confronted by young adults within the monolithic Asian category.

4.1.2 *Differential Racialization* and Contested Racial-Ethnic Identities

Although membership to a racial-ethnic group relies both on internal (i.e., self-

identification) and external definitions, the latter lays a heavy weight on how one experiences

race (Davenport 2020; Jenkins 1994; Roth 2016; Vargas and Kingsbury 2016). We know that

phenotypical features, like skin tone, hair texture, eye shape, and other physical characteristics

greatly inform racialization (Brown, Dane, and Durham 1998; Feliciano 2016; Roth 2016;

Saperstein 2006; Vargas and Stainback 2016). Yet not all people encapsulated under the same

monolithic racial-ethnic categories share the same physical features. Thus, assumptions related to

racial-ethnic status—including how people might behave, how intelligent they are, and how

capable they are of achieving certain valued goals—do not apply across all people that we

currently lump under the same categories of the ethno-racial pentagon (Hollinger 2006 [1995])

because they do not experience racialization equally.

Consequently, portions of these monolithic categories—particularly those who self-

identify as Latino and Asian—experience racial-ethnic classification that is incongruent with

how they self-identify (Vargas and Stainbak 2016). Because of that, some scholars argue that for

some people, racial-ethnic classifications produce *contested identities* (Lopez et al. 2018; Vargas and Stainback 2016; Vargas and Kingsbury 2016). Depending on physical appearance, individuals from the same monolithic race (e.g., white, Black, Asian, Native American) may confront racialization in vastly different ways (Bonilla-Silva and Glover 2004; Bonilla-Silva 2002, 2004, 2018; Lopez et al. 2018). As an example, while an individual may self-identify as Black, he/she/they may be perceived as some other race in daily interactions, highlighting that racial-ethnic group membership is sometimes fluid and not fixed (Liebler et al 2017; Penner and Saperstein 2015; Saperstein and Penner 2012). Lopez and colleagues (2018) refer to one's external classification in quotidian interactions as an individual's *street race*. And as previous studies show, the disjuncture between one's self-described racial-ethnic identity and how others perceive his/her/their racial-ethnic membership (i.e., street race) may harm one's wellbeing and life chances (Campbell and Troyer 2007; Jemal et al. 2019; Stepanikova 2010).

In this study, I use the term *differential racialization* to describe the process that produces the inconsistency between one's self-described racial-ethnic identity and how others classify him/her/them across different social contexts. And I apply this concept to the experiences of people of Asian origin. Scholarship on the racialization of people of Asian origin elucidates their multi-dimensional racial positioning vis-à-vis Blacks and whites in the United States (Kim 1999; Xu and Lee 2013). As Kim (1999) insightfully articulates, the triangulation of people of Asian origin occurs through their simultaneous valorization and ostracization within a field of racial positions. And while a significant portion of the existing literature focuses on the racial positioning of Asians as a whole, some scholars underscore the persistent salience of group boundaries in these racial positioning processes (Kibria 1998; Kim 2007; Lee and Kye 2016; Light and Gold 2000; Sakamoto and Kim 2013). To that end, some scholars point to the

complicated meanings and contested understandings of the concept of 'Asian American' to highlight the uncertainty of group boundaries and its consequences on how we understand racial disadvantage (Kibria 1998).

Moreover, considering the vast differences in how individuals and groups present physically, some studies explore the nature of racial-ethnic boundaries, racialization, and racial fluidity among some groups within the Asian category (e.g., Espiritu 1992; Fong 2008; Kibria 1996; Lee and Ramakrishnan 2020; Ocampo 2016; Selod 2018; Selod and Embrick 2013). These studies reveal that the boundaries of Asian identity are blurrier than might be expected. In his book, "The Latinos of Asia", Ocampo (2016) highlights the many ways in which Filipino Americans identify more with Latinx—particularly Mexican Americans—than with other Asian groups. The Filipinos in Ocampo's (2016) study note that due to their Spanish-sounding last names and darker skin tone, relative to East Asians, others often do not consider them *real* Asians. Thus, for some Filipinos, their street race (Lopez et al. 2018) may be Latinx or Mexican American. Additionally, Selod (2018) spotlights the racialization of South Asians as something other than Asian in response to their religious and cultural markers. Specifically, Selod (2018) finds that for many second and later generations of Muslim South Asians, their Muslim identity becomes more salient than their South Asian identity.

Further, Lee and Ramakrishnan (2020) find that even within the broader Asian category, many East Asians do not view some South and Southeast Asians as Asian. This literature suggests that many people of Asian descent experience incongruency between their self-described racial-ethnic identity and their external classification (i.e., *differential racialization*), which in turn produces contested identities. Considering the research highlighting the link between racial-ethnic identity contestation and unfair treatment (Farrell 2020; Jemal, Gardiner,

and Bloeser 2019; Noels, Leavitt, and Clement 2010), it is reasonable to expect that the *differential racialization* of individuals of Asian origin will also lead to unequal and unfair police interactions.

However, the consequences of *differential racialization* and the contested identities it produces vary depending on who is being classified and in what direction—that is, whether the individual is classified as a member of a higher status racial-ethnic group or a lower status group (Farrell 2020; Stepanikova 2010; Stepanikova and Oates 2016; Vargas and Stainback 2016). Consider, for example, Stepanikova and Oates (2016) finding that whites that believe they are perceived and racialized as non-white report more unfair treatment when seeking healthcare compared to non-contested whites. Another study reveals that self-identified Maori individuals in New Zealand are less likely to report racial discrimination when they believe that others racialize them as European, compared to their non-contested Maori peers (Cormack, Harris, and Stanley 2013). Taken together, these studies suggest that the boundary-making processes through which racial-ethnic classifications are drawn affect individuals through the loss or gain of social status (Stepanikova 2010).

4.1.3 Status Construction

Differential racialization is tied to micro-level inequality via status construction. According to Ridgeway (1991:368), status characteristics (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, national origin) have status value when 'consensual cultural beliefs' designate the occupation of one state of a characteristic as an indication of one's worthiness in a society. Thus, racial-ethnic status has status value because people who hold one state of that characteristic (e.g., white) are seen and

treated as more worthy than those who hold other states (e.g., Black, Asian). These status

characteristics also carry status typifications, or the generalized beliefs about the qualities

possessed by individuals who hold a particular state of a characteristic (Berger, Ridgeway, and

Zelditch 2002; Ridgeway 1991; Ridgeway and Balkwell 1997; Ridgeway et al. 1998). And these

typifications emerge from interactions between individuals with unequal structural advantages

(Blau 1977; Ridgeway 1991; Ridgeway and Balkwell 1997; Ridgeway et al. 1998). Status

construction theory posits that when individuals of different status characteristics and material

resources interact, they form implicit assumptions about the value and worthiness of the actors in

the encounter. While these assumptions originally develop from individual-level interactions,

they form the basis for more general assumptions about whole groups or types of people—in this

case racial-ethnic groups. These ideas then diffuse to the larger society as more unequal

interactions take place that seem to confirm the differential value and worthiness of members of

society (Berger et al. 2002; Mark, Smith-Lovin, and Ridgeway 2009; Ridgeway 1991; Ridgeway

et al. 1998). As these ideas diffuse, so too, do the status typifications related to them.

Importantly, status typifications are also tied to what Berger and colleagues (2002:158)

call *referential structures*—the generalized cultural beliefs about the relationship between status

positions and social rewards. During social interactions, actors draw from a social framework of

taken-for-granted generalizations based on status (Berger et al. 2002; Ridgeway 2019). This

social framework, or schema, is widely held and deeply learned, and it provides 'information

structures' that guide actors' behaviors in situations where certain status characteristics become

salient (Berger et al. 2002: 160; Ridgeway 2019). As such, in a racialized society, actors assess

each other during social interactions to determine racial-ethnic status and then hinge their

behaviors toward each other based on that assessment, drawing on racial schemas[14]. But while actors can draw on a racial schema of status typifications about racial-ethnic groups, the framework for how to classify individuals into race-ethnic groups is less clear. One's racial-ethnic classification is negotiated during social interactions, and how one is racialized in micro-level interactions determines his/her/their status. These status distinctions consequently affect how others treat an individual; how much resources, rewards, and privileges one can access; and how much power one can wield in society (Berger and Webster 2006; Berger et al. 1977; Ridgeway et al. 2009; Ridgeway 2014, 2019; Weber [1922] 1978). As I will later illustrate, *differential racialization* distinguishes the racial-ethnic statuses of individuals under the Asian category and shapes whether they are viewed as deserving of police protection or seen as a threat.

4.1.4   The Current Study

Together, the literatures on race and policing, racialization, and status construction undergird my investigation into how young adults of Asian origin experience *differential racialization*, and how *differential racialization* shapes their interactions with the police. First, the literature on race and policing exposes how racialization results in differential police treatment. While research on how the racialization of people of Asian origin affects their interactions with the police is scarce, it is reasonable to believe that racialization processes— particularly *differential racialization*— also impact how they interact with the police. Second,

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[14] Here, racial schema refers to the set of cultural beliefs and information structures that presume the ordered differentiation of people and how they should be differentially treated.

my conceptualization of *differential racialization* draws from the race and ethnicity research on the fluidity of racial-ethnic boundaries and the processes that produce contested racial-ethnic identities. Building on the growing literature concerning how various groups of Asian origin confront inconsistent external classification by others, I argue that such *differential racialization* experiences also engender disparate policing experiences. Lastly, I advance status construction as a key mechanism linking *differential racialization* to policing experiences. As the status construction literature indicates, status characteristics like racial-ethnic status are associated with generalized beliefs about types of individuals. But I argue that the Asian/Asian American racial-ethnic status does not apply equally to all people of Asian descent. As such, not all people of Asian descent benefit from the same generalized beliefs attached to their racial-ethnic statuses. In fact, I question the meaningfulness of using a monolithic Asian category by underlining the divergent racialization experiences of young adults of Asian origin. Through the narratives of these young adults, I demonstrate that incongruent policing experiences in a racially stratified society reflect the differential propensity of individuals for being targeted (Sexton 2007), based on their racial-ethnic status.

