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Asian Americans' Experiences of Covid-Related Discrimination: Collective Identity, Critical Consciousness, and Intergroup Solidarity

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ASIAN AMERICANS' EXPERIENCES OF COVID-RELATED DISCRIMINATION: COLLECTIVE IDENTITY, CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS, AND INTERGROUP SOLIDARITY

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There are far, far better things ahead than any we leave behind.

—C.S. Lewis

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ABSTRACT

The outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has stirred fear and panic with a surge of anti-Asian hate in the United States. Racial discrimination was exacerbated by labeling COVID19 as "the Chinese virus" and blaming Asians and Asian Americans as the source of the virus. Within the exacerbated xenophobic and racist rhetoric since the COVID outbreak in 2019, racial discrimination was amplified towards anyone who phenotypically presented as "Asian." It is unclear how various Asian ethnic individuals identify with their Asian American identity while experiencing the intensified discrimination. Specifically, experiencing COVID-related racism and group-based rejection may increase or decrease Asian Americans' collective racial identity according to rejection identification theory and interethnic othering theory, respectively. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine the impact of COVID-related discrimination on Asian Americans' collective identity and their solidaristic attitudes toward other marginalized groups (e.g., Black, indigenous, and people of color; BIPOC). The current study examined the mediating role of collective identity and the moderating role of critical consciousness on the relationship between COVID-related discrimination and intergroup solidarity. Data were collected from 468 self-identified Asian American adults (*M*age = 35.50, *SD* = 9.95) using an online survey containing a demographic information, the Scale of Ethnic Experience (SEE; Malcarne et al., 2006), the Ingroup Identification Scale (Leach et al., 2008), the Contemporary Critical Consciousness Measure (Shin et al., 2016), and Coalitional Attitudes Scale (Craig et al., 2020). The results supported the rejection identification theory in that COVID-related

discrimination had a significant positive association with intergroup solidarity both directly and indirectly via collective identity. Mediation analysis revealed that collective identity mediated the association between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity. Furthermore, moderated mediation analysis indicated that critical consciousness did not have a significant moderating effect between perceived discrimination and collective identity, or between collective identity and intergroup solidarity. However, critical consciousness significantly moderated the link between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity. Individuals with high levels of critical consciousness showed consistently strong intergroup solidarity. Notably, for individuals with low levels of critical consciousness, the more discrimination they perceived, the stronger intergroup solidarity they had with other BIPOC communities. Discussion about the findings included study limitations, and implications for clinical, social justice intervention and research.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Since the outbreak of the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV2 in 2019 (COVID-19), there has been a surge of anti-Asian American hate and racial discrimination. As of August 2021, the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council (A3PCON, 2021) received over 9,000 reports of hate incidents against Asian Americans across the United States. Because the first outbreak happened in Wuhan, China, individuals of Asian descent were targeted for COVID-related racial discrimination (Gover et al., 2020). With the spike of anti-Asian sentiment during the past three years, Asian Americans were blamed for the reality of the global COVID-19 pandemic (Tessler et al., 2020). Anti-Asian racism was exacerbated with the current climate of COVID-related discrimination by racial scapegoating such as labeling COVID-19 as the "Chinese virus" or "Wuhan virus" and blaming Asians and Asian Americans as the source of the virus (Tessler et al., 2020).

Asian American racial positionality in the United States, however, has been historically wedged between the black-white racial binary (Chanbonpin, 2015). Most of the intergroup relations studies have focused, as a result, on majority vs. minority groups (e.g., White – Black relations) but less is known about intergroup solidarity among Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). Especially as Asian Americans have been viewed as the model minority and perpetual foreigners, less attention has been paid to understand the collective identity that's unique to Asian Americans. Some studies suggest that increased collective identity within one's ingroup can expand solidarity with outgroups with shared experiences of marginalized status

(Burson & Godfrey, 2019; Tran & Curtin, 2017). However, study results are inconsistent as to whether discrimination increases or decreases one's collective identity (Branscombe et al., 1999; Bulhan, 1978). Furthermore, how critical consciousness impacts the relationship of discrimination and Asian Americans' collective identity in the present context is also unknown. Therefore, the current study examines how COVID-related racial discrimination is related to Asian Americans' collective identity and then intergroup solidarity while exploring critical consciousness as a moderator.

Historically, Asian Americans have been viewed as foreigners and labeled as a singular group (e.g., Chinese). However, Asian Americans in the U.S. are comprised of diverse subgroups, tracing their roots from more than 20 countries with unique languages, histories, and cultures (Pew Research, 2017). Furthermore, the perception of Asian Americans as perpetual foreigners creates inequality. Within the exacerbated xenophobic and racist rhetoric in the current context of anti-Asian hate, racial discrimination is amplified towards anyone who phenotypically presents as Asian. Asian Americans who experience discriminatory messages and oppressive behaviors may internalize bigotry beliefs, which engenders self-dislike as a person of color and insolence towards their own racial group (David et al., 2019). It is possible that ethnic groups within the Asian American category who experienced COVID-19 racial objectification based on their appearance of "looking Chinese" may react negatively to Chinese or Chinese American ethnic groups by distancing or blaming.

Conversely, the increase in anti-Asian hate may have illuminated a sense of ingroup solidarity (e.g., collective identity) of their shared experiences as Asian Americans. Studies suggest that awareness of discrimination can elicit ingroup racial solidarity based on their shared experience, and developing collective identity is an adaptive strategy that demonstrates resilience

(Burson & Godfrey, 2019; Cheng et al., 2021). Besides, studies revealed that strong collective identity may not only support ingroup activism but also help them empathize with other experiences of marginalization, which leads to solidarity towards other marginalized groups, also known as intergroup solidarity (Dawson, 1995; Gurin et al., 1980; Tate, 1993). According to the identity framework, the rejection identification model (RIM; Branscombe et al., 1999) derived from Social Identity Theory (SIT; Tajifel & Turner, 1986) suggests that experiencing rejection by outgroup (e.g., perceived discrimination) can lead marginalized group members to have increased ingroup identification, which can alleviate the deleterious effects of discrimination (Branscombe et al., 1999; Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002; Schmitt et al., 2002). However, empirical findings on the relationship of discrimination and collective identity are mixed, suggesting that discrimination can also harm their collective identities (Bulhan 1978; Crocker & Major, 1989). In other words, facing group-based rejection, members of minority groups can yield a decrease in desire to be part of their racial/ethnic group (in this case, Asian American) and avoid it altogether where they reject or deny their race (intra-ethnic othering; Pyke & Dang, 2003). Thus, a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between discrimination and collective identity among Asian Americans is timely and relevant to the current context of the pandemic.

The current study explores Asian Americans' racial experience in relation to discrimination and how it is associated with their collective identity and coalitional attitudes towards other marginalized groups in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, this study examines the relationship between COVID-19 related perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity through mediation by collective identity. Given that whether the group-based discrimination may elicit positive (e.g., rejection identification) or negative (e.g., intra-

ethnic othering) reactions still remains unclear, this study will explore the moderating role of critical consciousness between aforementioned variables.

Perceived Discrimination and Collective Identity

Collective identity is defined as the degree to which an individual feels connected to and identifies with their ingroup (Leach et al., 2008). Studies suggest that individuals' membership of their own group yields significant influence on their personal experiences as well as social interactions (Tajifel & Turner, 1979). For example, if individuals identify themselves as a part of a particular group, research suggests that individuals treat their ingroup members differently than those who hold outgroup identities (Tajifel 1978; Tajifel & Turner, 1986; Prentice & Miller, 1999).

The term *Asian American* was developed in pan-ethnic political movements during the Civil Rights Movement era (Lee & Zhou 2004). The United States has labeled the rising number of immigrants from Asian backgrounds since 1965 when the Immigration and Naturalization Act was enacted to increase the number of skilled immigrants (Radford & Noe-Bustamante, 2019). As race was used to categorize people for the convenience of 'the outside,' Asian American identity was imposed from the mainstream majority group regardless of increasing diversification among ethnic groups. In the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is unclear how various Asian ethnic individuals identify with their *Asian American* identity. In the present study, collective identity as Asian American is a mediator and not a moderator because identity can change and is context-dependent (e.g., discriminatory social climate; see Phinney & Ong, 2007; Rivas-Drake & Umaña-Taylor, 2019 for a similar approach). Under the recent anti-Asian hate climate, discrimination may affect the development of one's collective identity. For example, experiencing COVID-19 racism and discrimination may increase feeling ambivalent

towards their identification with Asian Americans. Specifically, experiencing direct or vicarious COVID-19 scapegoating may lead to internalizing racist messages (Cheng et al., 2021), which involve "othering" or "distancing" oneself from one's racial/ethnic group in order to be accepted by the dominant White mainstream community (Pyke & Dang, 2003).

Conversely, Rhoads and colleagues' qualitative research (2002) suggests that discrimination can play a critical catalyst role in creating collective identity among Asian American students, consistent with the rejection-identification model (RIM; Branscombe et al., 1999). However, quantitative research yields mixed findings between pervasive discrimination and collective identity among Asian Americans (Tran & Curtin, 2017; Wiley, 2013). Diversity among Asian Americans may partially explain the ambivalence in identifying with the term Asian American as their collective identity. Another explanation could be their level of awareness of structural racism (Tran & Curtin, 2017). It could be argued that high critical consciousness (e.g., awareness of structural inequity) may buffer the harmful effect of discrimination on collective identity. The empirical findings of studies testing the assumption of RIM are mixed. Some studies found positive associations that support RIM (Barlow et al., 2012; Branscombe et al., 1999), some studies found negative associations (Bulhan, 1978; Ford et al., 1994; Schwalbe et al., 2000), and some did not find any associations (Lee, 2003). Collective identity is a form of adaptive response to racial inequality according to RIM, while racial inequality can also lead to intra-ethnic othering among Asian Americans (Pyke & Dang, 2003).

Rejection Identification Model and Intra-Ethnic Othering

Rejection Identification Model (RIM; Branscombe et al., 1999) suggests that group-based discrimination can lead to increased ingroup identification (e.g., collective identity). This, in turn, can protect individuals from the adverse effect of discrimination on psychological

wellbeing (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002). This phenomenon shows that perceived discrimination will highlight similarities with others who have shared experiences while underscoring the offending groups' differences (Turner et al., 1987). Based on the social identity theory (Tajifel & Turner, 1986), RIM argues that perceived discrimination and prejudice can encourage members of minority groups to feel more connected and identify with their ingroup (Branscombe et al., 1999). Previous literature supports that perceived discrimination may increase one's awareness of structural racism, which leads to stronger ingroup solidarity (Curtin & Stewart, 2012). Multiple racial identity theories outlined stages of the identity development process: from pre-encounter to internalization-commitment (Cross & Vandiver, 2001); from ethnic awareness to ethnocentric realization (Nadal, 2004); from conformity/dissonance to integrative awareness (Sue, 1989). From these theories, experiencing a positive or a negative racial incident can become a catalyst in one's racial identity development process. Cross (1978) shows that a negative experience such as discrimination can elicit one's commitment and desire to be part of their ingroup. While previous studies observed robust findings as to the influence of discrimination on ingroup identity development among different groups such as African Americans (Branscombe et al., 1999), Latino immigrants (Wiley, 2013), women (Schmitt et al., 2002), and international students of color (Schmitt et al., 2003), some studies found negative associations (Bulhan, 1978; Ford et al., 1994). Bulhan (1978) argued that in contrast to moving towards developing ingroup identity, individuals distance themselves away from "a cause of negative outcomes" when faced with discrimination (Crocker & Major, 1989, p. 621).

Contrasting to the RIM, some studies suggest that perceiving discrimination may "move against" one's group identity as a self-protective factor, a phenomenon labeled as *intra-ethnic othering* (Pyke & Dang, 2003). In other words, members of the minority groups would distance

themselves from the negative stereotypes among their co-ethnics. For example, Osajima (1993) found that Asian American students among the predominantly White institution would distance themselves from appearing “too Asian” or “too stereotypical”. This study further suggested that, drawing from internalized racism framework, “distancing” or “disidentification” by assigning negative stereotypes and traits related to the group in attempt to gain acceptance and gain membership in the dominant White group. In an attempt to distance from stigma that is associated with their membership (e.g., Asian American), individuals may resist to identify as Asian American and even feel some resentment towards other co-ethnic members. Similarly, to intra-ethnic othering, race rejection was proposed where Black individuals reject or deny their race and invalidate their affiliation to their ingroup (Ford et al., 1994). Another study suggested that perceived ethnicity-based rejection decreased identification with American identity among first generation Latino immigrants (Wiley, 2013). Because the rejection is painful, members of minority groups who perceived rejection may distance themselves and be less likely to identify with their ethnic group. Furthermore, research suggests that members of the marginalized group may blame individuals as opposed to the system for everyday experiences of racism and oppression (Godfrey & Wolf, 2016). In that sense, attributing social inequality to systemic racism rather than individuals or groups can be a strategy of resistance (Curtin et al., 2015). As critical consciousness entails recognizing and attributing group-based rejection in a larger framework of power and oppression, awareness of structural racism may help explain the variant findings about the relationship between discrimination and collective identity (Burson & Godfrey, 2020). Thus, the current study proposes critical consciousness as a moderator to further elucidate the relationship.

Role of Critical Consciousness

As Asian Americans experience a myriad of external oppression and discrimination, their awareness of the systemic inequity and causes of oppression may influence their collective identity and attitudes towards other marginalized groups. In particular, the developmental theory of critical consciousness can facilitate our understanding of whether individuals embrace or distance themselves from their collective identity in the face of discrimination. Critical consciousness is defined as the ability to recognize and attribute social injustice and inequality to social structure and further take commitment and action against them (Freire, 1993). In Freire's text, the concept of critical consciousness was centered on "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (p. 19). As this theory gained increasing attention, Watts and colleagues (1999) draws upon Freire's work and posits five developmental stages, similarly to racial identity development stages: (1) acritical stage, (2) adaptive stage, (3) precritical stage, (4) critical stage, and (5) liberation stage. As to the components of critical consciousness, some researchers suggest two components of (1) capacity for critical reflection and (2) capacity for critical actions (e.g., see Diemer & Blustein, 2006), whereas others suggest three components of (1) critical reflection, (2) political efficacy, and (3) critical action (Godfrey & Grayman, 2014; Watts et al., 2011).