4.2   Data and Analytic Approach

To address my research questions, I analyzed data based on one-on-one in-depth semi-structured interviews with 36 young adults (21-30 years old) of Asian descent from across the United States. In-depth interviews were the most appropriate means to gather the data required to answer my research questions, considering the lack of accessible existing datasets with information on police encounters among disaggregated Asian groups. Additionally, my interest

in the relationship between racial-ethnic self-identification and external ascription further

required that I collect such information through this medium. Unlike survey data, the in-depth

interviews allowed me to capture the nuances of how individuals understood and interpreted race

as a concept; how their understandings of group membership shifted in different settings; and

how others' understanding of their racial-ethnic status played into their interactions with law

enforcement. The interviews also allowed me to delve deeper into the young adults' racialization

experiences by asking them to provide specific detailed examples of the events and experiences

that shaped their understanding of the role that racial-ethnic membership played in how they

interact with the police. Thus, the interviews allowed me to capture the various contextual factors

that may have shaped individuals' understandings of racial-ethnic membership.

The interviews were part of a larger research project, approved by the Vanderbilt

University Institutional Review Board, which examines the legal consciousness formation of

young adults who self-identify as various races from across the United States. I conducted the

interviews between May 2020 and February 2021. Following two in-person pilot interviews, all

other interviews were conducted by video call through Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

With permission from the participants, audio from the interviews were recorded and stored in an

encrypted external hard drive.

My analyses focused on the narratives of 36 young adults (21-30 years old) of Asian

descent. The two pilot interviews suggested that the period during the late teenage years may

mark an important turning point for legal consciousness evolution. On the other end, I excluded

individuals over 30 years old because people in that age category may be entering another phase

in the life course which may also be associated with another transition point in their legal

consciousness. As such, I interviewed individuals who had likely gone through that stage

already. Moreover, I recruited participants through a purposive, snowball sampling method,

whereby I made initial contact with a small group of individuals from my personal and

professional networks and then asked those contacts to introduce me to individuals within their

networks who may identify as having Asian descent. I then asked those individuals to network

me with other young adults of Asian origin who might be interested in talking with me.

Considering limited time and resources, I focused recruitment on geographic and ethnic

diversity, and I collected interview data until I reached theoretical saturation. Most of the

participants were from the Midwest (n=19), but also included those from the South (n=9),

Northeast (n=5), and West (n=3). Moreover, the largest group of participants were of Southeast

Asian descent (i.e., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Filipino, Hmong) (n=17), followed by those of East

Asian origin (i.e., Chinese, Japanese, Korean) (n=7), those of South Asian origin (i.e., Asian

Indian, Pakistani) (n=6), and those who identified as having more than one race and/or ethnicity

(n=6). Lastly, 26 participants identified as women and 10 as men.

My goal was to collect data that could provide an assessment of how young adults'

racialized social interactions shaped their experience of the law and law enforcement.

Specifically, I asked them to offer detailed descriptions of the circumstances surrounding any

memorable interactions with law enforcement, and their interpretation of what and why those

events happened. While I encouraged the participants to discuss major police encounters that

they experienced, witnessed, or heard about, I also asked them to characterize their typical police

interactions. Further, I asked respondents to describe how others' perception of their racial-ethnic

identity (i.e., external classification) played into their police encounters.

The interviews were semi-structured, and my questions were open-ended, thus allowing

me to probe for more details. I drew on grounded theory methods to achieve internal validity,

including searching for and explaining deviant cases and exceptions to the most common patterns in the participants' accounts. All interviews were voluntary, and they ranged between 35 minutes and 97 minutes in length. Pseudonyms will be used throughout for research participants. Further, the data were transcribed using two transcription services: Otter.ai and Rev.com. Otter.ai is an online transcription service that uses artificial intelligence and machine learning to transcribe speech to text. I used Otter.ai to transcribe the two pilot interviews, as well as five other interviews. The remaining interviews were transcribed using Rev.com. Rev.com relies on a team of professional transcriptionists to convert speech into text, thus producing more accurate transcripts than Otter. To check for accuracy, I reviewed each of the Otter and Rev transcripts and corrected any errors.

I coded the data using NVivo software. I approached the coding and data analysis of the interviews using a combination of flexible coding (Deterding and Waters 2021) and Charmaz's (2014) grounded theory coding techniques. First, I used flexible coding to categorize different sections of each interview transcript under broad index codes, largely based on the sections of the interviews as well as the broad concepts that were relevant to the research questions. Examples of these index codes include, race, interactions with legal agents, and views of law and justice. These index codes facilitated the reanalysis of the interview data (Deterding and Waters, 2021). Following index coding, I applied grounded theory techniques. I began with line-by-line coding, followed by focused coding and theoretical coding. To facilitate the coding and analysis process, I wrote brief analytic memos after coding every five to ten transcripts. Lastly, I kept a methodological journal where I wrote brief notes following each interview where I described methodological issues, directions, decisions, and suggestions for subsequent interviews. These brief journal entries helped to expedite analytical memo-writing.

4.3   Findings

4.3.1   Racialization and Precarious Protection: Overview of Key Themes

Status value accompanies one's racial-ethnic status (Ridgeway 1991, 2014, 2019). These status values also engender implicit assumptions and beliefs about individuals, such as their competence at achieving some desired outcome, or whether one 'type' of people is better or more worthy than another (Berger et al. 2002; Ridgeway 1991, 2019). These beliefs, or status typifications, influence expectations of how individuals will behave during face-to-face interactions, which in turn affect how individuals navigate micro-level interactions with each other (Berger et al. 1977; Berger et al. 2002; Ridgeway 1991). In a society where racial-ethnic membership constrains access to material resources and power (DuBois [1920] 1999, [1940] 2014; Hall 2017; Mills 1997; Omi and Winant 2014), how one is racialized also partly determines whether one is seen as deserving of police protection.

Racialization thus played a key role in how young adults of Asian descent interacted with the police. Specifically, (differential) racialization shaped the level of respect, scrutiny, surveillance, aggression, and violence that they experienced and/or expected to confront during police encounters, and how they navigated and interpreted such interactions. But as the interviewees articulated, how people of Asian descent were racialized during police encounters was inconsistent across contexts. This was in line with the differential racialization lens. Whereas some young adults noted some protective benefits of being perceived as Asian, many also described being excluded from that categorization and the assumptions concerning one's behaviors and level of threat that came with it. The young adults' accounts of their encounters

with the police underscored the precarity of the protection that people of Asian descent expected to receive by 'being Asian.'

Eighteen young adults noted that being perceived as Asian guarded against threats of physical violence, verbal abuse, and condescending and/or disrespectful behaviors and attitudes from the police. They attributed that protection to model minority stereotypes and widely held beliefs about Asians as obedient and law-abiding citizens. However, eighteen young adults, also noted being viewed as 'Brown' or a specific ethnic group (e.g., Cambodian, Hmong) rather than being grouped as Asian. For them, the status values and generalized beliefs related to Asians did not apply. As I describe in the following sections, these young adults' varied experiences of police interactions highlight the social processes that define and re-define the meaning of race and race labels across various contexts, and their consequences on status values and beliefs.

4.3.2   Protection Through Racialization

Eighteen young adults of Asian ancestry (Kobe, Jason, Jin, Kim, Yoon, Melody, Chloe, Minji, Anthony, Maribel, Luz, Sakura, Olivia, Adam, Jessica, Carly, James, and Hanh) described that being racialized as Asian protected them against potential violence, aggression, or disrespectful tone and behavior from the police. They repeatedly acknowledged that the police would not physically harm them. For instance, although interacting with the police was at times anxiety-inducing for Kobe—a Midwesterner of Filipino descent who identifies as Asian American—he explained that being perceived as '*Asian American'* meant that *'I have the privilege of knowing that I probably won't get harassed or like beat up or murdered by a police officer.'* Others also acknowledged the privilege that Kobe referred to. When characterizing his

past encounters with the police, Jason, who is of Chinese ancestry and is also from the Midwest, said that while he has had multiple police interactions, *'all of my experiences have been very reasonable.'* He admitted blame for previously issued tickets and warnings and added that *'my experience has been very professional.'* By professional, he meant that the police officers followed protocol and maintained a respectful tone with him. However, he also surmised, *'I know me being Asian has an impact on that.'*

Similarly, Jin, a Chinese American woman, said that she did not feel nervous around the police because *'in my mind, I know…like it sounds bad, but they're not there for me.'* Jin lives in a large city in the Midwest, and she described the heavy police presence in her city in response to the ongoing Black Lives Matter protests. She added, however, that while the presence of police heightened her sense of danger, *'it's not in terms of like the police being the ones that are putting me in danger. It's what the police are responding to that's putting me in danger.'* Likewise, the presence of police made Olivia, who is of Chinese and European descent, *'feel safer to know that they were there.'* Thus, there was an understanding among the young adults that the police were not there 'to get them.' Put another way, they were not the intended target of police violence and control. Rather, they were valued as worthy of police protection.

Another important facet of the protection associated with being racialized as Asian was that they were not viewed as a threat; thus, they were less likely to be approached by the police. Yoon, who described himself as Asian and/or Korean American, lives in a diverse neighborhood with large communities of immigrants and people who are racialized as Black and/or Latinx in a large city in the Northeast. The police are often seen around his neighborhood, and some members of his community have experienced racial profiling. Yoon described racial profiling as *'an assumption that police have…to feel as if they need to be more wary of certain people just*

based on race.' However, he rarely felt uneasy walking down the street: '*as an Asian man…I feel like I don't really catch the eye of a cop as easily.*' People like Yoon do not catch the eyes of the police because '*no one really sees Asians as threatening,*' according to Melody. Notably, while she is of Chinese and Filipino descent, Melody used the term 'Asian American' when asked how she describes her racial-ethnic identity. Further, for Olivia, '*the stereotypes of Asian people are [not] as negative as some other races. So, I don't think that [race] really has too much of a [negative] impact.*'

Some young adults also explicitly linked the Asian body to perceptions of safety. As Chloe explained:

> '*So, the assumption of danger for an Asian woman is less, far, far less, than it would be for a Black or browner counterpart. I don't ever feel like I would be suspected of anything insidious…especially with the trope of docility that is associated with Asian bodies.*'

Like Yoon, Chloe described herself as both Asian and/or Korean American. Also, because she lives in a large midwestern city, she has had multiple interactions with the police in the past. When asked how she would feel if she were approached by police, she responded: '*admittedly, I wouldn't feel threatened. Yeah, I don't think that [feeling threatened] comes up.*' She also noted, '*I don't think I would be perceived in a threatening way.*' And she reasoned that she '*[doesn't] present like so out of the norm, the social norm [of how 'Asians' look].*' Thus, for Chloe and the others, occupying a body marked as *Asian* meant not only being viewed as non-threatening, but also to be presumed as submissive. As Chloe and the others implied, these were generalized beliefs about certain types of bodies that were also held by the police. Consequently, as Yoon

described, the police were less 'wary' of Asians when compared to other groups of people. Notably, while these young adults described themselves as having origins in specific countries in Asia (e.g., South Korea, China, the Philippines), they often interchangeably used 'Asian/Asian American' and 'Korean/Chinese/Filipino-American' when describing their identities. That phenomenon underscored their shared understanding that Korean American, or Chinese American, or Filipino American meant the same thing—or at least belong in the same group—as Asian or Asian American. And in their experiences, *Asian* was a racial-ethnic status imbued with high value (e.g., worthy of police protection) and positive beliefs[15] (e.g., non-threatening, docile, submissive) within the specific context of interactions with the police.

4.3.3   Model Minority Myth

The typified belief regarding the docility of those who are racialized as Asians ties back to the model minority myth. Some young adults explicitly drew a connection between the model minority myth and assumptions about the 'submissiveness' of people labeled as Asian. According to Luz, a Filipina American woman from the Southeast, the model minority myth perpetuates the notion that '*Asians are the best minority, or the most behaved, or the ones that conform the most to the standards…, the ones who will be submissive…follow directions, be quiet*.' Also, because of the model minority myth, *'we've [referring to people racialized as Asian] been painted to be so submissive and law abiding,'* said another Filipina American

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[15] By 'positive beliefs' I refer only to contexts wherein individuals interact with law enforcement. Typified beliefs about Asians, like submissiveness and docility, are harmful to people so racialized; however, they are 'positive' in the sense that people associated with the law view such characteristics/temperaments as not negative or threatening.

woman from the Southeast named Maribel. Because of these widely held stereotypes, Kobe said

that the police rarely patrol his neighborhood: '*I don't think they go here as much because…they*

think we're all behaved I guess.' He lives in a suburban neighborhood comprised largely of

people of Asian and European descent.

Others also posited that prior police interactions did not escalate to violence because the

police saw them as the stereotypical well-behaved and submissive Asian person. Following a

traffic stop that ended in a ticket that was later dismissed by a judge, Minji recalled her friend

saying, '*Well, good thing I'm a white person and you're an Asian girl…Like imagine if we were*

someone else…it could have been a lot worse.' Minji is the daughter of immigrants from South

Korea, and she lives in a large city in the Midwest. Like many of the other young adults, she also

described herself as both Korean American and Asian American. Although she has had few

interactions with the police, she has long witnessed the differential treatment of people by police

in her city: *'growing up in an urban place…there is this kind of observation of like how people*

are penalized.' Because of that, she was aware from a young age that her being Asian afforded

her better treatment than her counterparts who were racialized differently. Minji's comments

indicate the deeply engrained cultural schemas of a racial-ethnic order in which people racialized

as white are at the top, Black at the bottom, and Asian somewhere in between.

Some young adults similarly expressed that their interactions with the police were not

likely to escalate to a point that may seriously threaten their lives or safety. For instance, Luz

said that because of the stereotypes associated with her perceived racial-ethnic identity (Asian),

'*I don't have the same type of fear that…a Black person would [have]…if I see a policeman*'.

Likewise, when describing how police officer's perceptions of his race played into his past

encounters with the law, Jason acknowledged that '*me being Asian is probably less of a*

detriment than if I was Black, with regards to getting pulled over by police.' In fact, for some

people, 'looking Asian' signaled their goodness as a person. When he was stopped by the police

for speeding, Anthony recounted that he was able to avoid punishment because he looked

innocent: *'I was pulled over and the cop came to me and asked the typical questions…I answered*

all his questions and he looked at me and said, "You seem like a good kid. I'm going to let you

go."' Anthony who identifies as both Vietnamese American and Asian American, is from a city

in the Southeast. According to him, the officer interpreted his physical appearance as an indicator

of how 'good' he was as a person:

> '*I felt like because I was Asian and that I looked like I was innocent and docile, and just*
> *answered all of his questions, and kind of just let him control the narrative, that he*
> *thought, "Okay, this guy is fine. I'm just going to let him go."*'

He expressed discomfort at the fact that the police officer let him go solely based on his

appearance. But he added, '*I think Asians in America are viewed as more docile and*

subservient…[and] upholding the law…Like you do what you're supposed to do, and you don't

really break the law.' As the others already noted, the belief that Asians will uphold the law is

closely linked to the model minority myth. Kobe proposed that the reason Asians are treated

better by the police is due to that myth: *'It comes back to that model minority thing. Like, you've*

been accepted by white people.' In this view, Asians remain subservient to the dominating group

('white people') but are also afforded the benefit of the doubt and presumed innocent when

confronted by police.

     Interestingly, the young adults frequently gauged their experiences on those racialized as

Black. Like Minji's comments, these comparisons underscore the taken-for-granted nature of the

racial-ethnic schema. They suggest some young adults' acceptance of a racially ordered experience of policing, where Asian individuals' encounters with the police can never be worse than Black individuals' encounters. Thus, young adults like Anthony, Jason, Minji, Yoon, Luz, and Melody implicitly underlined the bias of the police against some groups of people, while also recognizing the 'privileges' of being racialized as Asian. Such privileges, however, only extended to those who fit the public's image of who is Asian. As Minji acknowledged, she was able to avoid dangerous interactions with the police partly because '*I fit America's idea of what Asian looks like.*' Her response spotlights the implicitly understood boundaries of 'Asian-ness.' It implies that whereas people like Yoon, Luz, Jason, and herself 'fit' within those group boundaries, others do not.

Others' interpretations of the racial-ethnic boundaries that Minji pointed to have important consequences during police interactions. Underscoring her insight into the phenomenon, Luz said of the police: '*I wouldn't be a threat to them so they wouldn't be a threat to me.*' Therefore, while being racialized as Asian comes with potentially harmful stereotypes, the participants, like Kim, who is a Filipina American, recognized that such stereotypes largely protected them from physical violence: '*I think because Asians are seen as more of a model minority…even though we get stereotyped, it's mainly positive stereotypes, like [following] rules…were not seen as a threat.*' The beliefs regarding the docility and submissiveness of Asians allowed the police to lower their guard around these young adults. Importantly, however, Kim also remarked that people often did not racialize her as Filipino: '*I get Japanese a lot for some reason…When people see me, they don't think Filipino right away.*' Thus, as Minji earlier noted, Kim may also fit the public's image of what Asian looks like, and in turn benefited from the typified beliefs associated with those racialized as Asian.

Given these young adults' understanding of the typified beliefs associated with their ascribed racial-ethnic membership, they described fearing trouble more than fearing violence, harassment, disrespect or death when interacting with the police. A Filipina American woman from the Midwest named Carly noted that in a recent interaction with the police, *'I was very terrified. But not because I felt unsafe. I was just scared to get in trouble.'* James described similar emotions when he recounted a time he was stopped for a traffic violation when he was in high school:

> *'I think I was mostly worried about telling my parents that I got a ticket. Honestly, that was the responsibility that I guess kind of scared me the most…I didn't think I was actually afraid of the cop himself, but just the situation.'*

James is of Japanese and European descent, and he lives in the Southeast. In another event, he and his girlfriend at the time *'were fooling around in the backseat, [when] a cop saw [their] car.'* Rather than face a fine, the police simply *'proceeded to tell us about like personal values and respect…and like all this stuff.'* Thus, James, like Anthony, faced little serious consequences for his actions. The fear of the situation and potential troubles it might entail was also salient for Hanh, a Vietnamese American man from the Midwest, because *'if you see a cop it's probably going to be a bad situation.'* When asked whether he felt scared or fearful when interacting with the police, he added that while he felt scared when interacting police, *'I wouldn't say it's for my safety…I wouldn't say that I'm scared of them. I'm just scared because I don't know what the outcome is going to be.'* The outcome that Hanh and the other young adults feared included facing monetary fines, having 'things on your record,' or being labeled as 'bad.' As Minji noted, there are *'unspoken things…like if you're in trouble [with the police]…there's something inherently wrong about you or what you did.'* As such, the thought that police encounters would

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turn dangerous rarely entered these young adults' minds. Importantly, their accounts underlined the learned values, beliefs, and rules of interaction related to racial-ethnic status. As I describe in the following sections, however, the protective privileges associated with being racialized as Asian are uncertain and dependent on multiple contextual factors. I will also later highlight that these privileges were not accessible to all young adults of Asian origin because many of them do not fit the public's concept of what Asian looks like.

4.3.4   Exclusion Through *Differential Racialization*

As the young adults noted above, the corporeality of race and the typification of Asian bodies (and people) as docile heavily influenced police interactions. But not all people of Asian origin occupy bodies perceived and labeled as Asian, or at least not the 'type' of Asian associated with submissiveness, obedience, and law-abiding nature. Eighteen young adults (Hamza, Ananya, Samnang, Floribeth, Chenda, Thalia, Farha, Lis, Ekam, Abdul, Kevin, Fwam, Chue, Veronica, Thom, Arfah, Roshni, and Ekam) discussed how they or their close friends and/or family experienced being perceived as something other than Asian or Asian American. These young adults were mostly of South or Southeast Asian descent, or they identified as having more than one race. Their experiences of *differential racialization* emphasize the group boundary making processes at play during social interactions. Their narratives also revealed how typified beliefs varied within the monolithic Asian/Asian American group, depending on how individuals were racialized in micro-level social relations.

4.3.4.1 Who Got to be Asian?

Although most of the young adults did not explicitly claim that they were excluded from the Asian category, they understood that they did not meet the public's criteria of who is Asian or Asian American. According to Hamza, who is originally from Pakistan and lives in the Midwest, the American public has a narrow understanding of who is Asian:

> '*If I tell people I'm Asian they would look at me funny because when you think of Asian you think of Oriental. And people often forget that Pakistan and India are both in Asia.*'

Another young adult of Malayalee descent (originating in the southwestern region of India) named Ananya, said that she would describe herself as Indian or Malayalee first, before calling herself Asian American:

> '*I think most time when people refer to Asian Americans…they're thinking about Chinese people and Japanese people. I don't think they're thinking about South Asian people at all.*'

Additionally, the young adults noted that the narrow understanding of Asian American as only East Asians was widely held by the public and instilled at a young age. Ananya added, '*I think the idea is still instilled in me in my head from growing up that Asian American means East Asian, and it doesn't apply to you [referring to herself and other South Asians].*' Likewise, Floribeth, who is of Filipino ancestry, remarked that Filipinos are also often excluded from the public's notion of who is Asian: '*There's still some people that don't know what Filipinos are or where [the] Philippines is. If they [the public] think Asian, it's not going to be Filipino.*' Chenda, a woman of Cambodian origin, also expressed her discomfort with the term Asian-American because it did not capture the experiences of people like her: '*I just feel like the Southeast Asian*

experience or the Cambodian experience growing up was a lot different from our East Asian

peers.' These young adults' accounts point to the social framework that guide how actors draw

boundaries to classify people in social interactions. During social interactions, actors also drew

from that social framework to determine how they should behave and interact with others.