Overall, critical consciousness is expected to provide a positive buffer against oppression as an "antidote" (Watts et al., 1999). Empirical research has shown positive outcomes of critical consciousness on marginalized youth, ranging from higher self-esteem (Zimmerman et al., 1999), increased engagement in collective action (Diemer & Blustein, 2006) to even higher occupational attainment (Diemer, 2009). Furthermore, critical consciousness can aid in identifying one's positionality in the racial hierarchy (Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015). The

intellectual analyses of the systemic oppression and racism underlying the COVID-19 anti-Asian discrimination may raise awareness among Asian Americans to see the embedded injustice and oppression, motivating solidarity for collective identity shared within Asian American groups. This follows the racial identity development model (Cross, 1991), where a racial awakening experience elicited from understanding racial injustice, often results from discrimination. Recent literature suggests that this awakening experience requires critical reflection, which could be a potential moderator for collective identity development (Mathews et al., 2020). Although critical consciousness has a solid theoretical foundation, most literature is grounded in the experiences of Black/African Americans or Latinx populations (see Diemer & Blustein, 2006; Campbell & Macphail, 2002), and less is known about Asian American experiences. Thus, the current study proposed critical consciousness as a moderator between all study variables: (1) perceived discrimination and collective identity, (2) collective identity and intergroup solidarity, and (3) perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity.

Intergroup Solidarity

The term "intergroup solidarity" is used in the current study to examine the coalitional attitudes towards other BIPOC communities such as African American or Black, Hispanic Latina/o, or Latinx. While it is worth noting that "intraminority solidarity" or "interminority solidarity" are used interchangeably in the literature (Burson & Godfrey, 2020; Starzyk et al., 2019), the present study proposes to examine Asian Americans' attitudes toward other racially marginalized groups, which is better captured by the intergroup terminology. As many studies have discussed the adverse psychological costs of discrimination, an increase in one's collective identity has shown positive effects on one's self-esteem, wellbeing (see Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002), and even a sense of inclusion (Simon, 1999; Spears et al., 2002). Some studies showed

that an increase in collective identity may strengthen own-group activism (Cole & Stewart, 1996; Tran & Curtin, 2017; van Zomeren et al., 2008). While past literature support positive associations with collective identity and own group activism, much is unknown how this sense of ingroup solidarity may be related to individuals' attitudes towards other marginalized groups. Based on social identity theory (SIT; Tajifel & Turner, 1979) and racial identity model (Cross, 1991), perceived discrimination may strengthen collective identity when engaged in critical reflection, which may further expand to solidarity with other minority groups.

Interestingly, a study in political solidarity found that strong collective identity among African Americans showed shared marginalization experiences with other disadvantaged groups (Gurin et al., 1980). This study found that they did not only support pro-Black policies but also endorsed policies that support groups of lower socio-economic status, women, and other marginalized communities. Similarly, Tate (1994) and Dawson (1995) support that group-based discrimination is linked to strong collective identity to their own group, which is associated with supporting social justice-oriented policies that can ameliorate other minority/disadvantaged groups in general. While political science literature suggests that a shared sense of minority status would lead to intergroup solidarity, less is known about whether such phenomenon would apply to Asian Americans in the context of COVID-19 and anti-Asian hate climate. Thus, the current study examines how Asian Americans increased collective identity is related to their attitudes towards other BIPOC communities.

The Present Study

The current study examines how COVID-related racial discrimination is related to Asian Americans' collective identity and intergroup solidarity with other BIPOC communities. Given the mixed findings of the impact of discrimination on collective identity (RIM vs. intra-ethnic

othering), this study aims to understand the moderating role of critical consciousness on the relation of discrimination and collective identity, discrimination and intergroup solidarity, and collective identity and intergroup solidarity. As presented in the model of moderated mediation (see Figure 1 on p. 39), the hypotheses are as follows.

Hypothesis 1: Collective identity would mediate the relation between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity.

H1-a: Based on RIM, perceived discrimination would positively relate to collective identity, which in return would increase intergroup solidarity.

H1-b: Based on Intra-ethnic othering, perceived discrimination would negatively relate to collective identity, which in turn, would decrease intergroup solidarity.

Hypothesis 2: Critical consciousness would moderate the indirect relationship between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity via collective identity.

H2-a: Based on RIM, the positive indirect relationship would be stronger with higher levels of critical consciousness vs. low levels of critical consciousness.

H2-b: Based on Intra-ethnic othering, the negative indirect relationship would be buffered with higher levels of critical consciousness vs. low levels of critical consciousness.

Hypothesis 3: Critical consciousness would moderate the direct path between discrimination and intergroup solidarity.

H3-a: Based on RIM, the positive association would be stronger with high levels of critical consciousness.

H3-b: Based on Intra-ethnic othering, the negative association would be buffered with high levels of critical consciousness.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I will provide a literature review on the complex racial positioning of Asian Americans. To better understand Asian Americans' experiences with discrimination, collective identity, and intergroup solidarity, it is important to explore the history of Asian Americans in the context of the United States as it influences the development of the Asian American identity. A few key immigrant movements will be presented in order to consider contextual factors of immigrant history and its impact on the experience of Asian Americans and Asian American stereotypes (e.g., perpetual foreigner, model minority). This chapter will also draw on the Rejection Identification Model (RID; Branscombe et al., 1999) and Intra-ethnic othering (Pyke & Dang, 2003) as conceptual theories to guide our understanding of how race and racism shape the collective identity of Asian Americans. Additionally, a review of literature pertaining to the role of critical consciousness will be explored.

Overview of Asian American History and Racial Experiences

Asian Americans' Status

Term Asian Americans

The term *Asian American* was first coined by Yuji Ichioka and Emma Gee at UC Berkeley to form the Asian American Political Alliance in 1968 (Maeda, 2012). Prior to this time, individuals of Asian descent were often referred to by their country of origins such as Chinese or Japanese. The creation of this term Asian American was part of a larger movement for social and political justice for people of color in the United States, particularly during the

Civil Rights ear. The Asian American movement was inspired by the Black Power movement for racial justice and sought to unite Asian Americans across ethnic and national boundaries to fight for their rights and equality (Maeda, 2012). The term Asian American quickly gained popularity and became a widely accepted term for people of Asian decent living in the United States. It allowed individuals to form a collective identity and work together towards common goals such as fighting discrimination and advocating for civil rights. Today, the term Asian American is used as an umbrella term where it encompasses diverse group of people with origins in East Asia, South Asia, and the Pacific Islands. It is an inclusive term that recognizes the shared experiences around struggles of individuals from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, while also acknowledging their unique histories and identities (Maeda, 2012). In the current study, we refer to individuals of Asian descent who reside in the United States as Asian Americans.

Population Statistics

The population of Asian immigrants is one of the fastest-growing demographics in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). The number of Asian Americans represents 24 million or 7% of the total population as of 2020, which is an 88% increase from 11.9 million in 2000 (Pew Research Center, 2021). Chinese Americans are the largest group within the Asian American population, followed by Indian Americans, Filipino Americans, Vietnamese Americans, Korean Americans, and Japanese Americans, respectively. All these groups make up approximately 85% of the entire Asian American population in the U.S. (Pew Research Center, 2021). Regarding geographical distribution, nearly half of all Asian Americans live in the West (45%). California alone holds nearly a third of the population (6.7 million), followed by New York (1.9 million), and Texas (1.6 million). As of 2019, 52% of Asian Americans were

immigrants, and 61% were naturalized citizens. How and when Asian Americans holding U.S. citizenship arrive to the U.S. varies greatly (e.g., U.S. born citizens vs. foreign-born naturalized citizens). Approximately 66% of Asian Americans speak a language other than English at home and remaining 34% speak only English at home.

Asian Americans are grouped as a racial category to encompass many diverse groups of individuals with various ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Despite being collectively labeled as "Asian American," the subgroups within this community have significant disparities in education, poverty, and household income (U.S. Census, 2020). First, education levels vary significantly among Asian American subgroups. 69.7% of Indian Americans held a bachelor's degree or higher, followed by Filipino Americans (57.1%). In contrast, only 20.5% of Laotian Americans held a bachelor's degree or higher, and 23.2% of Cambodian Americans held a bachelor's degree or higher (Pew Research Center, 2021). These disparities in educational attainment can have significant impact on future employment opportunities and earning potential, further contributing to the disparities in poverty and household income levels. Secondly, despite assumptions that Asian Americans are high achieving and wealthy, the largest wealth gaps exist between Asian American subgroups. While 12.3% of Asian Americans fall under the federal poverty level, Mongolian Americans have the highest poverty rates (25%). In contrast, Indian Americans had a poverty rate of only 5.5%. Finally, the median household income for Asian Americans was $85,800. However, only two Asian subgroups had household incomes that exceeded the median income: Indian Americans with a median income of $119,000, and Filipino Americans with a median income of $90,400 while Hmong Americans had the lowest median household income at $45,400. These disparities in household income

levels can impact access to healthcare, housing, and may further perpetuate the cycle of poverty and inequality (Pew Research Center, 2021).

Immigration History

The rise of immigration to the U.S. from Asian countries flourished since 1965, when the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 increased the allowable number of skilled immigrants to the United States (Radford & Noe-Bustamante, 2019; Leong & Okazaki, 2009; Pew Research Center, 2015). Prior to 1965, many Chinese contract laborers arrived in Hawaii working on sugar plantations, permitted by the passing of the Masters and Servants Act in 1850 (Sur, 2008). As the title of the law suggests, Chinese contract laborers were treated unfairly and punished by the plantation owners if they were unsatisfied with their work. Due to the lack of accountability and excessive manual work, Chinese laborers were called coolies, a literal English pronunciation of Chinese word 苦力 (kǔ-lì), which refers to strenuous laboring (Sur, 2008). As the demand for labor was purely based on economics, more foreign labors were recruited from Japan, Korea, the Philippines, and other Asian countries. Asian immigrants were considered cheap labor and more docile to manage than black labor (Sur, 2008). It was often promulgated that Chinses immigrants lacked basic morals and were inherently unassimilable. Asian laborers were hard working, and their skill sets were needed for economic purposes, yet Asian bodies were excluded from citizenship, thus eliminated from political power (Kim, 1999). Many historical immigrant movements (e.g., The Chinese Exclusion Act, Japanese internment during World War II) were contributing to the already existing ostracization and denigration of the status quo of Asian immigrants (Saito, 1997). The anti-Japanese exclusion movement accused Japanese immigrants as undesirable and unassimilable, thus subject to exclusion and elimination, a similar posture already held against Chinese immigrants. White dominant societal fears about “racial mixing”

marked Japanese immigrants as untrustworthy, atrocious, and detrimental, a view which worsened in 1905 after the Russo-Japanese War. This escalated the existential fear of the Yellow Peril (Okihiro, 2014; Saito, 1997) where Asian bodies were considered unclean and diseased.

Invisibility of Asian Americans' Experiences

Asian American history suggests that there have been prolonged narratives of anti-Asian racism in the United States. The prevailing narratives about Asian Americans as perpetual foreigners, the legacy of Yellow Peril, and the poignant myth of the model minority have been widely documented, all of which add to the invisibility of their experiences (Huynh et al., 2011; Sue et al., 2007; Tessler et al., 2020; Yoo et al., 2010).

Perpetual Foreigner Stereotypes

The racial positionality of Asian Americans as perpetual foreigners is a form of racist nativism depicting Asian Americans as "outsiders," "others" and "non-American" regardless of birthplace, naturalized status, or how long they have lived in the United States (Huynh et al., 2011). Often the questions of "where are you from?" have been asked to ethnic minorities, especially to Asian Americans. The answers of "I'm from Chicago" tend to raise the follow-up question of "but where are you *really* from?" (Sue et al., 2007). Even though this question seems innocuous, it conveys the message that Asian Americans are not seen as "true Americans" (Lee, 2015). Questioning one's birthplace is one of the many subtle and daily racial microaggressions that occur to many ethnic and racial minorities including Asian Americans (Sue et al., 2007). Additionally, Asian Americans, regardless of their birthplace, often receive compliments on their English language proficiency even though it might be their mother tongue or the only language they can speak. It shows the Euro-centric expectation that being American is linked to being White, and Asian Americans are denied their in-group status. These denying experiences of

American identity have shown negative impact on mental health and well-being (Huynh et al., 2011; Li & Nicholson, 2021; Sue et al., 2007). Huynh and colleagues (2011) found that awareness of the perpetual foreigner stereotype was significantly associated with increased identity conflict and decreased sense of belonging to American culture. Furthermore, they found that awareness of one's perceived perpetual foreigner stereotypes significantly predicted low hope and life satisfaction and greater depression above and beyond perceived discrimination for Asian Americans (Huynh et al., 2011). Additionally, being treated as a foreigner and outsider in their own country is associated with feelings of inferiority, which in turn leads to discomfort and isolation among peers (Sue et al., 2007). Similarly, the perpetual foreigner stereotypes can lead to identity crisis, where individuals question their sense of belonging in their own land while not being fully accepted into mainstream U.S. culture (Phinney, 1990).

Model Minority Myth

Another prevailing narrative about Asian Americans is the myth of the model minority (Suzuki, 1977; Wang, 2008). The model minority myth solidified the stereotypes of Asian Americans as successful, intelligent, rule-following, and hard-working (Atkin et al., 2018). The term model minority first appeared in a New York Times article in 1966 (Kawai, 2005) written by the sociologist William Petersen. In his article, Petersen described how Japanese Americans achieved success despite their hardships and struggles and compared them to other "problematic minorities." The model minority stereotype was then solidified by popular media covers of "Those Asian American WHIZ KIDS" (Brand, 1987). This became a pedestal for all Asian Americans – which generalized and presented Asian Americans as monolithic, the gold standard, a model group to others, and honorary Whites (Bonilla-Silva, 2004). The narratives of successful Asian Americans are relatively homogeneous. This homogeneity lacks authenticity by erasing

diverse ethnic backgrounds within Asian Americans (Maeda, 2012). Failing to capture the within-ethnic group inequalities may substantially put many sub-groups, who may not fit into the model minority stereotypes, at risk from receiving appropriate services and resources from local, state, and federal government.