In these young adults' view, because the police drew from the same social framework

that excluded some people from the Asian category, their treatment of people of Asian origin

who did not fit the image of Asian was also different. As such, some young adults explicitly

connected differential police treatment to their racialization as 'Brown' or some other race.

Ananya, who earlier underscored the public's narrow understanding of who is Asian American,

also mentioned sometimes being classified under different racial-ethnic categories. Because of

her phenotypic presentation, particularly her skin tone, she had been perceived as different races

in the past: *'I think just based on how I look, I can present as different races to people, I think*

especially to white people who don't have too many interactions with other, like, brown people

of color.' When asked how perceptions of her race played into her encounters with the police,

she expressed concerns about differential police treatment because she might be perceived as a

Black person:

> *'I don't think that the police would immediately see me as Asian American. I think if*
>
> *anything, they might racially profile me as Black, which also raises separate concerns*
>
> *about how I would be treated by the police if they saw me as a Black person… So it is a*
>
> *concern like especially if I'm driving somewhere at night…What if I get pulled over by*
>
> *the police and I'm immediately profiled, and maybe things escalate? I do think about*
>
> *that, because I want to be prepared and know how to act in those situations.'*

That fear of receiving negative police treatment came to the fore when her family was at a mall when a group of Black Lives Matter protestors appeared:

> *'I just remembered my parents were so nervous and scared. And they were immediately like, okay, we have to get out of here because the police are going to be here and like, we don't want to be racially profiled as part of the protest.'*

Ananya's parents' fears of being racially profiled by police was grounded on their understanding that in the eyes of many people, they may be racialized as Black. More importantly, their fear also underscored their understanding of the unjust and often deadly treatment of people racialized as Black or Brown by the police. Considering that most of the interviews, including the one with Ananya, were conducted in 2020 at the height of Black Lives Matter protests throughout the U.S. and abroad, racialized police violence was at the fore of many interviewees' minds. Thusly, others echoed Ananya's discussion of race and police violence. *'I don't have to be a Black person even for a day. I can only imagine the kind of assault and hatred and the kind of profiling they get…I still get it [referring to racial profiling], African-Americans get it worse,'* said Hamza.

For a midwestern Hmong woman named Lis, the tense relationship between the police and some communities made her consider her own relationship with the police: *'I see the relationship with white people and police, and I see the relationships with Black people and police. And then I think, what is my relationship with the police?'* Kevin, a Filipino American man from the West, also wondered whether the negative treatment he previously received from the police was due to him being 'Brown': *'Are you [referring to the police] doing this to me because I'm Brown? Because it is easier to talk back to me than a white person?'* Unlike the

other young adults of Filipino descent, Kevin described himself as having different physical features that may have led to him being seen and treated poorly by the police: '*you have to look at the external features of who I am that will signal my ethnic origin.*' He added, *'With my dark brown skin, you can easily clock that I'm not Chinese…Immediately, I don't 100% fit the mold of other ethnicities under Asian American.'* For people like Kevin, it was not uncommon to be differentially racialized because they did not fit the widely accepted image of Asian. Consequently, they were unable to reap the protective benefits of being racialized as Asian. Thusly, people like Kevin characterized themselves as Brown, rather than Asian.

A prominent example of the differential racialization and treatment of Brown people that emerged in the data concerned the experiences of people of South Asian descent, particularly Asian Indians and Pakistanis. Hamza was driving his uncle's car when a police officer stopped him for driving over the speed limit and harassed him:

> '*He called me back in his squad car and he harassed me for ten minutes straight. He's like, "I could put your uncle in jail…I can send you back to your country!*"'

As a recent immigrant to the United States at the time, he did not realize that the police did not have the power to 'send him back'; thus he recalled the intense emotional stress he experienced: *'I was literally on my knees begging him like, please don't do any of this, I've worked very hard to get here.'* Upon reflection, he believed that the officer harassed him because '*he knew I was an immigrant…and he was going to give me a hard time for no reason.*' Consequently, unlike the young adults who described being protected by the police, Hamza remained scared of the police in subsequent interactions because they '*were out there to…do bad things to people.*'

Others also reiterated Hamza's claim that the police were there to do 'bad things' to people. Roshni, who describes herself as an Asian Indian woman, also discussed being frightened by the police: *'I think what I'm scared of is that they'll just find any reason to arrest me or hurt me, but mostly harass me.'* Farha, who is of Pakistani origin, also felt targeted by the police. She described a particular officer in her small midwestern town who was '*known to be more strict to people of color.*' That same police officer once stopped her for going five miles over the speed limit, confiscated her license, fined her multiple hundred dollars, and required her to go to court. After that incident, Farha's mother said to her: *'You're so lucky, that's all that happened to you. You just had a ticket. That's it.'* Her mother's response exposed how much worse Farha's police interaction could have proceeded. In contrast, Farha also added that it was well-known among Brown people in her town that *'Caucasians…were more likely to just get a warning, or just kind of let off.'* Thus, unlike some young adults of Asian descent—like Anthony or James who faced no serious consequences for their actions— Farha and others like her did not receive the benefit of the doubt during police encounters.

These young adults were more likely to be viewed as threatening, guilty, or suspicious, rather than presumed innocent. As an Asian Indian man who is Sikh, Ekam chronicled multiple examples of such treatment by police officers. In one instance when he was in high school, he was driving with a friend who was a woman of European descent, when the police stopped them because of the dark tint on his windows; but upon seeing Ekam's friend, the officer quickly shifted his concern: *'it was more about like making sure that she was safe in a weird way. And he was more concerned about why we were together, why [we were] driving to wherever we were driving.'* When his friend told the officer that they were driving to get food, the officer insisted: *'No, call your parents and let them know that you're here!'* In Ekam's view, the officer's

concern for his friend revealed his perception of Ekam as a potential threat to the safety of a white woman. The officer's behavior also made Ekam feel attacked and made him wonder if his treatment was due to his racial-ethnic identity:

'I was a little uncomfortable because it felt weird to have to justify why you're hanging out with your friend…It seemed almost like an attack…I'm not even sure what we would call that. Maybe [it was] about my race. But also, like I didn't understand. I couldn't comprehend what went wrong, or why he was questioning what he was questioning.'

Thus, while young adults like Jin and Jason enjoyed police protection, young adults like Ekam described being the subject of police suspicion. Those in the latter group pointed to the widely recognized status hierarchies associated with being racialized as Asian as opposed to being racialized as Brown or some other race-ethnicity.

4.3.4.2 Context Shaping (Differential) Racialization

For other young adults, how they were racialized and treated by the police also depended on other contextual factors, like where the interactions took place and who they were with. Like Ananya, Thalia also noted that she was often mistaken as different 'races' by other people. Growing up in the Southwest as the daughter of Japanese and Greek parents, she recalled that '*most people think that I'm Hispanic or Latinx.*' She added, '[I] *most commonly get [racialized as]…Mexican…or that I'm Filipino.*' Given the different ways she has been racialized by others, she surmised that who she was with mattered to how she was classified:

'I think I can kind of blend in with different communities depending on who I'm with. Like, if I'm with white people, I feel like people see me as like, "oh, you're mixed with something"…But when I'm with my Latinx friends, they're like, "oh, she's Latinx." People kind of see me differently depending on what group I'm with.'

According to Chenda, as a Cambodian woman living in an area in a northeastern city that was *'definitely Black and Brown,'* she often got *'mistaken for being Mexican all the time.'* She added, *'I definitely pass as Hispanic a lot of times or as a Brown person. A lot of people probably don't perceive me as Asian-American at first impression.'* Moreover, Floribeth also mentioned that people often mistook her as Mexican because *'there was not a lot of Filipino people'* in the town where she lived in the Midwest. Relatedly, Floribeth also described herself as having *'dark black hair and darker features.'* For Veronica the nuances of racialization were most clear when she compared her experiences of racialization to her father's, who she described as *'a browner Filipino man.'* Veronica and her family live in a southern state with a large community of *'Mexican migrant workers and field workers.'* Because of the large Mexican migrant population and small Filipino community in their area, she noted that *'[her] dad really had a difficulty being hailed as Hispanic or being hailed as Mexican in public.'*

There were also some young adults who described being divorced from the benefits of being viewed as Asian American by being categorized as a member of a specific ethnic group or simply being othered. Thom said, *'where I live, people will probably think I'm Cambodian, because there is a large Cambodian population here.'* Growing up, Fwam was racialized specifically as Hmong because she lived in a community *'full of Black people, Hmong people, and a little bit of color here and there'* within a large midwestern city. However, for Chue, a Hmong woman from a midwestern city, people either saw her as Hmong or they simply did not

know how to categorize her: '*I just feel like a foreign object.*' Such racialization and othering influenced these young adults' police interactions because such processes linked them to negative stereotypes of criminality and deviance. As Floribeth mentioned, *'the way you treat people is based on how you view them.*' And the treatment of racialized people depended on *'what the narrative will be'* of the group that they are tied to, she added. The status value and beliefs related to certain races were thus linked to the reputation, or narratives, granted to them by others in a society.

Consequently, the young adults expressed lingering feelings of unease and uncertainty about how the police might racialize and treat them or their friends and family. Veronica said that because her father was often racialized as Latinx or Mexican, he received differential treatment from the police:

> *'He experiences being racialized in a different way than I do. I'm a light-skinned Filipino woman. And so, I am perceived as closer to East Asian, closer to whiteness, too. And so, it's interesting to me to see how, when they get stopped by the police, how I'm treated, how my mom is treated, and how my dad is treated.'*

Because her father was aware that others racialized him as Latinx or Mexican, Veronica reported that during police interactions, '*he was really scared.*' Thus, there was a lot of uncertainty about how one was going to be treated by the police. Thalia also recounted receiving negative police treatment in an incident when she was with a group of Latinx friends. She was one of five people in a car driving to get food, when the police stopped them for a minor traffic violation:

> *'They asked my friend who was driving to show her ID, and she did. And then he, like, asked all of us to [show identification], and I was like not even driving. Like, I'm literally*

just sitting here, like I don't know why I need to do this…But then I got kind of scared

because I was like, why is he looking at all of our ID's?'

She surmised that the police most likely asked for all their ID's because she was in a car of mostly Latinx students, and *'he was like looking for undocumented students.'* In that incident, Thalia was also likely racialized as Latinx, like the rest of her friends in the car.

For Chue, the connection between racialization and police treatment was clear in the tension between her Hmong community and the police: *'I remember growing up there was a lot of gang activity. And so, there was a lot of distrust between the police and the Hmong community.'* She also recalled the *'fear in [her] parents'* that *'it felt like you could do almost anything wrong and the police could arrest for you it.'* Fear of the police was also high in Fwam's Hmong community: *'I remember growing up in the hood. I remember playing outside and seeing a cop pull up and seeing the teenagers running.'* She recalled her brother telling her that *'the cops aren't very nice to the people around here,'* referring to her largely Black and Hmong working class neighborhood. And even as she had gotten older, she characterized her interactions with the police as negative: *'I think the way they talk to us [Hmong people]…the cops were really condescending.'* Lis, another Hmong woman from the Midwest, also described the police as being *'condescending, rude, and disrespectful'* to her during traffic stops. When asked what may have caused the police to treat her as such, she responded: *'I don't want to make it racial…But it's just like you can't help but feel that way.'*

That (differential) racialization mattered for how individuals interacted and behaved around the police was most clear in Thom's experience. He explained that the police department in his city utilized a gang database that included many Cambodians who were suspected gang

members. He added, '*I assume I'm not in that database, but I think even socially, people make those connections, and police make those connections.*' Consequently, Thom avoided presenting any symbols that signaled his Cambodian identity:

> '*A lot of Cambodians have a Cambodian flag in their car, and I don't. I'm kind of like I don't really want to put one on there, because it feels like the likelihood of me getting pulled over will be higher…So I don't have one even though I want one.*'

Even as a child, he was already aware of the association between Cambodians and gangs in his city: '*When I was younger, I wanted to wear a bandana. I remember I just liked how they looked…but I was like, I don't want to be seen as a gang member.*' Yet, Thom nonetheless experienced racial profiling by the police. He recounted an incident when someone called the police on him and his friends for standing outside a pizza shop: '*they ended up being closed, so we were outside just trying to figure out what to do. I guess somebody called the police on us, and four or five cop cars pulled up, and we were pretty scared.*' Thom and his friends then brought up classical music to the police to 'protect' themselves from potential violence:

> '*Me and my friends learned how to play classical music growing up, and so as soon as we started talking to the police, we were all like, "Yeah, we play the violin. We play the viola." It was very much we were trying to tell these police officers we were just good little classical musician kids. There's nothing to fear about us.*'

He added that the reason they did that was because '*classical music is very much seen as a white thing. So, engaging in this aspect of whiteness…it kind of put us closer to whiteness.*' Unlike other young adults who noted that how they were racialized guarded against threats of violence, aggression, or disrespect from the police, Thom instead had to navigate police encounters by

performing 'whiteness' and distancing himself from his self-described racial-ethnic identity. Thus, Thom and the others recognized that because they were racialized as something other than Asian or Asian American, they were sometimes viewed as threatening and less worthy of respect and protection.

4.4   Discussion and Conclusion

The narratives of the young adults illustrate the link between *differential racialization*, status construction, and unequal policing experiences. Recall that this study aimed to address how young adults of Asian descent experience differential racialization at the individual level and how it affects their police interactions. In general, the young adults described how assumptions tied to their racialized bodies molded how police treated them and how they navigated police encounters. Status construction theory suggests that the assumptions regarding types of individuals form part of a larger social framework that guide how actors behave in social relations (Ridgeway 1991, 2014, 2019; Berger et al. 2002). Status represents the social value awarded by a society to an individual or group of people (Ridgeway 2019: 5). However, because racial-ethnic status criteria are not clear-cut, individuals who are 'officially' subsumed under the Asian category may still be differentiated into different types of people during police interactions. This study highlights at least two ways that individuals of Asian origin experience differential racialization. First, by exclusion from the general image of Asian-ness (e.g., being Brown vs. Asian-American). Second, by racialization as a member of a specific country-of-origin-group rather than being part of the larger racial-ethnic group (e.g., being treated as

Hmong, rather than Asian). And as their accounts revealed, such racial-ethnic differentiation

mattered for how they experienced and interpreted police interactions.

Some young adults felt protected from police violence because they fit within the

generalized boundaries of Asian-ness. Notably, they described fitting the generalized

assumptions about *how* Asians look. In other words, they fit criteria of *typicality* (Monk Jr. 2022)

of prototypical Asian phenotype. The accounts of half of the participants highlighted the

'positive' status value beliefs associated with the Asian racial-ethnic status—that they were

submissive, docile, law-abiding, and innocent. As the young adults surmised, such generalized

beliefs came to the fore during police interactions. These beliefs were positive in the sense that

they indicated good behavior. Because these young adults fit the public's criteria of how Asians

look, they represented a collective standard of what types of Asian people deserve respect and

protection. The protection and sense of safety that they described were social privileges rewarded

to them by the larger society on account of their reputation as submissive and law-abiding

citizens. Nonetheless, that reputation draws from the problematic model minority myth (Shim

1998; Lee 2015). While generalizations based on the model minority myth (e.g., Asians as docile

and submissive) somewhat protected half of the young adults from police aggression and

violence, research also demonstrates the harms such generalizations generate in other contexts

(e.g., they may lead to poor peer relations in educational settings; they produce poor mental

health) (Choi and Lim 2014; Gupta, Szymanski, and Leong 2011; Holland and Palaniappan

2012; Shih, Chang, and Chen 2019; Yoo, Oda, and Le 2012).

For these young adults, their police treatment was tied to deeply learned narratives and

generalizations (i.e., schemas) about 'Asian-ness' as a racial-ethnic status. That respondents

often speculated about how much worse their interactions could have been had they been

racialized as Black (e.g., Jason, Yoon, Chloe) points to the depth of these racial-ethnic schemas (Jung 2015). That is, the taken-for-granted and widely accepted assumptions tied to the hierarchical ordering of different racial-ethnic groups that actors apply to each other during social interactions. Without first-hand knowledge of how Black individuals experience policing, these young adults grounded their comparisons on generalized understandings of the status beliefs associated with those racialized as Black. As Goffman (1956) and Ridgeway (2019:11) noted, status functions like a reputation; it is given by others. Through their explanations of the protection afforded to Asians and comparisons to Black individuals, these young adults acknowledged their advantaged social position within the United States' social hierarchy.

However, not all young adults of Asian descent enjoyed such social advantages. Those who did not meet widely held criteria for how Asian persons look were unable to access the protections of Asian-ness. In every interaction, actors rely on pre-given cultural schemas about how certain types of people look, and how they are likely to behave (Ridgeway 1991; Berger et al. 2002; Ridgeway et al. 1998). For the young adults who were differentially racialized, their racial-ethnic membership became a contested identity (Lopez et al. 2018). Racial-ethnic contestation deprived these young adults of certainty about their safety around the police. Unlike the other young adults, who may have been generalized as non-threatening, these young adults faced more scrutiny, doubt, and poorer treatment by police. They were those who did not fit the general and widely held understanding and image of who is Asian (e.g., because they had darker skin tones) or they were members of ethnic subgroups who exist in spaces in large enough numbers that their interactions with the police had been shaped by 'doubly different' interactions (Ridgeway 1991). For example, the large presence of Cambodian gangs in Thom's city led to the formation of negative beliefs about Cambodians' behaviors. Because status diffuses by

association (Ridgeway 1991, 2019), the frequent contact between the police and Cambodian gang members in Thom's city confirmed and eventually solidified negative stereotypes about the larger Cambodian community. Thus, during police encounters Thom's Cambodian-ness became a salient marker of his group membership, and it separated him from purportedly submissive and law-abiding Asians. Alternately, a relatively darker skinned Asian Indian woman (like Ananya) feared being racialized as Black because it could have been detrimental during police encounters. But the incongruence between self-identified race and external classifications did not apply to all people of the same country of origin groups. For instance, there were young adults of Filipino ancestry who described being viewed as Asian (e.g., Veronica, Melody, Luz) and some who were not (e.g., Kevin, Floribeth). A key factor that explained the contrast in their racialization was the dissimilarity in their self-reported physical features, particularly skin tone. This suggests that physical features continue to be used as key markers to delineate racial-ethnic boundaries. As Monk Jr. (2022) notes, physical features, like skin tone, function as *cues of categories* that signal one's position within the racial hierarchy.

Altogether, the interviews revealed at least two ways that individuals of Asian origin experienced *differential racialization*. First, by exclusion from the general image of Asian-ness (e.g., being Brown vs. Asian-American). And second, by racialization as a member of a specific country of origin group rather than being part of the larger racial-ethnic group (e.g., being treated as Hmong or Cambodian, rather than Asian/Asian-American). But this study also has limitations. First, while the study captured the experiences of young adult men and women of Asian origin from various geographic contexts, it could not account for diversity along other key axes (e.g., class, gender beyond the binary, immigration status, etc.). Second, it did not address the role of (differential) racialization beyond police interactions. Extant research shows that some people of

Asian descent experience (differential) racialization and differential treatment by other agents of the law, like TSA agents (Selod 2019, 2018; Shahms 2020). Third, although this study incorporated the accounts of ethnically diverse individuals, limited time and resources curtailed its ability to fully capture the ethnic diversity of people of Asian origin residing in the United States. Lastly, this study did not capture the perspectives of police officers involved in these racialized interactions. Notwithstanding these limitations, the findings nonetheless offer important insight into micro-level differential racialization processes at work.