The internalized model minority myth is defined as "the extent to which [Asian American] individuals believe Asian Americans are more successful than other racial minority groups based on their values emphasizing achievement and hard work and belief in unrestricted mobility towards progress" (Yoo et al., 2010, p. 117). Although this stereotype seems harmless and even positive, numerous empirical studies show the negative impacts on the mental health of Asian Americans who have internalized the model minority myth (Cress & Ikeda, 2003; Kodama et al., 2002; Yoo et al., 2010). In a school setting, Asian American individuals who may internalize the model minority myth from their surrounding environments (e.g., peers, teachers, parents, school system) feel pressure to live up to unrealistic standards of performance (Li, 2005). The consequences for not living up to these standards are associated with blaming, shaming, and guilt (Li, 2005). Furthermore, the alarming rate of suicide among Asian American young adults is partially tied to the unbearable stress and pressure they experience when they are unable to succeed and live up to the stereotypes perpetuated by the model minority myth (Noh, 2018).

The belief in the myth dismisses structural barriers and systemic oppression while solely focusing on individual merits, this in turn, puts the locus of causality on the individual rather than systemic factors. (Wu, 2013). Covering up the understructure of white supremacy, the model minority myth pits Asian Americans against other ethnic minority groups (Kim, 1999; Poon et al., 2016). Politically, the myth has been used in a form of "othering", creating racial

hierarchy between Whites and other minorities (e.g., Black/African Americans, Hispanic and Latino Americans). Racial triangulation serves to neglect Asian American communities and limit their political and civic voices by positioning them superior to other ethnic minority groups yet excluding them from in-group status (Kim, 1999). Throughout the immigration history of Asian Americans, this narrative was used not only to give a cultural explanation for Asian Americans' achievement, but also to invalidate the racial struggles of other people of color. In other words, when compared with the "success stories" of Asian Americans based on their individual merits, any perceived shortcomings of other groups are ascribed to their lack of effort and results in their failure (Wu, 2013). Taken together, the perpetual foreigner and model minority stereotypes depict the Asian Americans' marginalized status in the United States: forever foreigners who are unassimilable and outsiders despite their achievements.

Racial Positionality of Asian Americans

To understand the power and privileges of whiteness, we must explain the values that are assigned to its construct. As Memmi (1968) argues,

> the assigning of values is intended to prove two things: the inferiority of the victim and the superiority of the racists. Better still, it proves the one by the other: inferiority of the black race automatically means superiority of the white. (p. 188)

The colonial mindset has constructed a different value system privileging Whiteness over others in relation to their racial difference. Whiteness has been associated with being normative and typically perceived as truly American (Huynh et al., 2011). This is reflected in ways that European-Americans typically refer to themselves as Americans, whereas other ethnic groups are referred as hyphenated identities such as Chinese American or Asian-American. As Ahmed (2004) argues "the power of whiteness is maintained by being seen" in dominant public spaces including education, entertainment, public policy, and law (p. 14). Dei (2008) further noted that

"White power and privilege masquerade as excellence" (p. 30). It has been supported that the proximity to Whiteness (e.g., one's cultural acceptance to dominant culture and literacy towards dominant cultural knowledge) is linked to success and excellence and thus, used as a standard to measure the success of other groups. This binary paradigm can help understand how proximity to Whiteness is also distancing from Blackness, and conformity to White ideology is ascending the racial hierarchy (Abdulle, 2017). However, the binary paradigm shows the lack of racial vocabulary to recognize the complex racial positionality of Asian Americans.

Framed by White supremacy, Asian Americans were triangulated between Whites and other racial minorities due to what appears to be proximity to Whiteness (Dennis, 2018). Proximity to Whiteness, if not examined critically, can be used to maintain the status quo and uphold the racial hierarchy (Poon et al., 2016). In other words, the focus and emphasis on myths like model minority rose in tandem with the culture of poverty narrative which blames racial groups who do not have the "right" values to succeed (Wu, 2013). Without naming White supremacy, it is easy to point towards essentialist cultural values rather than structural inequality and how these myths are used to keep the status quo (Dennis, 2018). These myths play key roles in racial triangulation where Asian Americans as "honorary whites" are valorized between white and black through this process. In that sense, whites are seen as superior to all, Asian Americans are considered in the middle, and Blacks appear at the bottom of this hierarchy (Kim, 1999). On the other hand, as proximity to Whiteness is partial to economic success based on an individual's merits, there are barriers to prevent full ascension (Xu & Lee, 2013; Kim, 1999). Asian Americans are also seen as perpetual foreigners and remain disenfranchised (Huynh et al., 2011; Kim, 1999). Taken together, the racial triangulation would still uphold the racial structure by honoring the cultural superiority of Asian Americans yet ostracizing their civic rights (Kim,

1999), masking the structural inequality by putting the locus of causality on an individuals' merit (Bonilla-Silva, 2004).

Conceptual/Theoretical Framework

Rejection Identification Model

The Rejection Identification Model (RIM) suggests that group-based rejection (e.g., prejudice and discrimination) may encourage stronger identification with an individual's in-group. Using the social identity theory as a framework (Tajifel & Turner, 1986), RIM was first proposed by Branscombe et al. (1999) to describe the effect of group-based discrimination on the well-being among African American adults. Findings suggest that identification with an individual's in-group alleviated the negative consequences of discrimination on well-being such as self-esteem. They noted that positive self-esteem was restored by the sense of inclusion from the in-group despite the rejection and devaluation from the out-group.

RIM was supported among older adults (Garstka et al, 2004), Latino immigrants (Wiley, 2013), and lesbians and gay men (Herek et al., 1999) for perceived discrimination and lower psychological well-being. Notably, the RIM was also supported with a sample of international students from non-European and non-English speaking countries (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002). The findings suggest that international students' identification increased to their identity as international student in response to perceived rejections by the host community, but interestingly, not their identification to their home country. This suggests that identification with pre-existing, long-term group membership (e.g., their ethnic group) did not weaken the consequences of perceived rejection. On the other hand, the identification to the relatively new, local group membership context (e.g., international student group) provided psychological protection regardless of its heterogeneous qualities (e.g., students from different countries). Additionally, an

experimental study was conducted among a group of individuals with body piercings to examine the perceived discrimination and group identification (Jetten et al., 2001). This study found a strong support for increased group identification among individuals who have body piercings when they perceived group-level discrimination as a threat. In other words, when perceived discrimination was manipulated, individuals with body piercing showed increased identification with others who shared similar stigma. Interestingly, this study suggested that it was more important for them when perceived group-level discrimination occurred to convey "who we are not" in contrast to the mainstream group rather than "who we are" (p. 1211). This means that individuals with body piercings built stronger in-group identification not based on commonalities (e.g., body piercings) but on their *dissimilarities* from the mainstream group (Jetten et al., 2001).

This raises the question of why members identify with the group that is subject to discrimination and rejection, which could potentially bring negative consequences (e.g., disadvantages). According to RIM, the strengthened in-group identification may stem from when in-group and out-group boundaries are (1) impermeable, (2) illegitimate, and (3) unstable (Branscombe et al., 1999; Tajifel & Turner, 1986). In other words, the upward mobility to be part of the out-group is impossible, and members of the group who are subject to discrimination turn inward to increase identification with their in-group because there is no exit (van Zomeren et al., 2008). When there is no exit, Branscombe et al. (1999) suggests that "not only can attributions to prejudice make one's group membership salient, but they also should motivate targets of discrimination to become increasingly reliant on the minority group as a means of building a meaningful and positive self-concept" (p. 144). This can promote shifting in attribution, such as moving the locus of causality away from the self by having strong negative emotions towards the mainstream out-group to preserve positive self-conception. For example,

African Americans who perceive racial discrimination as "illegitimate" from the White mainstream group would express hostility towards the out-group and more closely align with the minority group (Branscombe et al., 1999). Thus, it is argued that members who perceive discrimination from the out-group to be illegitimate and unstable are more likely to have stronger identification with their in-group, which can lead to actions that will change their in-group status (van Zomeren et al., 2008).

A qualitative study (Rhoads et al., 2002) suggests that perceived discrimination can be the impetus for creating collective identity among Asian American students which is consistent with the notion of the RIM. Interestingly, Lee (2003) examined the relationships between ethnic identities and did not find a direct relationship between perceived discrimination and collective identity among Asian Americans. The inconsistent findings illustrate that individuals respond differently to perceived discrimination. Some scholars assert that, in contrast to the RIM, individuals who perceive discrimination may attribute the cause of discrimination to themselves, which may have negative outcomes on their collective identity (Crocker & Major, 1989)

Intra-Ethnic Othering

Despite the empirical evidence that supports RIM, other researchers contest the relationship between perceived discrimination and group identification. For instance, it is argued that individuals may attempt to distance themselves from what has caused them negative consequences (Bulhan, 1978; Crocker & Major, 1989). Such acute rising of racism and xenophobic reactions in light of the threat to public health, Asian Americans may engage in "othering" – distancing oneself from the source of the threat (Pyke & Dang, 2003). This phenomenon is called "intra-ethnic othering" where discrimination exists within a group. For example, certain behaviors were marked as stereotypical and thus prone to be the target of

stigmatization. The action of assigning a level of appropriateness to certain behaviors is used within Asian American subgroups as a tool for control on social behavior (Pyke, 2010; Zhou, 1997). To resist discrimination, members of the marginalized group may attempt other behaviors by distancing themselves from other members of the same group who might be displaying "stereotypical" behaviors. Pyke (2010) suggested that this othering experience is rooted in internalized racism that sustains White privilege put another way "the 'subject' of the victims of racism to the mystifications of the very racist ideology which imprison and define them" (Hall, 1986, p. 26). However, it is important to note that internalized racism is not a reflection of deficiency or shortfalls of the oppressed. Pyke (2010) articulated the following:

> The empty promise that the oppressed can escape their 'otherness' by shunning their difference lures them into supporting the very rules that define them into existence as the 'other' – as those who are not allowed to share power. 'Become like us and you will be accepted into our groups.' But they never are. (p. 577)

This empty promise motivates Asian Americans to engage in othering behaviors to each other, concealing their collective identity against discrimination.

The term "FOB" (Fresh Off the Boat) describes Asian Americans who are too ethnic, too rooted in their Asian cultures, and less assimilated (Shao-Kobayashi, 2013). For example, those described as "FOB" present with more ethnic identifiers such as a preference to speak in their native language, having an accent in their spoken English, identifying more with recent immigrated peers or clothing styles aligning with the ethnic enclaves (Pyke & Dang, 2003). Similarly, the term "whitewashed" was used in attempt to carve out Asian Americans who are on the other extreme of the spectrum, as too assimilated. For example, those described as "whitewashed" are those who do not have language proficiency in their mother tongue other than English, do not have Asian friends, date exclusively non-Asians, or individuals who do not

practice ethnic traditions (Pyke & Dang, 2003). Pyke and Dang found that using the term "FOB" or "whitewashed" captured othering behaviors in co-ethnic peers on extreme ends of the acculturative spectrum as adaptive responses to internalized racism. While both terms "FOB" and "whitewashed" carry stigma there has been a sense of shame and distancing with the term "FOB." Alternatively, people preferred to be categorized as "whitewashed" and some claimed it with a sense of pride as it symbolized that they successfully assimilated to the mainstream culture and are seen as "American" by their co-ethnic peers (Pyke & Dang, 2003). In doing so, "othering" is more than assimilating to White dominant culture but reaffirming the messages from the dominant culture to their racial/ethnic groups thereby creating intra-ethnic prejudice. Among Asian Americans, intra-ethnic othering creates barriers between co-ethnic groups leading to internal discrimination. Internal discrimination paired with external discrimination undermines collective identity and dwindles social movement to resist discrimination as a group.

Osajima (1993) found that Asian American students in predominantly white institutions avoid being associated with co-ethnic peers to be seen as "fully Americanized." By distancing oneself from co-ethnic peers, Asian American students may be able to separate themselves from dominant cultural views of their ethnic group and protect themselves from derogatory messages. Similarly, Pyke and Dang (2003) in a qualitative study illustrated the case of Hannah, 19, who rejects a Vietnamese identity as a strategy to distance herself from negative stereotypes perpetuated by the mainstream culture: "I'm really not Vietnamese because I'm just so not like you [her co-ethnic peer]" (p. 165).

In sum, the process of intra-ethnic othering is an adaptive response to the internalized racism and systemic oppression at large. Asian Americans have been seen as a homogenous group by mainstream society without considering differences between ethnic groups as well as

individual's level of acculturation (Pyke, 2010). The compounding stress of heightened anti-Asian sentiment during the pandemic may have created dissonance in individuals who identify as Asian American. As such, some may want to distance themselves from derogatory stereotypes associated with a surge of racist hate (intra-ethnic othering).

Overview of Study Variables

Racial Discrimination

As the history of Asian Americans in the United States shows that racial discrimination towards Asian Americans is well-documented on various levels including individual (e.g., microaggression, racial stereotyping), societal (e.g., anti-Asian hate), and institutional (e.g., The Chinese Exclusion Act) (Liang et al., 2004; Maeda, 2012; Sue et al., 2007). While racial discrimination towards Asian Americans is part of a much longer genealogy of anti-Asian hate, violence, harassment, and racial scapegoating of Asian Americans dramatically surged during the pandemic. Since the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), there has been an outpouring of racist, xenophobic violence towards Asian Americans and people of Asian descent due to the association of the virus with Wuhan, China (Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council, 2021). Especially during the beginning stage of the pandemic, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) reported an increase of 77% of hate crimes against Asian people from 2019 to 2020. These incidents of anti-Asian hate continued to increase from 2020 to 2021, where physical assaults increased from 10.8% to 16.6%, vandalism increased from 2.6% to 4.9%, online hate incidents increased from 6.1% to 10.6% (Horse et al., 2022). Based on the self-reported data from the advocacy group Stop AAPI Hate, over 11,000 incidents (e.g., verbal harassment, discrimination, violence, vandalism, or threats) were reported from March 2020 to March 2022 (Horse et al., 2022). In an incident in Atlanta, Georgia, a perpetrator killed eight

Americans, among them six women of Asian descent. Another incident involving an attempted murder of a family in Texas occurred because the suspect "thought the family was Chinese, and infecting people with coronavirus" (Yam, 2020). In addition to physical assault and threats made against Asian Americans, there have been numerous reports of vandalism and property damage targeting Asian-owned businesses (Horse et al., 2022). Some of these incidents have explicit reference to COVID-19 in the act of vandalism such as "watch out for corona" (Wang et al., 2021). While these reports are high, it is likely that there are more victims of hate crimes, and these statistics are vastly underreported.

It is not new, however, that the infectious disease threat has been racialized and engendered discrimination and scapegoating to foreigners, immigrants, and marginalized groups. For instance, the outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in 2003 was racialized and linked to stigmatization of Asian bodies as disease vectors (Tessler et al., 2020). The Ebola outbreak in 2013 has allowed for discriminated against African immigrants in the forms of Ebola-based harassment and racial discrimination (Shultz et al., 2015). Similarly, blaming Asian Americans for the source of COVID-19 has been the theme of the anti-hate incidents (Cheng et al., 2021). Among reported hate incidents, nearly half of them included at least one hateful statement that indicates anti-Chinese or anti-immigrant rhetoric such as "chink," "Kung Flu," or "Go back to where you come from" (A3PC, 2021; Horse et al., 2022). Asian bodies are linked with COVID-19 and are seen as foreign and diseased. Due to the political climate of 2019, the term "China virus," "Wuhan virus," or "Kung Flu" was repeatedly used by the sitting presidential administration (Borja et al., 2020). The mainstream media also linked COVID-19 with China by mentioning Wuhan, China or using the image of China (Li & Nicholson, 2020). This resulted in an increase in racial scapegoating and hate crimes towards Asian Americans.

Furthermore, many East or Southeast Asian Americans were grouped together and seen as "Chinese" and were targeted for racial attacks due to false stereotypes that all Asians "look-alike," invalidating intergroup differences (Borja et al., 2020). Regardless of their ethnic backgrounds, people who phenotypically present as Asian Americans were shunned as contagious and unclean, and were ostracized (Li & Nicholson, 2020).

While it is important to pay attention to the drastic upward swing of anti-Asian discrimination and violence during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is only an increase of the on-going racialized experiences for Asian and Asian Americans since the early immigration phase. In that sense, COVID-related discrimination and harassment only reflect the long, prevalent history and negative perceptions towards Asian Americans and demonstrate the racialization of Asian Americans (Tessler et al., 2020).

Collective Identity

The first article on racial identity was published by Sue and Sue (1971) describing three typologies in Chinese immigrants such as the Traditionalist, the Marginal Man, and the Asian American juxtaposed with Western values. Research and theory have grown exponentially since then on the racial and ethnic identity of black, indigenous and people of color (BIPOC; see Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). For people of color, collective identity was considered as a multidimensional construct regarding their membership, beliefs, and attitudes including the process in which these elements evolve over time and in different contexts in respect to their racial and ethnic groups (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). Literature highlighted the importance of group identification (e.g., collective identity) in coping with racism and discrimination (e.g., Branscombe et al., 1999; Sellers & Shelton, 2003). Collective identity broadly refers to the degree in which individuals identify, attach, and feel solidarity with one's in-group (Leach et al.,

2008). It also refers to "an individual's awareness of belonging to a certain group and having a psychological attachment to that group based on a perception of shared beliefs, feelings, interests, and ideas with other group members" (McClain et al., 2009, p. 474). The text by Gutiérrez et al. (1995) emphasizes the process of collective identification may require re-examining one's social identity – empowering shared experiences and culture. It also entails many forms such as gender, sexual orientation, racial identity, and immigrant status.

Partly due to a rise in extreme xenophobic and racist rhetoric since the pandemic, racial discrimination has increased against anyone who phenotypically presents as Asian. While the experience of discrimination and racism have been cited as catalyst to one's identity development and sense of solidarity towards their in-group (Branscombe et al., 1999; Tajifel & Turner, 1986), it is unclear, however, whether and to what degree various Asian ethnic individuals identify with their Asian American identity. Specifically, Covid-related discrimination has led to scapegoating the Asian community, which in turn could espouse internalized racist beliefs towards their own community and feelings of shame towards their own group (Pyke & Dang, 2003). Therefore, the Rejection Identification Model (RIM; Branscombe et al., 1999) and Intra-ethnic othering (Pyke & Dang, 2003) are utilized as conceptual frameworks to understand the inconsistent findings on the collective identity among Asian Americans.

Intergroup Solidarity

The majority of intergroup relations research has focused on majority vs. minority groups in the United States such as White vs. non-White groups (Burson & Godfrey, 2020; Dovidio et al., 2009), but less is known about the relations among marginalized groups. The field of psychology has acknowledged the gap in the literature for intergroup relations among marginalized groups and called attention to such topics on empirical work and theoretical

conceptualization (Burson & Godfrey, 2020; Ramiah et al., 2014; Richeson & Craig, 2011). The relations between "minority – minority" groups may differ from "majority – minority" relations given variation in group status and power (Ramiah et al., 2014). To provide a comprehensive understanding on intergroup relations, it is essential to examine relations beyond majority – minority dichotomies (often White and Black dichotomous relations). Additionally, intergroup relations are increasingly timely as the United State continually grows more diverse, therefore intergroup contact is inevitable among marginalized groups (Richeson & Craig, 2011). Furthermore, Asian Americans are one of the fastest growing racial populations in the United States, making 7.2% of the general population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022). Given the current context of the pandemic and the rise in anti-Asian racism, intergroup relations between Asian Americans and other groups of color are timely and pertinent.

Intergroup solidarity research engendered issues around oppression and social justice to support communities of color. Solidarity is a cultural response to racial valorization and civic ostracism based on Kim's (1999) conceptualization of racial triangulation (1999). As Kim argued, not supporting, or endorsing intergroup solidarity for out-groups is effectively maintaining the proxy distance of Asian Americans to power and privilege. Conversely, growing awareness of systemic oppression that upholds white racial power through racial tensions between non-white groups may motivate greater intergroup solidarity (Burson & Godfrey, 2020). In that sense, intergroup solidarity is a collective response to shared experiences and interlocks oppression toward all marginalized groups – thereby focusing on transforming the system and building solidarity with other groups of color who have been denied access to power and privilege (Merseth, 2018). The Asian American movement, inspired by the Black liberation movement, toward intergroup solidarity is to reject racism and proximity to Whiteness as

"honorary Whites" (Maeda, 2012). The role of the racial hierarchy which endorses Asian Americans as the middleman minority or as racial bourgeoisie contributed to the racial tension between communities of color (Matsuda, 1993). Kim (1999) underscores that the tensions are created and sustained to maintain the power structure of White supremacy. Recognizing historical tensions and racial hierarchy, much of the literature on intergroup relations were focused on White – Black relations (dominant group vs. disadvantaged group) rather than relations between the members of disadvantaged groups (Wu, 2013). Thus, more attention to intergroup solidarity among communities of color is warranted.

In the context of "minority-minority" relations, Intergroup solidarity has been operationalized as attitudes and beliefs towards those who belong to an out-group (Craig & Richeson, 2012). While some academics have included collective actions within the broader term of solidarity, the current dissertation accepts the definition of solidarity included attitudes, linking, and beliefs towards other members of racially disadvantaged groups. What are some factors that contribute or impede intergroup solidarity (i.e., attitudes towards other marginalized groups)? According to social identity theory (SIT; Tajifel & Turner, 1979; also see Craig & Richeson, 2014), two frameworks were proposed to explain the process of intergroup solidarity: (1) social identity threat (SIT; Branscombe et al., 1999) and (2) common in-group identity model (CIM; Gaertner et al., 1993).

SIT (Tajifel & Turner, 1979) suggests that the social identity threat is a major obstacle to solidarity. The social identity threat emerges when one in-group faces discrimination, those members engage in derogatory behaviors towards other groups in order to protect their own group social identity (Branscombe et al., 1999). Recognizing one's marginalization and in-group status can trigger a social identity threat that leads to antipathetic responses to the out-group to

preserve in-group respect (Craig & Richeson, 2014). For example, white women who perceived sexism as discrimination and a threat to their identity showed increased antipathy attitudes towards Black and Latino men to achieve in-group respect (Craig & Richeson, 2012). Additionally, Blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans who were reminded of racial discrimination showed increased negative attitudes towards gay men and lesbians (Craig & Richeson, 2014). A meta-analysis suggested that perceived intergroup threats (e.g., group competition, value violation, and group esteem threats) negatively affect out-group attitudes (Riek et al., 2016). These findings suggest that perceived in-group discrimination can trigger social identity threats which result in increased negative attitudes and biases against other disadvantaged groups. Interestingly, social identity threats can be perceived regardless of an individuals' "minority" status. White Americans who were presented with shifting in racial demographic information (i.e., increase in racial/ethnic minority populations in the U.S.) showed more negative attitudes towards Blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans (Craig & Richeson, 2014). This phenomenon is also described as perceptions of competition where resources (e.g., jobs, educational opportunities) are perceived as limited and inadequate. For example, Black participants who perceived limited economic resources showed negative attitudes towards Latinos and less supportive of policies that benefits Latino communities (Gay, 2006). It is also important to acknowledge that zero-sum perceptions were shaped and perpetuated by White supremacy. It requires critical consciousness to disrupt these beliefs of competition and limited resources to move the locus of responsibility from marginalized groups onto systemic oppression (Burson & Godfrey, 2020). In that sense, it provides an alternative explanation for the lack of resources; rather than blaming it on other marginalized out-groups, it can redirect the responsibility to systemic factors that contribute to creating and maintaining the racial hierarchy. This process

can, in turn, spark or even increase coalition and solidarity among marginalized groups who were historically pitted against each other.

While research suggests that discrimination can trigger a social identity threat and decrease intergroup solidarity, some scholars support the opposite. According to the common identity model (CIM; Gaertner et al., 1993), perceived discrimination could provoke greater intergroup solidarity. Allport et al. (1954) stated that "their own trials and suffering…make for understanding…with insight, [they] will say, 'these people are victims exactly as I am a victim. Better stand with them, not against them" (p. 154). Similarly, CIM argues that shared identity of stigma and marginalization can be a motivation for increasing identification with the out-group (Gurin et al., 1980). For example, Asian Americans and Latino Americans who were primed to elicit their experiences as a victim of discrimination by reading articles on discrimination against their own racial group showed more positive attitudes towards Black Americans compared to individuals who were not primed (Craig & Richeson, 2012). Similarly, highlighting experiences of discrimination both explicitly and subtly can led to more positive intergroup relations (e.g., more positive attitude, decrease in biased attitude, supporting policies that benefit out-group) among groups across multiple dimensions of social identity including Black Americans, Asian Americans, straight White women, and sexual minorities (Cortland et al., 2017). Additionally, a recent study on Asian Americans' intragroup and intergroup suggests that experiences of discrimination had a significant and positive association with both intragroup and intergroup solidarity, explaining 59% and 44% of the variance, respectively (Ouch & Moradi, 2022). In addition, this study found a direct positive link between intergroup solidarity to intergroup collective action with other groups of color. In other words, these findings point to the

importance of evaluating the relationship between perceived experiences of discrimination and a sense of solidarity to both intra and intergroup relations.

Taken together, the literature on intergroup solidarity is mixed. While there is some evidence that experience of discrimination can lead to increase in solidarity (Craig & Richeson, 2012), SIT argues that it could elicit deleterious effects on solidarity (Branscombe et al., 1999). In other words, experiences of discrimination can facilitate either positive or negative relations between groups, which suggests that there are potential moderators. According to Burson and Godfrey (2020), theory of critical consciousness can be a potential moderator that can foster intergroup solidarity.

Critical Consciousness

Critical consciousness was developed by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. In his text, critical consciousness, referred as "conscientização (conscientization)," was described as the ability to recognize and attribute social injustice and inequality to social structures and further take commitment and action against them (Freire, 1993). It was during the Brazil democracy that critical consciousness was developed by Freire to actively "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (p. 19). The purpose of cultivating the mind of critical consciousness was to "[enable] the people to reflect on themselves, their responsibilities and their role in the new cultural climate – indeed to reflect on their very power of reflection" (Freire, 2021, p. 13).

Critical consciousness has gained increasing attention in the field of counseling psychology. As the field acknowledged systemic oppression, counseling psychologists have been called to actively engage in social justice work, advocacy, prevention, and outreach (Vera & Speight, 2003). In that sense, critical consciousness was developed as (1) an "antidote" against

social oppression or "psychological armor" that can play a role as a positive buffer against systemic oppression such as racism (Watts et al., 1999), and (2) a system level social justice intervention and prevention effort (Vera & Speight, 2003).