The young adults' accounts of interactions with the police exemplify the inconsistency of the rules of race and the blurriness of racial-ethnic boundaries. Although all the participants were of Asian origin, and thus formally considered Asian, their skin tone and/or geographic context often shaped who got included or excluded from the monolithic Asian category. Their narratives show how *differential racialization* and differential status construction produce micro-level inequality. As status construction theory explains, hierarchical micro-level social relations can solidify over time as actors with dissimilar material resources and nominal characteristics (e.g., race, gender) interact and confirm implicitly held generalization about others (Ridgeway 1991, 2019; Berger et al. 2002). As these status value beliefs calcify, they may be employed to justify and rationalize macro-level inequalities along various status characteristics. Thus, the *differential racialization* of individuals in micro-level interactions is tied to population-level changes in the American racial-ethnic hierarchy and the evolving criteria for racial-ethnic group membership.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

In this dissertation, I extended the concept of *differential racialization* to capture not only how assumptions and meanings attached to existing groups change over time (the traditional definition), but also who is included or excluded under certain racial labels in the first place. Moreover, I demonstrated the ability of this reimagined *differential racialization* to elucidate the consequences of macro and micro-level group boundary formation processes. As I noted in the beginning of this dissertation, the concept of differential racialization originated from critical race theory scholarship and was primarily invoked to describe the processes through which racialized meanings and assumptions were attached to existing groups (Basile and Black 2019; Delgado and Stefancic 2004, 2007, 2017; Gotanda 1991, 2010, 2011; Johnston-Guerro 2016)—for example, the construction of Black men as deviant and violent, or the portrayal of Asian Americans as 'model minorities' or perpetual foreigners.

Differential racialization's traditional conceptualization, however, does not capture who is racialized as Black or Asian American. Indeed, that gap is part of a general limitation of extant race research, where wide-ranging race categories (e.g., Black, Asian, white) are taken for granted and their construction left unexplored (for some exceptions, see Kibria 1998; Morning 2009; Walker 2016; Zuberi 2001). As Monk (2022:2) argues, while social categorization (e.g., the classification of peoples into race groups) is foundational to inequality research, such research "tends to be conducted with little reflection on or knowledge of how concepts, categories, and categorization actually work in everyday life." As such, understanding the

relationship between social categorization and inequality requires deep examination of the social reality of categorization—including their inconsistencies across various contexts and their unclear and often shifting boundaries (Lamont and Molnar 2002).

I explored the social reality of categorization in this dissertation by examining the nuances and complexities of what is perhaps the most important social categorization scheme in American society, race. I accomplished that task in three papers. The first paper, Chapter 2, merged the literatures on the social construction of race, racial fluidity, and racial boundaries to lay out new tenets of *differential racialization* that extends it beyond its traditional conceptualization. Then, in Chapter 3, I applied the new insights of the *differential racialization* perspective to reframe our understanding of health disparities between groups at the population level. Lastly, in the third paper, Chapter 4, I underscored how *differential racialization* is experienced by individuals through their interactions with the police.

These three papers cohere around five key arguments about the nature of race in the United States, all of which I discussed in detail in Chapter 2. First, race is socially constructed and not an innate characteristic. Second, differential racialization captures the shifting boundaries of racial group membership. Third, differential racialization determines who gets to belong under certain labels. Fourth, differential racialization is experienced and empirically observable at the micro to the macro levels. Lastly, broad racial categories (i.e., white, Black, Asian, Native American) obscure the racial experiences of the people they encapsulate by assuming that they share common positions vis-à-vis the American racial hierarchy.

In Chapter 3, I utilized formal demographic techniques to analyze data from the Multiple Cause of Death File and the American Community Survey to illustrate how differential

racialization can explain macro-level health disparities between Chinese, Asian Indians, and Filipinos in the United States. Drawing on the literature on race and health, as well as the existing research pointing to the disparate racialization experiences of Chinese, Asian Indians, and Filipinos in the United States, I argued that the widening health gaps between them are manifestations of emergent[16] *differential racialization* processes.

By and large, the results of my analyses supported my argument. While Chinese life expectancy generally increased between the years 2005-2019, Asian Indian longevity decreased, and Filipino life expectancy largely stagnated or increased only slightly. Some researchers might argue that such observed differences simply reflect within-race heterogeneity. But such a position overlooks the social and political contexts of racial discourse over the last two decades in the United States, which has become increasingly hostile against people who are perceived to fall outside the stereotypical Asian phenotype. I therefore maintain the position that the widening health gaps within the Asian monolithic category is better understood as between-race inequalities resulting from *differential racialization*. My supplementary analysis further buttressed the argument for *differential racialization* by underlining how unequal racial statuses influence which causes of death contribute to longevity gaps between two groups occupying dissimilar social positions.

Following the macro-level analyses in Chapter 3, I investigated how *differential racialization* shaped how young adults of Asian descent experienced policing in Chapter 4. After analyzing interview data from young adults from across the United States, I relayed narratives that highlighted the complicated discourse between self-identification and external classification

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[16] I use the word emergent to underscore that the processes of racial boundary formation are ongoing and not yet complete.

that impacted how young adults experience differential racialization. Specifically, I found that racialization as Asian protected against threats of violence and feelings of insecurity during police interactions. However, only those individuals who fit the generalized assumptions about how Asians look were able to access the 'benefits' of Asian-ness. On the other hand, those who did not exhibit the *categorical cues* (Monk 2022) of Asian-ness—notably through skin tone—reported more negative and anxiety-inducing experiences with the police. These young adults were also racialized as Brown, Black, or something other than Asian. Therefore, I argued that their racialized policing experiences reflect the tensions produced by *differential racialization*.

5.1   Implications for the Study of People of Asian Descent

This dissertation exemplifies how centering the experiences of people of Asian descent can unlock new insights into the workings of race, racialization, and racism in the United States. What I have shown via the three substantive chapters is that there is an emergent process that distinguishes new social categories of people within the existing category that we call Asian/Asian American. This finding should compel researchers to untangle the tensions between legal definitions of racial categories, self-identified group membership, and external classifications that are salient among people of Asian descent and other groups.

Some might misinterpret the findings in this dissertation as further evidence of the declining significance of race for some groups (e.g., Chinese, Koreans, and other East Asians) (Nee and Holbrow 2013; Sakamoto et al. 2009). To be clear, I do not interpret these findings in that way. I agree with Lee and Kye (2016) who contend that it is shortsighted to claim that any people of Asian descent are becoming white in the United States. Although my findings

demonstrate an East Asian advantage over those racialized as Brown or something other than Asian, they do not necessarily mean that the advantaged groups are becoming white. It simply means that they occupy a higher position within the ordered continuum of racial categories in the United States. Indeed, this is what I have argued throughout this dissertation—racial statuses do not simply comprise of five monolithic racial categories. Furthermore, as I noted in both Chapters 3 and 4, that people of East Asian descent occupy and benefit from a higher racial status than others does not mean they do not also experience racism and racial subordination. For example, the protections against police violence and disrespect that people perceived as Asian benefitted from were also rooted in racist stereotypical assumptions about Asians as docile and subservient. Because people of Asian descent, regardless of national-origin group, live within a society shaped by white supremacy, the (dis)advantages associated with their racial status will always be unstable (Gotanda 1999, 2000; Jung 2015). Thus, a key contribution of this dissertation is that it highlights the precarity associated with (differential) racialization through the experiences of people of Asian descent.

5.2   Future Directions and Final Thoughts

Notwithstanding the insights this dissertation provides regarding racialization and its implications on peoples' lives, much research is still needed to further refine the differential racialization framework. For example, we need more empirical evidence of *differential racialization* at work, generally, and empirical work that uncovers the mechanisms through which *differential racialization* takes place. For example, it is important for future research to merge and reconcile the differing positions on the relationships and (dis)similarities between

groupness, race, ethnicity, and nation, and also understand their independent and joint implications for our understanding of social inequality (Bonilla-Silva 1997; Brubaker, Loveman, and Stamatov 2004; Loveman 1999; Monk 2022; Tilly 1999). In a recent paper, Monk (2022:3) urges researchers to shift attention to "cues of categories, subcategories, and perceived typicality," rather than only focusing on membership to nominal categories. In many ways, this dissertation aligns with his request. For instance, the findings in Chapter 4 highlight the importance of what Monk (2022) refers to as *typicality* because the young adults who experienced differential racialization described being excluded from the Asian racial status because they did not fit stereotypical notions of what an Asian person looks like. Through my conversations with interviewees, I discovered the salience of certain *categorical cues* (e.g., skin tone) as markers of people's *typicality* as Asian, regardless of their national origin. These findings underline the value of qualitative research to the study of race. Future research should continue to make use of qualitative research designs to uncover the nuances of boundary formation processes without solely relying on existing categories.

Capturing notions of typicality or cues of categories through quantitative approaches presents some important challenges. As other scholars have previously noted, much of existing datasets used by researchers to study racial inequality rely on group categories developed by the census or other governmental agency (i.e., legal racial definitions) (Sen and Wasow 2016; Zuberi 2001; Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva 2008). It is difficult to capture the various dimensions of race (e.g., *differential racialization*) using variables in existing datasets, which often only measure self-identified racial identity. Nonetheless, there are existing studies from which we can learn to operationalize the different facets of race and how it is experienced (e.g., Hargrove 2019; King and Johnson 2016; Lopez et al 2018; Monk 2015; Penner and Saperstein 2013). Future research

should build on this literature to examine how different aspects of race, racialization, and racism shape various life outcomes.

In addition, more research is needed to examine racial experiences within existing racial labels, like I did in the chapter examining the trends in life expectancy and life disparity gaps between Chinese, Asian Indians, and Filipinos. Some scholars argue that taking this approach— that is, disaggregating elements within existing monolithic groups—can help researchers build stronger causal claims linking racialization to various outcomes (Monk 2022; Sen and Wasow 2016). Lastly, in line with what other scholars have argued, future studies on racialization should pay careful attention to the historical and political discourses that influence so-called 'race effects' (Twine and Warren 2000; Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva 2008). Doing so allows us to see a clearer picture of racial inequality by underlining the interconnectedness of various factors (e.g., political rhetoric, power dynamics, and economic conditions) that shape how meanings of race and racial categories evolve over time and vary across contexts.

Taken together, this dissertation is a crucial step towards clarifying how the meanings of race and racial categories vary across spatial and temporal contexts. Ultimately, this project extends the theoretical discourse on racialization and boundary formation. The *differential racialization* framework that I established in this project offers a new perspective through which we can understand the dynamic processes that produce and reproduce social inequality. This dissertation also showcases how dynamic conceptualizations of race can strengthen racial disparities research designs, heeding prior calls to focus on social, political, and historical contexts when studying and interpreting the consequences of racialization processes on people's life outcomes and trajectories. Lastly, this project spotlights the precarity of people's racial status—a consequence of unjust and unstable social conditions that do not have to be inevitable.