The theories and definition of critical consciousness suggest the process of transforming internalized messages by critically analyzing received knowledge. Often these processes involve naming, re-examining, and questioning social realities (Freire, 1993; Watts et al., 2011). Critical reflection, also known as social analysis, is described as:

> Learning to think critically about accepted ways of thinking and feeling, discerning the hidden interests in underlying assumptions and framing notions (whether these be class-, gender-, race/ethnicity- or sect-based). It means learning to see, in the mundane particulars of ordinary lives, how history works, how received ways of thinking and feeling serve to perpetuate existing structures of inequality. (Hopper, 1999, p. 13)

These processes inspire action to enhance social justice and liberation as described in Freire's pedagogy: "the oppressed by entering into the experience of oppression and assisting the oppressed in transforming oppressors through reflection and action" (Freire, 1993, p. 234). The development of critical consciousness can be a motive to improve social status, not only for one's group, but also for "the betterment of the collective" (Watts & Hipolito-Delgado, 2015, p. 849). It can inspire communities of color to foster collective identity and challenge systemic oppression (Hipolito-Delgado & Lee, 2007). Freire (2014) also noted that critical consciousness is not solely based on reflection. The value of action was noted as *praxis* in the theories of critical consciousness. Praxis is described as the synergistic and reciprocal relationship of theory and practice, where they influence each other. The development of theory guides practice, and practice informs theory (Watts et al., 2011). Similarly, critical consciousness is the juncture of critical thinking which examines the received messages and affective experiences and commitment to action (Freire et al., 2014; Osajima, 2007). Smith (2021) describes the process of

critical consciousness as “an awakening from the slumber of hegemony, and the realization that action has to occur” (p. 201). The awareness of racial realities by critically examining complex positionality can lead to rejection of inequalities and moves toward intergroup solidarity.

A majority of research on critical consciousness has largely focused on Black, Latinx, and low-income youth populations (Diemer & Li, 2011; Godfrey et al., 2019; Watts et al., 2002; Zimmerman et al., 1999) whereas less is known about Asian Americans. However, there is a burgeoning attention to explore the role of critical consciousness in relation to discrimination, racial identity, and how it influences their attitudes towards social justice, activism and solidarity (Burson & Godfrey, 2020). A study examined critical consciousness in a sample of 707 college students and found that critical consciousness for Asian and Latinx individuals supports the development of CC theory in which experiencing marginalization within a particular system can serve as a basis for understanding broader forms of social oppression and can motivate individuals to resist and challenge such oppression. (Burson & Godfrey, 2020). This study suggested that higher level of critical consciousness among Asian American college students were more likely to engage in social justice activism (Castro et al., 2022). Higher levels of critical consciousness were also positively associated with a stronger sense of racial/ethnic identity and more positive outlooks on diversity. Interestingly, this study found lower levels of critical reflection and high levels of critical actions were both associated with less hopefulness. Suggesting complicated pictures of efforts to challenge structural oppression can sometimes elicit feelings of despair or hopelessness (Castro et al., 2022). A qualitative study by Museus (2021), investigated the process by which Asian American college students develop a commitment to social justice. The study revealed a common misconception that Asian Americans are not subject to systemic injustices and therefore indifferent towards social justice

issues. The findings emphasized the significance of promoting critical consciousness as a means to encourage engagement in social justice causes (Museus, 2021).

In sum, critical consciousness intersectionality encompasses understanding and responding to inequitable sociopolitical conditions, as defined by Diemer et al. (2017) and developing the motivation for collective action to confront oppressive societal structures, as described by Burson and Godfrey (2020). The reinforcement of privilege and oppression operates in a cyclical manner, and critical consciousness is necessary to interrupt this process. Critical consciousness can offer a framework by putting emphasis on analyzing systemic oppression and structural inequity, rather than on individual experiences and individual responsibility.

Statement of the Problem and Study Hypotheses

Discrimination against Asian Americans is well-documented in the existing literature including an extensive history of anti-Asian racism in the context of Asian Americans' racial positioning (Kim, 1999; Wang, 2008). Scholars have theorized that perceived discrimination shape identity development towards the in-group (i.e., collective identity; Branscombe et al., 1999; Wiley, 2013), which in turn, can influence intergroup solidarity (Craig & Richeson, 2012; Gurin et al., 1980). Previous research on intergroup relations between racial groups has primarily focused on White and various minority groups. As such, findings presumed that different racial groups would have similar intergroup relations with Whites, leaving a gap in our understanding of intergroup solidarity among BIPOC communities (Segura & Rodrigues, 2006).

There is a paucity of research that has examined how Asian Americans collective identity would impact their attitudes and solidarity towards other BIPOC communities such as Black, Hispanic, and Latinx people. The RIM is one theory that has been used to conceptualize how in-

group identity could be promoted by perceived discrimination (Branscombe et al., 1999; Jetten et al., 2001; Schmitt et al., 2002). However, the RIM was tested largely among African Americans and Latinx immigrants (Branscombe et al., 1999; Wiley, 2013), and less is known whether the rejection identification model applies to Asian American populations in the context of COVID-19. In addition, there have been mixed findings suggesting that Asian Americans may distance themselves from co-ethnic peers as a response to discrimination (intra-ethnic othering; Pyke & Dang, 2003). As such, it is unclear if and how these relationships hold with respect to COVID-related discrimination, Asian American's collective identity, and intergroup solidarity are related in the context of the heightened anti-Asian hate during the pandemic. Finally, recent advances in intergroup solidarity research suggested the importance of critical consciousness as a potential moderating variable (Burson & Godfrey, 2020; Cortland et al., 2017). Awareness of structural oppression and inequity may help individuals to place locus of responsibility on system rather than blaming individuals (Tran & Curtin, 2017). Thus, investigating the relationships between perceived discrimination, collective identity, intergroup solidarity, and critical consciousness simultaneously within Asian Americans is sorely needed.

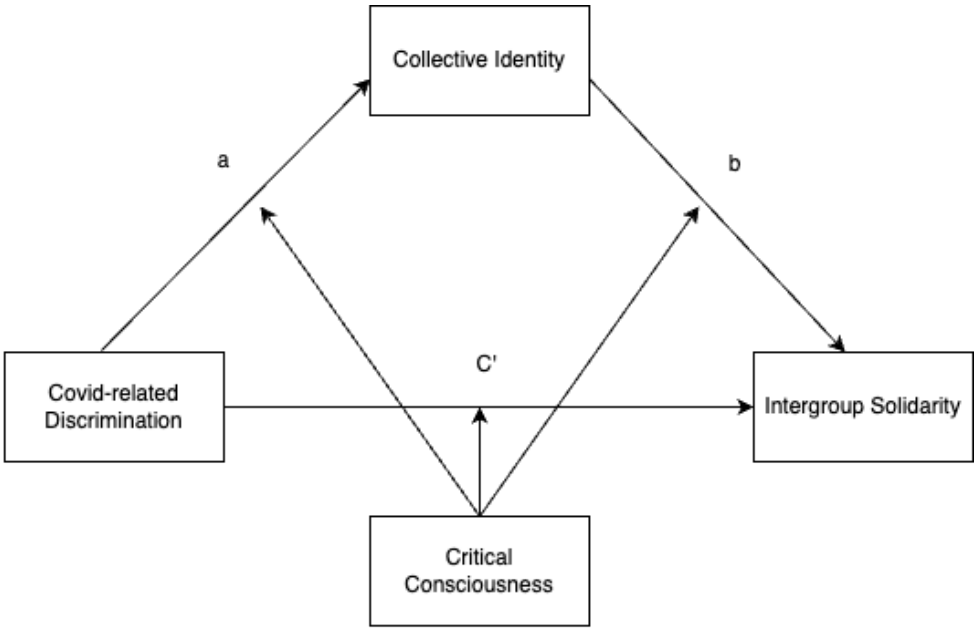


Figure 1. Conceptual model for proposed relationship between COVID-related discrimination, collective identity, and intergroup solidarity.

The following hypotheses were tested in the current study:

Hypothesis 1: Collective identity would mediate the relation between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity.

H1-a: Based on RIM, perceived discrimination would positively relate to collective identity, which in return would increase intergroup solidarity.

H1-b: Based on Intra-ethnic othering, perceived discrimination would negatively relate to collective identity, which in turn, would decrease intergroup solidarity.

This hypothesis was based on two theories of RIM (Branscombe et al., 1999) and intra-ethnic othering (Pyke & Dang, 2003). According to the theoretical framework of RIM (Branscombe et al., 1999), collective identity would positively mediate the relationship between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity. RIM suggested that individuals who perceived high levels of discrimination would engage in social identification as a coping

strategy. In other words, Asian Americans who perceived high levels of anti-Asian hate may feel stronger identification with their group and are motivated to maintain their group identity despite negative evaluation by others. Scholars have investigated the impact of perceived discrimination on intergroup solidarity as these experiences serve as a foundation for a sense of closeness among marginalized groups (Corral, 2020). The underlying premise is that individuals who believe that their in-group is subject to negative and disparate treatment by the dominant group are more likely to develop favorable attitudes towards other marginalized groups when they consider themselves part of a "disadvantaged racial minority" group (Craig & Richeson, 2012).

Conversely, intra-ethnic othering (Pyke & Dang, 2003) argued that individuals may attempt to distance themselves from what has caused them negative consequences of discrimination. Intra-ethnic othering is a form of internalized oppression, as it reinforces negative stereotypes and beliefs about one's own group and can lead to self-hatred and a lack of solidarity within the group (Osajima, 1993; Pyke & Dang, 2003). Based on intra-ethnic othering, individuals may distance themselves from their own group to resist discrimination, leading to negative attitudes towards their own group and decreased in-group identification (Pyke & Dang, 2003). Thus, the current study aims to investigate the impact of perceived discrimination on intergroup solidarity via collective identity among Asian Americans and to test which of the two competing theories, RIM, or intra-ethnic othering, is supported in this context. Based on the findings of the current study RIM would be supported if there is a positive mediation between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity via collective identity. However, intra-ethnic othering would be supported if there is a negative mediation between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity via collective identity.

Hypothesis 2: Critical consciousness would moderate the indirect relationship between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity via collective identity.

H2-a: Based on RIM, the positive indirect relationship would be stronger with higher levels of critical consciousness vs. low levels of critical consciousness.

H2-b: Based on Intra-ethnic othering, the negative indirect relationship would be buffered with higher levels of critical consciousness vs. low levels of critical consciousness.

Hypothesis 2 will test the moderating role of critical consciousness based on mixed findings on how individuals respond to experiences of discrimination. Drawing on RIM (Branscombe et al., 1999) one perspective suggests that individuals who experience discrimination are likely to develop a stronger sense of identification with their in-group. Whereas literature also highlights that discrimination can trigger a self-protective response that leads Asian Americans to distance themselves from co-ethnic peers (Pyke & Dang, 2003). Research suggests that individuals belong to marginalized groups may tend to hold individuals responsible rather than the system of experiences of racism and oppression (Godfrey & Wolf, 2016). However, viewing social inequality as a result of systemic racism rather than individual or group actions can be seen as a way of resisting such oppression (Curtin et al., 2015). As such, some scholars suggested that critical consciousness would act as a moderator as individuals may see more shared experiences due to discrimination (Burson & Godfrey, 2020). Critical consciousness involves acknowledging and attributing group-based discrimination within a broader context of power and oppression, and awareness of structural racism may account for the different findings on the link between discrimination and collective identity (Burson & Godfrey, 2020). Based on social identity theory (SIT; Tajifel & Turner, 1979) and racial identity model (Cross, 1991), perceived discrimination may strengthen collective identity when engaged in

critical reflection, which may further expand to solidarity with other marginalized groups. A recent qualitative study found that intergroup solidarity was established by reframing personal experiences of discrimination and challenging dominant racial narratives such as colorblindness and internalized racism among Asian American activists (Lin, 2020). Additionally, a recent study on Asian Americans' intergroup relations found a direct positive link between intergroup solidarity to intergroup collective action with other groups of color (Ouch & Moradi, 2022). Given that this study aims to test two competing theories, I expected that critical consciousness would moderate the indirect relationship between perceived discrimination, collective identity, and intergroup solidarity. Due to the exploratory nature of testing the two theories, I hypothesize that high critical consciousness would strengthen the indirect relationships if RIM were supported. However, critical consciousness would buffer the relationship between the two if intra-ethnic othering is supported.

Hypothesis 3: Critical consciousness would moderate the direct path between discrimination and intergroup solidarity.

H3-a: Based on RIM, the positive association would be stronger with high levels of critical consciousness.

H3-b: Based on Intra-ethnic othering, the negative association would be buffered with high levels of critical consciousness.

Hypothesis 3 will test the moderating role of critical consciousness between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity. When it comes to Asian Americans and other marginalized group relations, the findings are inconclusive and inconsistent. While the empirical results are scant, the growing literature suggests that the impact of discrimination experiences is an important variable to Asian Americans' sense of solidarity with other racial groups. Several

scholars suggested that understanding the relationship between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity may require examining a moderating variable such as critical consciousness (Burson & Godfrey, 2020; Cheng et al., 2021). For example, a qualitative study (Hope, 2019) conducted in California suggested that Afro – Asian solidarity was established by emphasizing common struggles from local racializing politics in both communities. Additionally, studies suggest belief about discrimination and experiential discrimination, regardless of individual awareness, were significant predictors for a linked fate among Asian Americans (Lu & Jones, 2019). Furthermore, Ouch and Moradi (2022) found that the experience of discrimination had a significant positive association with intra- and intergroup collective action. Conversely, some studies found no significant link between perceived discrimination and Asian Americans' attitudes towards Black Lives Matter (BLM) or feeling closeness with Blacks (Merseth, 2018). The awareness of systemic oppression would highlight shared experiences of discrimination with other racial groups. Thus, I expected that the critical consciousness would moderate the direct relationship between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity with other racial groups. Based on RIM, the positive association between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity would be stronger with high levels of critical consciousness. Whereas critical consciousness would buffer the negative association based on intra-ethnic othering.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

Participants

Participants consisted of 468 self-identified Asian Americans (*M*age = 35.50, *SD* = 9.95). The inclusion criteria require (1) participants who are 18 years or older, (2) self-identified as Asian Americans, and (3) currently residing in the United States. The final sample included 265 women (56.6%), 202 men (43.2%), and one (.2%) non-binary individual. A total of 301 participants (64.3%) identified as heterosexual, 137 (29.3%) identified as bisexual, 11 (2.4%) identified as Queer, 11 (2.4%) identified as asexual, four (1%) identified as gay or lesbian, two (.4%) identified as pansexual, and two prefer not to answer. As for generational status, 26.9% (*N* = 126) of participants identified as first generation, 43.2% (*N* = 202) as second generation, and 28.7% (*N* = 134) as third generation and above. Through a free-response question about their ethnicity, 21.6% of participants self-identified as Chinese, 17.1% as Indian, 9.8% as Korean, 7.5% as Japanese, 24% as multiethnic. The remaining ethnicities (17.6%) included Filipino, Indonesian, Laotian, Mongolian, Pakistani, Taiwanese, Thai, Vietnamese, Hmong, and Pacific Islander. The participants were highly educated, with 27.6% holding an advanced degree, 57.1% a bachelor's degree, and 15% holding at least high school or some college or associate degree. Approximately 62.6% of our participants self-identified as middle class followed by 19.4% as upper or upper middle class and 11.3% as lower or lower middle class.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics

Variables	Frequency (%)
Gender	
Male	202 (43.2%)
Female	265 (56.6%)
Non-binary	1 (0.2%)
Sexual Orientation	
Heterosexual	301 (64.3%)
Bisexual	137 (29.3%)
Queer	11 (2.4%)
Asexual	11 (2.4%)
Gay or Lesbian	4 (.9%)
Pansexual	2 (.4%)
Missing	2 (.4%)
Ethnicity	
Chinese	101 (21.6%)
Indian	80 (17.1%)
Korean	46 (9.8%)
Japanese	35 (7.5%)
Filipino	17 (3.6%)
Laotian	15 (3.2%)
Pacific Islander	12 (2.6%)
Indonesian	10 (2.1%)
Taiwanese	8 (1.7%)
Vietnamese	8 (1.7%)
Thai	7 (1.5%)
Pakistani	3 (.6%)
Hmong	2 (.4%)
Mongolian	1 (.2%)
Multi-ethnic/ multi-racial	113 (24.1%)
Other	10 (2.1%)
Generation	
First generation	126 (26.9%)
Second generation	202 (43.2%)
Third generation and above	134 (28.7%)
Missing	6 (1.3%)
Income	
Less than $30,000	39 (8.3%)
$30,000 - $49,999	141 (30.1%)
$50,000 - $79,999	172 (36.8%)
$80,000 - $99,999	64 (13.7%)
$1000,000 – more	49 (10.5%)
Missing	3 (.6%)
	M (*SD*)
Age	35.50 (9.95)

Note. $N = 468$.

Procedure

Loyola University Chicago Institutional Review Board approved this study prior to survey administration. Survey instruments were made available via secure online website Qualtrics. Participants were recruited nationwide by sending e-invitations to participants in an anonymous web survey through personal contacts (e.g., family, friends), listservs (e.g., Asian American Psychological Association), and through an online crowdsourcing platform (e.g., Amazon Mechanical Turk). Participants were informed of the inclusion criteria: self-identified Asian American adults over the age of 18 years who are currently residing in the United States. Data were collected in August 2022 via Qualtrics. After providing their informed consent, participants were directed to fill out an anonymous and confidential survey about their racial experiences during the pandemic. Surveys were completed in approximately 15 minutes and participants had the option to withdraw at any time. The survey measures were administered in the following order: Demographic information, perceived discrimination scale, collective identity scale, critical consciousness scale, and intergroup solidarity scale.

Among MTurk responses, a total of 629 responses were initially collected, but 209 responses were excluded for not meeting inclusion criteria and/or failing two validity check questions (e.g., please select 4 for this item). Among non-MTurk responses, a total of 105 responses were collected, but 17 responses were excluded for not meeting inclusion criteria and/or failing two validity check questions. At the completion of the survey, Mechanical Turk participants received $1 for their completion of the survey and non-Amazon Mechanical Turk participants were given the opportunity to enter to win one of four $25 Amazon gift cards. They were instructed to provide their email address if they chose to enter into the raffle so that the

principal investigator could contact them if they were to win. Participants were informed that their email addresses would not be linked with their survey responses and would be deleted.

Power Analysis

It has been recommended that sample sizes exceed 200 participants for moderately complex models of structural equation modeling (Kline, 2011; Wolf et al., 2013). Over the years, a general guideline has been proposed such as a 20:1 ratio of observation to parameter estimation (Kline, 2016). For example, if a study has a total number of model parameters of 10, then a minimum sample size based on the 20:1 ratio would be 200 participants. This study has 15 parameters, which suggests 300 participants would be a good target number. The current study recruited 468 participants, which suggests sufficient power for the analysis.

Measures

Demographic Information

The demographic questionnaire utilized for this study included eight items pertaining to participants' age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nativity, generation status, education level, and self-identified social class.

Perceived Discrimination

The scale of Ethnic Experience (SEE; Malcarne et al., 2006) is a multidimensional measure of ethnicity-related experiences (e.g., Ethnic Identity, Perceived Discrimination, Mainstream Comfort, Social Affiliation). For the purpose of the current study, only the 9-item subscale of the Perceived Discrimination was used after being modified to reflect the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, each question was specified for Asian Americans and the participants were prompted to reflect on their experiences "as an Asian American during the COVID-19 pandemic and anti-Asian hate climate." Sample items include

"Asian Americans have been treated well in American society (reverse item)" and "Asian Americans are often criticized in this country." Participants rate their perceived discrimination on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Higher scores reflect stronger perceived discrimination against Asian Americans during the pandemic. The initial scale validation (Malcarne et al., 2006) showed reasonable internal consistency ranging from .83 to .91for the total scale, and .76 to .87 for Perceived Discrimination subscale. The test-retest reliability of six-week ranges from .77 to .86 for the total scale, and .46 to .82 for Perceived Discrimination subscale. The total scale demonstrated good concurrent validity showing significant correlations with the existing ethnic identity scale (MEIM; Phinney, 1992) and acculturation scale (SL-ASIA; Suinn et al., 1987). The Perceived Discrimination subscale showed significant correlation with MEIM ethnic identity scale. The Cronbach's alpha of the Perceived Discrimination subscale for a sample of Asian American was .83 (Lee et al., in progress). The current Cronbach's alpha was .72.

Collective Identity

The Ingroup Identification scale (Leach et al., 2008) is a multidimensional measure of ingroup identification that includes the following subscale: Solidarity, Satisfaction, Centrality, Individual Self-Stereotyping, Ingroup Homogeneity. Two subscales of Solidarity (three items) and Centrality (three items) were used for the current study. The Solidarity subscale measures one's psychological bond, in-group identification, and commitment to the group. Centrality subscale measures whether the group membership is a salient aspect of their group identity. Sample items for the Solidarity subscale include "I feel a bond with [Asian Americans]" and "I feel committed to [Asian Americans]." Sample items for the Centrality subscale include "The fact that I am [Asian American] is an important part of my identity" and "I often think about the

fact that I am [Asian American].” The measure is a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Two subscales were combined into one scale and an average score was calculated for each participant. Higher scores reflect a stronger level of identification with one’s ingroup. The total scale showed significant concurrent validity with group attachment scale ranging from .79 to .80 (Smith et al., 1999), and self-categorization ranging from .77 to .82 (Jackson, 2002). The two subscales also showed significant concurrent validity with identity search and affirmation and belonging subscales (Phinney, 1992). The initial validation demonstrated reasonable internal consistency ranging from .80 to .93 for the total scale, and .80 to .90 for the solidarity and centrality subscales. The Cronbach’s alpha for solidarity and centrality subscales combined among Asian American populations was .91 (Tran & Curtin, 2017). The current Cronbach’s alpha was .88.

Critical Consciousness

A 19-item scale from Shin et al. (2016) was used to measure the capacity of individuals’ general critical consciousness as well as specific awareness associated with racism, classism, and heterosexism. The Contemporary Critical Consciousness Measure is comprised of three subscales: (1) racism (four items), (2) classism (nine items), and (3) heterosexism (six items). Sample items include: “All Whites receive unearned privileges in U.S. society” (racism), “Most poor people are poor because they are unable to manage their expenses well” (reverse score; classism), and “Anyone who openly identifies as lesbian, gay, or bisexual in today’s society must be very courageous” (heterosexism). The measure is a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Higher scores reflect a greater level of critical consciousness. The sum scores are used for each subscale and total scale score. Convergent validity was demonstrated by positive correlations between the Symbolic Racism 2000 scale

(SR2K; Henry & Sears, 2002), the classism subscale of the intolerant schema measure (ISM; Aosved et al., 2009), and the modern homonegativity scale-gay men (MHS-G; Morrison & Morrison, 2002). The initial validation scale shows acceptable internal consistency among the U.S. adult population through Mturk, majority female (53.8%), Caucasian/European American (71.2%), and heterosexual (85%). Cronbach's alpha values of .868 for the Racism subscale, .880 for the Classism subscale, .868 for the heterosexism subscale, and .890 for the full scale. In a sample of bicultural individuals of color, the total score of Cronbach's alpha was .85 (Lee et al., 2021). The current Cronbach's alpha was .83.

Intergroup Solidarity

A nine-item Coalitional Attitudes Scale from Craig et al. (2020; adapted from the Oppressed Minority Subscale from Sellers et al., 1998) measures perceived similarity and willingness to work together with other oppressed groups. The scale was modified to focus on Asian Americans' attitudes towards other groups of color such as Black/Latinx by switching [my group] to Asian Americans. Sample items include "The racism Asian Americans have experienced is similar to that of other marginalized groups such as Black/African American people, Latina/o/Hispanic people, Native American/Indian American people, and other racial/ethnic minority populations," and "Asian Americans should treat other oppressed people as allies." The measure is a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). A higher score indicates that Asian Americans have greater intergroup solidarity. The total scale showed significant correlations with the inter-racial contact subscale. Additionally, the Oppressed Minority subscale showed a significant correlation with the endorsement of assimilationist and humanist subscales (Wegner & Shelton, 1995). The initial validation for the Oppressed Minority subscale demonstrated adequate internal consistency of .86. The Cronbach's

alpha for the original Oppression Minority subscale among African American college students was .76. The modified version of this scale yielded Cronbach's alpha for a sample of adults of community of .94 and for a sample of lesbian, gay, and bisexual community of .85 (Craig et al., 2020). The current Cronbach's alpha was .88.

Data Analytic Plan

All statistical analyses were completed using IBM SPSS statistics (version 27) and Haye's (2018) PROCESS macro v. 4.2 (model 59) to test the moderated mediation model of Asian Americans' perceived discrimination, critical consciousness, collective identity, and intergroup solidarity. For the preliminary data screening, participants who fail to pass all three validity check items were removed from the analysis as it can bias the results of the research (DeSimone et al., 2015). Mean, standard deviations, skewness, kurtosis, Cronbach's alpha, and zero-order correlations for all study variables were examined using univariate and multivariate statistics. Skewness and kurtosis were screened using the criteria of 3 and 10 respectively to ensure univariate normality (Weston & Gore, 2006). Missing data were imputed using multiple imputation (MI) via expectation-maximum likelihood algorithm in the PRELIS of the LISEREL program (FIML; Gottschall et al., 2012; Version 8.80; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2006).

Hypothesis 1 (a-b) was tested using MacKinnon et al.'s (2012) four-step procedure. This procedure requires: (1) a significant association between perceived discrimination and collective identity, (2) a significant association between collective identity and intergroup solidarity, (3) a significant association between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity while controlling for collective identity, and (4) a significant coefficient for the indirect path between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity via collective identity. The bias-corrected percentile bootstrap method determined whether the last condition is satisfied.

Hypothesis 2 (a-b) and 3 (a-b) examined the moderating role of critical consciousness on the relationship between (1) perceived discrimination and collective identity, (2) perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity, and (3) collective identity and intergroup solidarity. According to Hayes (2018), moderated mediation examined whether the magnitudes of a mediation effect are conditional on the value of a moderator. The current study examined whether the mediation process was moderated by critical consciousness using Haye's (2018) PROCESS macro v. 4.2 (Model 59). To test indirect effects, a bias-corrected bootstrapping method with a 95% confidence interval will be used with 5,000 random sampling. The exclusion of zero in a 95% confidence interval indicates statistically significant indirect effects at .05 level (Cheung & Lau, 2008). For all analyses, predictors and the moderators were standardized as *z* scores to facilitate the interpretation of the moderation effects as well as to reduce multicollinearity (Frazier et al., 2004).

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

The aim of the study was to determine whether Asian Americans' collective identity would mediate the relationship between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity with other BIPOC communities. This study further explores the moderating effect of critical consciousness on the link between (1) perceived discrimination and collective identity, (2) perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity, and (3) collective identity and intergroup solidarity. Finally, the study purposed to examine whether the indirect relationship between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity via collective identity would be moderated by critical consciousness.

Missing Value Treatment and Multivariate Assumptions

Item-level missing data analysis using multiple imputation (MI) via expectation-maximum likelihood algorithm in the PRELIS of the LISEREL program was conducted (Gottschall et al., 2012; Version 8.80; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2006). Multiple imputation is robust against a moderate amount and different patterns of missing data (Collins et al., 2001; Schlomer et al., 2010). The percentages of missing cases per item ranged from 0% to 1.1% and the overall rate of missing cases was .35%.

To ensure the assumption of multivariate normality, histograms, Quantile-Quantile (Q-Q) plot of variables were plotted, and the skewness and kurtosis statistics was examined. All variables appeared to be acceptable upon visually examining their histograms and Q-Q- plots. This was confirmed by checking the standardized skewness value (Zskewness) of all study

variables. An absolute Zsckewness value that is greater than 1.96 suggests significant skewness of the respective variable at the .05 probability level. The values of skewness and kurtosis were acceptable (see Table 1; West et al., 1995).

The multicollinearity test was examined by checking tolerance values and variance inflation factors (VIF). Higher values of VIF indicates higher levels of multicollinearity is present. A rule of thumb is that a values of VIF between 1 and 5 indicates moderate correlation but acceptable range whereas a VIF value greater than 5 indicates attention is required due to a severe correlation between variables (Menard, 2002). In all multiple regression models, the highest VIF value was 1.43, suggesting no evidence of multicollinearity. Additionally, Pearson correlation among predictor variables range from .311 to .602 (seeTable 1). In sum, examination of VIF and Pearson correlation did not indicate concerns for multicollinearity among predictor variables.