Table 1 Key Population Characteristics by Sex, Time Period, and National-Origin Group, 2005-2019

Male

	Chinese		Asian Indians		Filipinos		Aggregated Asians	
Period[a]	Population Size[b]	B.S/B.A[c]	Population Size	B.S/B.A	Population Size	B.S/B.A	Population Size	B.S/B.A
05-07	1,496,689[d]	0.57[c]	1,297,559	0.74	1,045,934	0.45	6,322,219	0.54
08-10	1,512,781	0.57	1,368,382	0.76	1,109,212	0.44	6,605,163	0.54
11-13	1,707,437	0.57	1,575,239	0.77	1,166,898	0.43	7,352,294	0.54
14-16	1,922,139	0.58	1,924,276	0.78	1,258,532	0.44	8,317,848	0.57
17-19	2,063,953	0.61	2,181,161	0.79	1,288,294	0.46	8,807,578	0.59

Female

	Chinese		Asian Indian		Filipino		Aggregated Asians	
Period	Population Size	B.S/B.A	Population Size	B.S/B.A	Population Size	B.S/B.A	Population Size	B.S/B.A
05-07	1,630,149	0.51	1,151,447	0.65	1,282,236	0.52	6,786,052	0.48
08-10	1,682,821	0.52	1,234,111	0.67	1,377,270	0.53	7,145,343	0.49
11-13	1,947,389	0.52	1,485,650	0.69	1,505,298	0.53	8,225,771	0.51
14-16	2,226,168	0.55	1,777,317	0.72	1,594,329	0.52	9,260,007	0.53
17-19	2,373,453	0.59	2,034,897	0.74	1,691,078	0.54	9,801,340	0.56

Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample

Notes: (a) Each period refers to three-year periods, beginning with the 2005-2007 period, labeled as (05-07).

(b) Population size refers to the total population size by sex and national-origin group.

(c) B.S./B.A. refers to the proportion of each population between the ages 25-74 with at least a bachelors' degree.

(d) These figures reflect only those who reported one race/ethnicity (e.g., Chinese only, Filipino only). People who identified as having more than one race/ethnicity were excluded.

Table 2 Life Expectancy at Birth and Life Disparity Trends among Males by National-Origin Group and Bachelor's Degree Attainment, 2005-2019

≥ B.S.

	Chinese			Asian Indian			Filipino			Aggregated Asians		
Period	e_0	95% CI	$e^\dagger$	e_0	95% CI	$e^\dagger$	e_0	95% CI	$e^\dagger$	e_0	95% CI	$e^\dagger$
05-07	84	(84, 84.1)	13.5	85.1	(85, 85.2)	14.5	80.3	(80.2, 80.4)	12.5	81.4	(81.3, 81.4)	13
08-10	83.8	(83.8, 83.9)	13.1	86	(86, 86.1)	17.5	80.9	(80.9, 81)	14.3	81.5	(81.5, 81.5)	13.9
11-13	83.2	(83.2, 83.2)	11.9	85.3	(85.2, 85.4)	16.9	81	(81, 81.1)	14.6	81.3	(81.3, 81.3)	13.2
14-16	84.7	(84.7, 84.8)	14.7	82.8	(82.8, 82.9)	14.2	80.2	(80.1, 80.3)	14.3	81.6	(81.6, 81.6)	13.7
17-19	85.7	(85.7, 85.8)	15.3	83.6	(83.6, 83.7)	15.2	81.2	(81.1, 81.3)	14.8	82	(82, 82)	14.8

< B.S.

	Chinese			Asian Indian			Filipino			Aggregated Asians		
Period	e_0	95% CI	$e^\dagger$	e_0	95% CI	$e^\dagger$	e_0	95% CI	$e^\dagger$	e_0	95% CI	$e^\dagger$
05-07	82.4	(82.3, 82.4)	14.4	82.5	(82.4, 82.6)	16	80	(79.9, 80.1)	13.1	79.6	(79.6, 79.6)	14.1
08-10	82.2	(82.2, 82.3)	14.1	83.1	(83.0, 83.2)	19.1	80.6	(80.6, 80.7)	14.6	79.7	(79.7, 80.0)	15
11-13	81.5	(81.4, 81.5)	13.0	82.5	(82.4, 82.6)	18.4	80.3	(80.3, 80.4)	15.1	79.3	(79, 79.3)	14.4
14-16	83.1	(83, 83.2)	15.7	79.8	(79.7, 79.8)	16	79.1	(79.1, 79.2)	15.1	78.5	(78.5, 78.6)	15.6
17-19	83.8	(83.7, 83.8)	16.4	80.3	(80.2, 80.4)	17	79.5	(79.4, 79.6)	16	78.2	(78.2, 78.2)	17

Source: Author's calculations using data from the Multiple Cause of Death File and American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample.

Notes: Life expectancy at birth is denoted by (e_0) and life disparity is denoted by ($e^\dagger$). These estimates apply only to those who reported one race/ethnicity (e.g., Chinese only, Filipino only). Each period (rows) represents a 3-year time period, beginning with the 2005-2007 period, labeled as (05-07).

Table 3 Life Expectancy at Birth and Life Disparity Trends among Females by National-Origin Group and Bachelor's Degree Attainment, 2005-2019

≥ B.S

	Chinese			Asian Indian			Filipino			Aggregated Asians		
Period	e_0	95% CI	$e^{\dagger}$	e_0	95% CI	$e^{\dagger}$	e_0	95% CI	$e^{\dagger}$	e_0	95% CI	$e^{\dagger}$
05-07	88.6	(88.6, 88.7)	15.7	92.1	(92, 92.1)	20.2	86.3	(86.2, 86.4)	15.4	85.8	(85.8, 85.8)	14.7
08-10	87.7	(87.7, 87.8)	14.7	89.4	(89.3, 89.5)	18.4	88.5	(88.4, 88.6)	16.7	85.4	(85.4, 85.4)	14.7
11-13	87.4	(87.4, 87.6)	14.8	84.7	(84.7, 84.8)	12.4	86.2	(86.2, 86.3)	15.2	85.5	(85.5, 85.5)	14.5
14-16	87.9	(87.9, 87.9)	14.7	87.3	(87.3, 87.4)	15.9	86.3	(86.2, 86.4)	16.2	86	(86, 86)	15.2
17-19	89.3	(89.3, 89.3)	16.4	86.5	(86.5, 86.7)	14.9	87	(87, 87.2)	16.8	86.2	(86.2, 86.2)	15.5

< B.S.

	Chinese			Asian Indian			Filipino			Aggregated Asians		
Period	e_0	95% CI	$e^{\dagger}$	e_0	95% CI	$e^{\dagger}$	e_0	95% CI	$e^{\dagger}$	e_0	95% CI	$e^{\dagger}$
05-07	87.6	(87.6, 87.6)	16.2	91	(91, 91.1)	20.7	86	(86, 86.1)	15.7	84.9	(84.9, 84.9)	15.2
08-10	87	(87, 87.1)	15.1	88.2	(88.1, 88.3)	19	88.4	(88.3, 88.5)	18.9	84.7	(84.7, 84.7)	15.2
11-13	87.1	(87.1, 87.1)	15	83.6	(83.5, 83.7)	13.1	86	(86, 86.1)	15.4	84.6	(84.6, 84.6)	15.1
14-16	87.4	(87.4, 87.4)	15	86	(86, 86.1)	16.6	85.9	(85.8, 86)	16.5	84.6	(84.6, 84.6)	16
17-19	88.5	(88.5, 88.5)	16.8	85.3	(85.2, 85.4)	15.7	86.1	(86, 86.2)	17.3	84.4	(84.4, 84.4)	16.5

Source: Author's calculations using the Multiple Cause of Death File and American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample

Notes: Life expectancy at birth is denoted by (e_0) and life disparity is denoted by ($e^{\dagger}$). These estimates apply only to those who reported one race/ethnicity (e.g., Chinese only, Filipino only). Each period (rows) represents a 3-year time period, beginning with the 2005-2007 period, labeled as (05-07).

Table 4 Life Expectancy at Birth and Lifespan Disparity among Males, by National-Origin Group and Bachelor's Degree Attainment (Missing Educational Attainment Deaths Divided Between Those With and Those Without A Bachelor's Degree), 2005-2019

≥ B.S

Period	Chinese			Asian Indian			Filipino			Aggregated Asians		
	e_0	95% CI	$e^\dagger$	e_0	95% CI	$e^\dagger$	e_0	95% CI	$e^\dagger$	e_0	95% CI	$e^\dagger$
05-07	83.9	(83.9, 83.9)	13.5	85	(84.9, 85.1)	14.5	80.3	(80.2, 80.4)	12.5	81.4	(81.3, 81.4)	13
08-10	83.7	(83.7, 83.8)	13.2	85.9	(85.8, 86)	17.6	80.8	(80.7, 80.9)	14.3	81.3	(81.3, 81.3)	14
11-13	83.1	(83.1, 83.1)	11.9	85.3	(85.2, 85.4)	16.9	80.9	(89.8, 81)	14.6	81.1	(81.1, 81.1)	13.2
14-16	84.6	(84.6, 84.7)	14.8	82.7	(82.7, 82.8)	14.3	80.1	(80, 80.2)	14.3	81.4	(81.4, 81.4)	13.7
17-19	85.6	(85.6, 85.7)	15.3	83.5	(83.4, 83.6)	15.2	81.1	(81, 81.2)	14.9	81.8	(81.8, 81.8)	14.9

< B.S.

Period	Chinese			Asian Indian			Filipino			Aggregated Asians		
	e_0	95% CI	$e^\dagger$	e_0	95% CI	$e^\dagger$	e_0	95% CI	$e^\dagger$	e_0	95% CI	$e^\dagger$
05-07	82.3	(82.3, 82.4)	14.4	82.4	(82.3, 82.5)	16.1	80	(79.9, 80.1)	13.1	79.6	(79.6, 79.6)	14.1
08-10	82.2	(82.1, 82.3)	14.1	82.8	(82.7, 82.9)	19.2	80.6	(80.5, 80.7)	14.6	79.5	(79.5, 79.5)	15.1
11-13	81.4	(81.4, 81.5)	13	82.3	(82.2, 82.4)	18.5	80.3	(80.2, 80.4)	15.1	79.3	(79.3, 79.3)	14.4
14-16	83	(82.9, 83.1)	15.7	79.6	(79.5, 79.7)	16.1	79	(78.9, 79.1)	15.1	78.3	(78.3, 78.3)	15.7
17-19	83.7	(83.6, 83.8)	16.5	80.2	(80.1, 80.3)	17	79.4	(79.3, 79.5)	16	78.1	(78.1, 78.1)	17

Source: Multiple Cause of Death File and American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample

Notes: Life expectancy at birth is denoted by (e_0) and life disparity is denoted by ($e^\dagger$). These estimates apply only to those who reported one race/ethnicity (e.g., Chinese only, Filipino only). Each period (rows) represents a 3-year time period, beginning with the 2005-2007 period, labeled as (05-07).