Preliminary Analyses

Preliminary analyses were conducted using SPSS version 27 software. Table 2 indicates the means, standard deviations, reliability, and correlation results for all study variables. Correlation analyses demonstrated that perceived discrimination was positively associated with collective identity, critical consciousness, and intergroup solidarity. Collective identity was positively associated with intergroup solidarity and critical consciousness. Intergroup solidarity was positively associated with critical consciousness (see Table 2). Furthermore, the scale reliabilities were in the acceptable ranges as the Cronbach's alphas were above .70 for all study variables. Preliminary analyses with the demographic variables and the study variables were conducted. Pearson correlation analysis was utilized if the demographic variables were continuous, and one-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted for categorial

variables. Age was significantly and negatively associated with perceived discrimination (r = -.103, p = .031), collective identity (r = -.180, p < .001), intergroup solidarity (r =-.127, p = .008), and critical consciousness (r = -.148, p = .002). For categorical demographic variables, only social class showed significant relationship to intergroup solidarity (F(4,455) = 2.69, p = .31, η = .031).

Table 2. Correlations and Descriptive Statistics of Variables

	1	2	3	4
1. Discrimination	—			
2. Collective identity	.311***	—		
3. Intergroup Solidarity	.343***	.602***	—	
4. Critical Consciousness	.508***	.359***	.460***	—
M	3.24	5.43	5.22	4.36
SD	.62	1.07	1.04	.85
Kurtosis	1.63	.75	1.18	1.69
Skewness	.31	-.91	-.86	1.13
Cronbach's Alpha	.72	.88	.88	.83

*Note. N = 468. *p* < .05, ** *p* <.01. *** *p* < .001*

Test of Hypotheses

Mediating Effect of Collective Identity

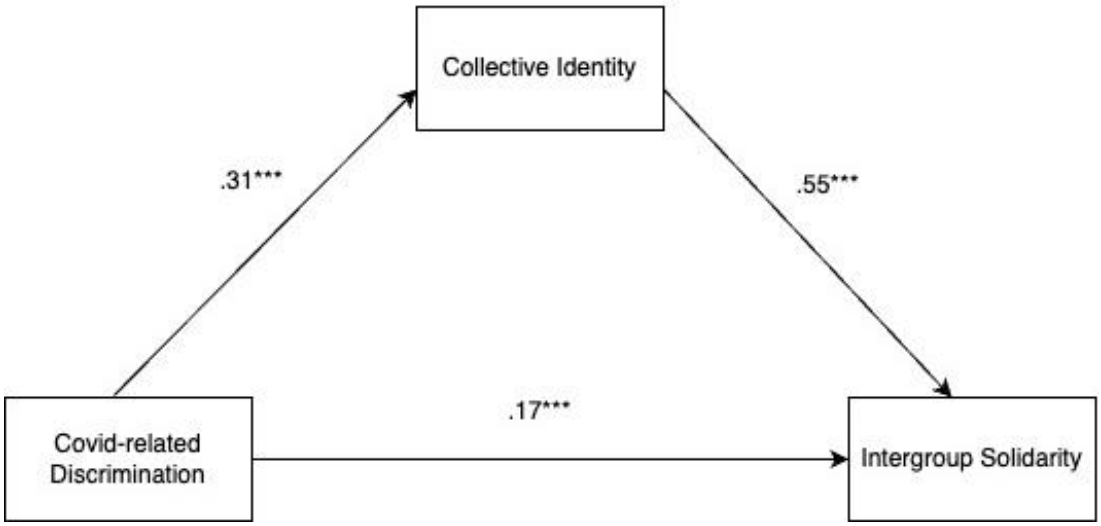
Hypothesis 1: Collective identity would mediate the relation between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity.

H1-a: Based on RIM, perceived discrimination would positively relate to collective identity, which in return would increase intergroup solidarity.

H1-b: Based on Intra-ethnic othering, perceived discrimination would negatively relate to collective identity, which in turn, would decrease intergroup solidarity.

Mediation analysis summary is presented in Table 3 and 4. The current study followed MacKinnon (2012) four-steps to analyze the mediation effect. Multiple regression analysis by Hayes (2018) PROCESS macro v. 4.2 (Model 4) was employed. All data were processed and converted into Z-scores. The findings indicated that perceived discrimination was a significant predictor of intergroup solidarity, B = .58, SE = .04 .04, β = .34, p <.00, with 95% unstandardized CI of [.432 .718]. The direct effect of perceived discrimination on intergroup solidarity remained significant in the presence of the mediator, B = .29, SE = .04, β = .17, p <.001, with 95% unstandardized CI of [.164, .415].

Perceived discrimination had a significant positive predictive effect on collective identity, B = .54, SE = .04, β = .31, p < .001, with 95% unstandardized CI of [.387, .685] (Model 1). Collective identity also had a significant positive predictive effect on intergroup solidarity, B = .53, SE = .04, β = .55, p <.001, 95% unstandardized CI of [.460, .606] (Model 2). Furthermore, the upper and lower 95% bootstrapping CI for the direct effect of perceived discrimination on intergroup solidarity and the mediating effect of collective identity did not contain 0 (see Table 3). The findings suggested that perceived discrimination directly predicted intergroup solidarity as well as indirectly predicted intergroup solidarity through the mediating effect of collective identity. The standardized direct effect of perceived discrimination was .173, while its the standardized mediating effect was .170. They accounted for 50.4 and 49.6% of the total effect (.343), respectively.



Note. Standardized regression coefficients for the relationship between Covid-related discrimination and intergroup solidarity with other BIPOC groups as mediated by collective identity.

Figure 2. Standardized regression coefficients for the Mediation Analysis

Table 3. Results for mediation effect of collective identity on the relationship between discrimination and intergroup solidarity

Variables	Standardized indirect relation		Unstandardized indirect relation		95% CI of unstandardized indirect relation		Fitting index	
	β	*SE*	B	SE	Lower bound	Upper bound	F	R^2
Outcome: Intergroup Solidarity								
Perceived discrimination	.343	.044	.575	.073	.432	.718	62.22***	.118
Model 1 Outcome: Collective Identity								
Perceived discrimination	.311	.044	.536	.076	.387	.685	49.88***	.097
Model 2 Outcome: Intergroup Solidarity								
Perceived discrimination	.173	.038	.290	.064	.164	.415	148.13***	.389
Collective identity	.548	.038	.533	.037	.460	.606		

Note. N = 468. *p < .05, ** p <.01. *** p < .001

Table 4. Mediation Analysis Summary

Discrimination → Collective Identity → Intergroup Solidarity	Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI	Percentage of effect value
Total effect	.343	.044	.258	.429	
Direct effect	.173	.053	.070	.273	50.4%
Mediating effect of collective identity	.170	.030	.115	.235	49.6%

Moderated Mediation

Hypothesis 2: Critical consciousness would moderate the indirect relationship between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity via collective identity.

H2-a: Based on RIM, the positive indirect relationship would be stronger with higher levels of critical consciousness vs. low levels of critical consciousness.

H2-b: Based on Intra-ethnic othering, the negative indirect relationship would be buffered with higher levels of critical consciousness vs. low levels of critical consciousness.

Results in Table 5 show the conditional process analysis of the study by utilizing Hayes (2018) process macro v. 4.2 (model 59). The first multiple regression (Model 1 in Table 5) tested whether the critical consciousness moderated the path from perceived discrimination to collective identity (depicted as path a in Figure 1). The model accounted for 13.53% of the variance in collective identity. However, critical consciousness had no significant moderating effect between perceived discrimination and collective identity (B = .039, SE = .03, β = .02, p = .44), with 95% CI of [-.059, .137]. The same regression (Model 2 in Table 5) was tested whether critical consciousness moderated the link between collective identity and intergroup solidarity (depicted as path b in Figure 1). Critical consciousness was found to have no significant moderating effect between collective identity and intergroup solidarity (B = -.067, SE = .04, β = -.059, p =.10), with 95% CI of [-.147, .014].

Overall, the results indicated non-significant moderation by critical consciousness of the relationship between perceived discrimination and collective identity (path a), and the relationship between collective identity and intergroup solidarity (path b). The conditional indirect effects, therefore, was not found between the relationship between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity via collective identity.

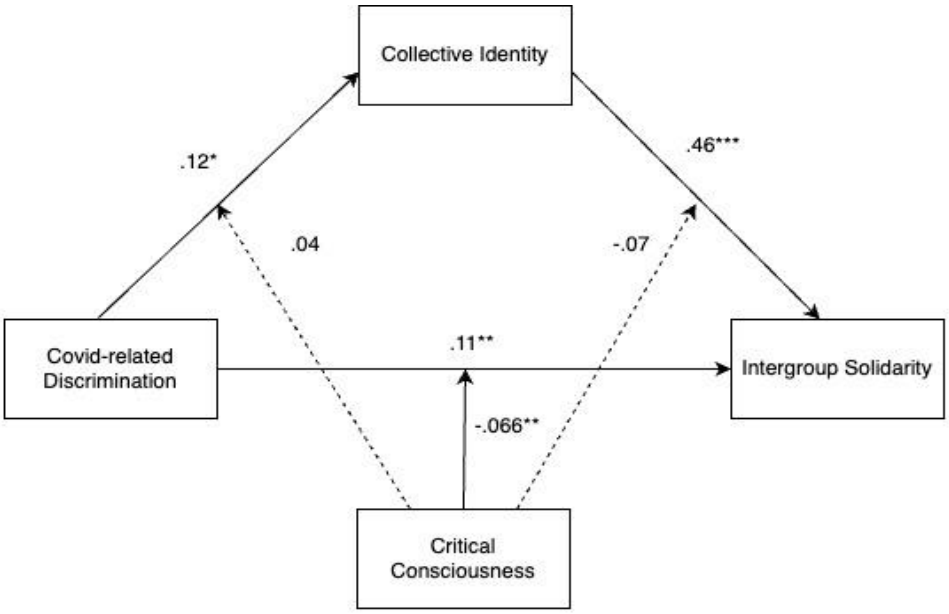


Figure 3. Moderated Mediation Model

Hypothesis 3: Critical consciousness would moderate the direct path between discrimination and intergroup solidarity.

H3-a: Based on RIM, the positive association would be stronger with high levels of critical consciousness.

H3-b: Based on Intra-ethnic othering, the negative association would be buffered with high levels of critical consciousness.

The second regression analysis (Model 2 in Table 5) tested whether critical consciousness moderated the path from perceived discrimination to intergroup solidarity (depicted as path c in Figure 1). As shown in Table 5, all direct paths leading to intergroup solidarity were significant including the paths from perceived discrimination (B = .169, SE = .04, β = .11, p =.006), with 95% CI of [.049, .289], collective identity (B = .453, SE = .04, β = .46, , p <.001), with 95% CI of [.380, .525], and critical consciousness (B = .392, SE = .04, β = .32, p <.001), with 95% CI of

[.293, .491]. Additionally, the interaction of critical consciousness on the relationship between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity (path c in Figure 1) was statistically significant (B = -.119, SE = .03, β = -.07, p =.009), with 95% CI of [-.208, -.029]. This model accounted for 46.84% of the total variance in intergroup solidarity.

Table 5. Moderated Mediation Model Analysis

Variables	B (SE)	95% CI of B		*β (SE)*	F	R^2
		Lower bound	Upper bound			
Model 1 Outcome: Collective identity						
Perceived discrimination	.186 (.078)	.033	.338	.117 (.049)	25.19***	.135
Critical Consciousness	.348 (.061)	.228	.468	.285 (.050)		
PD × CC	.039 (.050)	-.059	.137	.021 (.028)		
Model 2 Outcome: Intergroup solidarity						
Perceived discrimination	.169 (.061)	.049	.289	.107 (.039)	84.77***	.468
Collective identity	.453	.380	.525	.455 (.037)		
Critical Consciousness	.392 (.051)	.293	.491	.322 (.042)		
PD × CC	-.119 (.046)	-.208	-.029	-.066 (0.25)		
CI × CC	-.067 (.041)	-.147	.014	-.059 (.036)		

Note. *N* = 468. PD = Perceived Discrimination, CI = Collective Identity, CC = Critical Consciousness. *p < .05, ** p <.01. *** p < .001

As to the specifics of how critical consciousness moderates the relationship between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity, critical consciousness was divided into high and low groups by M ± 1 SD using SPSS, and simple slope tests were performed. A follow-up analyses of simple slope plot (Hayes & Matthes, 2009) indicated that the perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity were not significantly related to each other at higher levels of critical consciousness (1 *SD* above the mean), β = .04, *SE* = .05, with 95% CI of [-.078, .209]. However, the relationship was significant at lower levels of critical consciousness (1 *SD* below the mean), β = .173, *SE* = .05, with 95% CI of [.129, .415]. Specifically, perceived discrimination was a stronger predictor of intergroup solidarity for the individuals with low levels of critical consciousness (see Figure 4). The findings supported that critical consciousness moderated the relationship of perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity; however, the nature of moderation was different from what was hypothesized.