Table 5 Life Expectancy at Birth and Lifespan Disparity among Females, by National-Origin Group and Bachelor's Degree Attainment (Missing Educational Attainment Deaths Divided Between Those With and Those Without A Bachelor's Degree), 2005-2019

≥ B.S

Period	Chinese e_0	Chinese 95% CI	Chinese $e^{\dagger}$	Asian Indian e_0	Asian Indian 95% CI	Asian Indian $e^{\dagger}$	Filipino e_0	Filipino 95% CI	Filipino $e^{\dagger}$	Aggregated Asians e_0	Aggregated Asians 95% CI	Aggregated Asians $e^{\dagger}$
05-07	88.5	(88.4, 88.6)	15.7	92	(91.9, 92.1)	20.2	86.3	(86.2, 86.4)	15.5	85.7	(85.7, 85.7)	14.7
08-10	87.5	(87.4, 87.6)	14.7	89.2	(89.1, 89.3)	18.5	88.5	(88.4, 88.6)	18.7	85.3	(85.3, 85.3)	14.8
11-13	87.3	(87.2, 87.4)	14.8	84.6	(84.5, 84.7)	12.4	86.1	(86, 86.2)	15.3	85.4	(85.4, 85.4)	15
14-16	87.8	(87.8, 87.8)	14.8	87.2	(87.1, 87.3)	16	86.3	(86.5, 86.7)	16.2	85.9	(85.9, 85.9)	15.2
17-19	89.3	(89.3, 89.4)	16.4	86.5	(86.4, 86.6)	14.9	87	(86.9, 87.1)	16.8	86.1	(86.1, 86.1)	15.5

< B.S.

Period	Chinese e_0	Chinese 95% CI	Chinese $e^{\dagger}$	Asian Indian e_0	Asian Indian 95% CI	Asian Indian $e^{\dagger}$	Filipino e_0	Filipino 95% CI	Filipino $e^{\dagger}$	Aggregated Asians e_0	Aggregated Asians 95% CI	Aggregated Asians $e^{\dagger}$
05-07	87.6	(87.5, 87.7)	16.2	90.9	(90.8, 91)	20.7	86	(85.9, 86.1)	15.7	84.8	(84.8, 84.8)	15.2
08-10	87	(86.9, 87.1)	15.1	88.1	(88, 88.2)	19.1	88.3	(88.2, 88.4)	18.9	84.6	(84.6, 84.6)	15.3
11-13	87	(87, 87)	15	83.5	(83.4, 83.6)	13.1	85.9	(85.8, 86)	15.4	84.6	(84.6, 84.6)	15.1
14-16	87.3	(87.3, 87.3)	15.1	85.9	(85.8, 86)	16.7	85.9	(85.8, 86)	16.5	84.5	(84.5, 84.5)	16.1
17-19	88.5	(88.4, 88.6)	16.9	85.2	(85.1, 85.3)	15.7	86.1	(86, 86.2)	17.3	84.3	(84.3, 84.3)	16.6

Source: Multiple Cause of Death File and American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample

Notes: Life expectancy at birth is denoted by (e_0) and life disparity is denoted by ($e^{\dagger}$). These estimates apply only to those who reported one race/ethnicity (e.g., Chinese only, Filipino only). Each period (rows) represents a 3-year time period, beginning with the 2005-2007 period, labeled as (05-07).

Table 6 Age and Cause Decomposition of Difference in Life Expectancy at Birth Between Chinese and Filipinos Without a College Degree by Sex, 2012-2016

Age and Sex		Contributions of Cause-Specific Mortality Differences			
	nΔx Total	nΔx Low	nΔx Medium	nΔx High	nΔx Others
Male					
0-24	0.3	-	-	-	-
25-29	0.1	0.002	-0.003	0.055	-0.001
30-34	0.0	0.003	0.005	0.051	-0.010
35-39	0.1	0.014	-0.005	0.041	0.019
40-44	0.1	0.013	0.012	0.089	0.013
45-49	0.1	0.014	-0.004	0.060	0.023
50-54	0.1	0.011	-0.001	0.063	-0.004
55-59	0.2	0.017	0.017	0.109	0.047
60-64	0.2	0.022	0.026	0.149	0.044
65-69	0.3	-0.001	0.037	0.181	0.085
70-74	0.3	0.015	0.029	0.189	0.083
75+	2.1	-	-	-	-
Total	3.8	-	-	-	-
nΔx (25-74)	1.5	0.1	0.1	1.0	0.3
Female					
0-24	0.3	-	-	-	-
25-29	0.0	0.001	-0.001	0.024	0.000
30-34	0.0	0.001	0.002	0.023	-0.005
35-39	0.0	0.008	-0.003	0.023	0.011
40-44	0.1	0.008	0.007	0.054	0.008
45-49	0.1	0.010	-0.003	0.044	0.017
50-54	0.1	0.018	-0.001	0.105	-0.007
55-59	0.1	0.008	0.008	0.053	0.023
60-64	0.2	0.014	0.017	0.097	0.028
65-69	0.2	-0.001	0.027	0.132	0.062
70-74	0.2	0.007	0.014	0.093	0.041
75+	0.0	-	-	-	-
Total	1.3	-	-	-	-
nΔx (25-74)	1.0	0.1	0.1	0.6	0.2

Note: Author's calculations using data from the Multiple Cause of Death File and American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample (2012-2016). Each cell value represents the contribution (in years) to the total life expectancy difference between Chinese and Filipinos attributable to differences in cause-specific death rates in each age-group. Positive values mean that Chinese had lower death rates than Filipinos.

Table 7 Age and Cause Decomposition of Difference in Life Expectancy at Birth Between Chinese and Filipinos With At Least a College Degree by Sex, 2012-2016

Age and Sex	nΔx Total	Contributions of Cause-Specific Mortality Differences			
		nΔx Low	nΔx Medium	nΔx High	nΔx Others
Male					
0-24	0.3	-	-	-	-
25-29	0.0	0.000	0.000	-0.004	0.000
30-34	0.0	0.002	0.003	0.034	-0.007
35-39	0.0	0.009	-0.003	0.028	0.013
40-44	0.1	0.007	0.006	0.046	0.007
45-49	0.1	0.015	-0.004	0.063	0.024
50-54	0.2	0.030	-0.002	0.174	-0.012
55-59	0.2	0.022	0.022	0.137	0.059
60-64	0.3	0.031	0.036	0.211	0.062
65-69	0.5	-0.002	0.062	0.309	0.144
70-74	0.6	0.028	0.055	0.359	0.157
75+	2.1	-	-	-	-
Total	4.5	-	-	-	-
nΔx 25-74	2.1	0.1	0.2	1.4	0.4
Female					
0-24	0.3	-	-	-	-
25-29	0.0	0.001	-0.001	0.024	0.000
30-34	0.0	0.000	0.001	0.010	-0.002
35-39	0.0	0.009	-0.003	0.026	0.012
40-44	0.0	0.001	0.001	0.007	0.001
45-49	0.1	0.011	-0.003	0.045	0.017
50-54	0.1	0.009	-0.001	0.051	-0.003
55-59	0.1	0.007	0.007	0.044	0.019
60-64	0.2	0.019	0.023	0.133	0.039
65-69	0.3	-0.001	0.035	0.175	0.082
70-74	0.3	0.014	0.027	0.179	0.078
75+	0.0	-	-	-	-
Total	1.4	-	-	-	-
nΔx 25-74	1.1	0.1	0.1	0.7	0.2

Note: Author's calculations using data from the Multiple Cause of Death File and American Community Survey Public Use Micro Sample (2012-2016). Each cell value represents the contribution (in years) to the total life expectancy difference between Chinese and Filipinos attributable to differences in cause-specific death rates in each age-group. Positive values mean that Chinese had lower death rates than Filipinos.

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A1 Proportion of Deaths Between Ages 25-74 by Sex, National-Origin Group, Educational Attainment, and Time Period, 2005-2019

Male

Period	Chinese			Asian Indian			Filipino			Aggregated Asians		
	≥ B.S	<B.S	Unknown Edu.	≥ B.S	<B.S.	Unknown Edu.	≥ B.S	<B.S.	Unknown Edu.	≥ B.S	<B.S.	Unknown Edu.
05-07	0.33	0.65	0.02	0.44	0.54	0.02	0.41	0.58	0.01	0.34	0.63	0.03
08-10	0.34	0.63	0.03	0.47	0.49	0.04	0.43	0.55	0.01	0.35	0.61	0.04
11-13	0.35	0.63	0.02	0.51	0.47	0.02	0.41	0.58	0.01	0.35	0.62	0.03
14-16	0.37	0.61	0.03	0.50	0.47	0.03	0.38	0.60	0.02	0.33	0.64	0.03
17-19	0.37	0.61	0.02	0.53	0.45	0.02	0.38	0.61	0.02	0.33	0.64	0.03

Female

Period	Chinese			Asian Indian			Filipino			Aggregated Asians		
	≥ B.S	<B.S.	Unknown Edu.	≥ B.S	<B.S.	Unknown Edu.	≥ B.S	<B.S.	Unknown Edu.	≥ B.S	<B.S.	Unknown Edu.
05-07	0.26	0.72	0.02	0.32	0.65	0.03	0.44	0.55	0.01	0.27	0.71	0.02
08-10	0.31	0.67	0.02	0.33	0.63	0.03	0.47	0.52	0.02	0.29	0.67	0.04
11-13	0.35	0.64	0.01	0.35	0.63	0.02	0.48	0.41	0.01	0.31	0.67	0.02
14-16	0.36	0.63	0.02	0.40	0.57	0.03	0.47	0.52	0.02	0.31	0.67	0.02
17-19	0.36	0.62	0.02	0.43	0.55	0.02	0.46	0.53	0.01	0.31	0.66	0.03

Source: Author's calculations based on data from the Multiple Cause of Death File

Notes: Each cell value represents the proportion of the total deaths between ages 25-74 that occurred among each educational-attainment group. Numbers may not all sum to 1.00 because of rounding. These estimates apply only to those who reported one race/ethnicity (e.g., Chinese only, Filipino only). Each period (rows) represents a 3-year time period, beginning with the 2005-2007 period, labeled as (05-07).