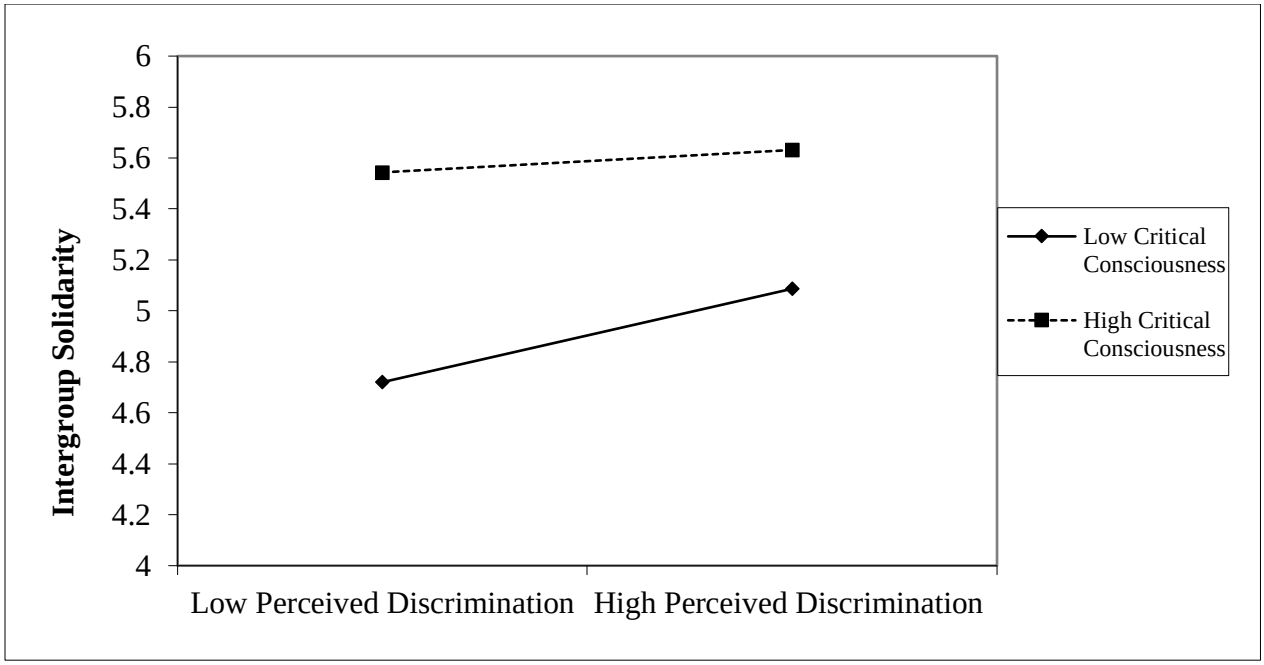


Figure 4. Graphical representation of the moderating effect of critical consciousness on the relationship between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Racism is not a new phenomenon but rather a long, on-going, violent history in the United States (Bonilla-Silva, 2004; Tessler et al., 2020). Since the first wave of Asian immigrants, Asian and Asian Americans are perceived as forever foreigners who are unassimilable and considered outsiders (perpetuated foreigner; Sue et al., 2007) regardless of their achievement (model minority myth; Atkin et al., 2018). These stereotypes are coupled with discrimination against people of color (e.g., anti-Blackness), serving as a tool to pit Asian American's "success" against other marginalized groups' "failure" (Wu, 2013). Creating false narratives of Asian Americans by perpetuating racial valorization and civic ostracism (Kim, 1999) and masking the structural inequality by putting the locus of causality on an individuals' responsibility (Bonilla-Silva, 2004). With the rise of anti-Asian hate and discrimination, Asian and Asian Americans are linked with COVID-19 (e.g., China virus) and innuendos of disease (Tessler et al., 2020). Thus, it is unclear how diverse Asian ethnic individuals would response to a rise in extreme xenophobic and racist rhetoric since the pandemic.

Drawing on RIM and intra-ethnic othering theories, the current study examined the relationships between COVID-19-related discrimination, Asian Americans' collective identity, critical consciousness, and intergroup solidarity with other BIPOC groups. RIM (Branscombe et al., 1999) was focused primarily on Black and Latinx populations for the impact of perceived discrimination on increased identification. Additionally, research shows that perceived discrimination does not only increase the collective identity of the within group but also

increased identification with other groups who share similar stigma (Jetten et al., 2001) – highlighting individual's commonalities of the within group as well as their dissimilarities from the mainstream out-group increases their solidarity with other marginalized groups. Conversely, intra-ethnic othering (Pyke & Dang, 2013) suggests that Asian Americans may engage in othering behaviors (e.g., distancing oneself from the source of threat) as a means of self-preservation. By distancing oneself from co-ethnic groups, individuals can separate themselves from derogatory messages and negative stereotypes perpetuated by the mainstream culture. In addition, recent advances in intergroup solidarity literature propose critical consciousness as a potential moderating variable (Burson & Godfrey, 2020). Awareness of structural oppression and the ability to analyze systems of inequality may facilitate intergroup solidarity and challenge the system. The current study aimed to investigate the impact of COVID-19 related discrimination on collective identity and intergroup solidarity with other marginalized groups. Particularly, scholarly attention is needed in understanding the roles of Asian Americans for intergroup solidarity and alliance. As such examination is nascent, this study broadens our understanding of how Asian Americans can further join coalition and solidarity with others.

Using the two frameworks of RIM and intra-ethnic othering, the current study was guided by the following research questions: (a) Does collective identity positively or negatively mediate the relationship between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity? (b) Does critical consciousness strengthen or buffer the indirect relationships between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity via collective identity? (c) Does critical consciousness strengthen or buffer the direct relationship between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity? In the following sections, results of the findings related to these research questions will be reviewed

and discussed. In addition, limitations of the study and implications for counseling, prevention/social justice intervention, and research will be discussed.

Mediating Effect of Collective Identity

The current study examined whether collective identity mediates the relationship between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity with other BIPOC groups (Hypothesis 1). RIM (Branscombe et al., 1999) suggests that perceived discrimination would increase one's collective identity, which in return would increase their coalitions and solidarity towards other people of color (Hypothesis 1-a). Conversely, intra-ethnic othering (Pyke & Dang, 2013) suggests that perceived discrimination would decrease one's collective identity, which in return, would decrease intergroup solidarity towards other people of color (Hypothesis 1-b).

The current findings are in support of RIM (H1-a), suggesting perceived discrimination is positively associated with Asian Americans' collective identity and intergroup solidarity with other BIPOC communities. First, the result shows positive association between perceived discrimination and collective identity among Asian Americans. Consistent with previous RIM findings, COVID-related discrimination acted as a group-based rejection, heightening the shared experiences of Asian Americans (Wiley, 2013). In addition, studies posit that increased racial/ethnic identity would likely enhance within group solidarity (van Zomeren et al., 2008). Asian Americans feel more identified and attached to their Asian American identity when high levels of discrimination are perceived. Similarly, a qualitative study revealed that perceived discrimination was a strong impetus in the development of Asian American identity among college students (Rhoads et al., 2002). As such, many Asian Americans may feel stronger identification due to the rise of COVID-related discrimination.

One explanation for why intra-ethnic othering was not supported could be due to COVID-19 related discrimination that was directed towards anyone who phenotypically presented as Asian. According to Pyke and Dang (2013), members of marginalized groups may attempt to distance themselves from other members of the same group to resist discrimination. Othering as an adaptive response to racism might seem possible when 'honorary Whites' are permeable (Maeda, 2012). On the other hand, COVID-related discrimination has been racialized and linked to stigmatization of Asian bodies (Tessler et al., 2020). Asian Americans were grouped together and seen as "Chinese" and targeted for hate crimes and violence regardless of their ethnic differences (Borja et al., 2020; Li & Nicholson, 2021). RIM (Branscombe et al., 1999) provides potential explanation that ingroup identification is strengthened when upward mobility to be part of the out-group is impossible (Tajifel & Turner, 1986). In other words, Asian American who perceived high levels of COVID-19 related discrimination would turn inward to increase their collective identity because there is no exit. Although exploring one's identity in a minoritized group status is vulnerable process (Yip et al., 2021), the literature demonstrates that experiences of acute discrimination may be sufficient to elicit identity formation especially during a contingency period (Duncan, 1999).

Secondly, as expected, increased collective identity was positively associated with intergroup solidarity with other BIPOC groups. These findings are aligned with findings in African American or Latinx samples by previous research in political solidarity indicating that strong collective identity is associated with heightened shared marginalized experiences with other disadvantaged groups (Gurin et al., 1980; Wiley, 2013). Specifically, perceived group-based discrimination was associated with strong collective identity, which in turn, was positively linked with supporting social justice-oriented policies that support other marginalized groups in

general (Dawson, 1995; Tate, 1993). It appears that an increase in Asian American identity can increase connection and solidarity with other BIPOC groups. Accordant with highlighting a common fate and similarity (Gaetner & Dovidio, 2012), anti-Asian hate and discrimination during the pandemic facilitated positive attitudes toward other similarly marginalized groups. Indeed, many Asian Americans participated in solidarity events such as protests, advocacy groups (e.g., Asians4BLM), community education webinars (e.g., unlearning anti-Blackness), and different social media platforms (e.g., #aapiforblacklives).

Thirdly, the direct effect of perceived discrimination on intergroup solidarity is positive. This supports the notion that perceived group-based discrimination can elicit common identity among marginalized groups and provoke greater intergroup solidarity (Gaetner et al., 1993). Notably, it appears that a heightened perception of COVID-related discrimination toward Asian Americans increased positive attitudes towards other BIPOC groups. This aligned with previous findings on experiences of discrimination acting as catalysts for solidarity (Duncan, 2012). In addition, Asian Americans showed positive attitudes towards Black Americans with less anti-Black bias, especially when anti-Asian discrimination was pronounced (Craig & Richeson, 2012). As such, Asian Americans' perception of COVID-19 anti-Asian racism and discrimination seems to facilitate intergroup solidarity with other BIPOC communities.

Through the pain of anti-Asian hate, emerged a greater sense of collective identity for Asian Americans and greater intergroup solidarity with other marginalized groups crystalizing as a form of resilience (Cheng et al., 2021). The findings of the current study found a direct link between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity with other BIPOC groups, in addition to mediated links through collective identity among Asian Americans. As such, the surge of anti-Asian hate during the pandemic may have compelled Asian Americans to feel more solidarity

towards their in-group identity and activate Asian American unity. This is one of the first evidences suggesting that RIM (Branscombe et al., 1999) can be applied to Asian American populations in the context of the pandemic, which is consistent with Hypothesis 1-a.

Moderating Effect of Critical Consciousness

The current study examined the moderating role of critical consciousness among the indirect paths between perceived discrimination, collective identity, and intergroup solidarity (Hypothesis 2-a). Results show that critical consciousness does not moderate the relationship between perceived discrimination and collective identity, and collective identity and intergroup solidarity.

Consistent with previous findings, an increase in perceived discrimination has both direct and indirect associations with intergroup solidarity (Duncan, 2012; Ouch & Moradi, 2022). The findings suggest critical consciousness was positively and significantly associated with both collective identity and intergroup solidarity. Although critical consciousness did not moderate the mediational link between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity, our findings suggest that the ability to critically examine structural oppression, power, and inequality can contribute to Asian Americans' collective identity and greater intergroup solidarity. In fact, Asian Americans' racial and ethnic backgrounds were attacked during the pandemic, which underscores the importance of strengthening their collective identity (Branscombe et al., 1999; Craig & Richeson, 2014; Tajifel & Turner, 1986).

However, this study found support for critical consciousness significantly moderating the direct relationship between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity with other BIPOC groups (Hypothesis 3). Close examination of the moderation result shows that critical consciousness strengthens the direct path between perceived discrimination and intergroup

solidarity. Notably, individuals with high critical consciousness had stronger intergroup solidarity regardless of their perceived discrimination. However, for individuals with low levels of critical consciousness, more perceived discrimination showed even stronger intergroup solidarity. Hypothesis 3-a was supported as to the significant moderation effect, but the nature of the moderation was different from what was hypothesized.

According to the RIM, it was hypothesized that the positive association between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity would be strengthened by critical consciousness. Based on the theory of critical consciousness, this study expected the relationship would be stronger for individuals with higher (vs. lower) levels of critical consciousness (Burson & Godfrey, 2020; Gaetner & Dovidio, 2000) – meaning that awareness of structural oppression would highlight commonality and similarity of racial pain and struggle experienced by all BIPOC groups. Interestingly, perceived discrimination was significantly positively related to intergroup solidarity only for individuals with low levels of critical consciousness. Notably, for individuals with low levels of critical consciousness, the more discrimination they perceived, the stronger intergroup solidarity with other BIPOC communities were formed. It is possible that individuals with high levels of critical consciousness already have strong BIPOC solidarity, thus resulting in non-significant relationship between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity at high levels of critical consciousness. This viewpoint, on the surface, may suggest that discrimination is helpful for increasing intergroup solidarity. While it can be a basis to form solidarity, it must be stated that discrimination should not be justified as numerous empirical evidence suggests detrimental effects of racism on mental health and well-being of BIPOCs (Liang et al., 2004; Maeda, 2012; Sue et al., 2007; Yam, 2020). Studies found that individuals who experience discrimination may internalize messages of bigotry and views about their group

without critical awareness and examination of systemic inequities and oppression (Hwang, 2021; Pyke & Dang, 2013). As such, developing critical consciousness is paramount to prevent the adverse impact of racism and dismantle internalized racism (Burson & Godfrey, 2020). Solidarity and advocacy could still be developed as a form of resilience against racism while still exacerbating well-being/mental health of BIPOCs and putting marginalized groups in vulnerable position.

In addition to critical consciousness, findings suggest that there might be another avenue for empowering Asian Americans to develop solidarity with other BIPOC groups when critical consciousness underdeveloped. Individuals may not require analyzing systemic oppression cognitively or critically to feel solidarity with other marginalized groups. One pathway through which BIPOC solidarity could be facilitated might be through empathy (Gaertner et al., 1993; Wang et al., 2003). According to Davis (1983), two components of empathy – perspective taking and empathic concern – might be relevant in facilitating positive attitudes toward other marginalized groups (Cortland et al., 2017). Ethnocultural empathy in the intergroup context demonstrates the ability to understand and take the perspective of other marginalized groups' racial and ethnic experiences (Wang et al., 2003). For example, perspective taking was positively associated with civic identity in a sample of Asian American college students (Johnson, 2015). In addition, a recent study with Korean Americans found that empathy was directly associated with coalitional identity and indirectly associated with Black collective action (Kim et al., 2022). Similarly, a qualitative content analyses found that Asian American women who identified as lesbian or bisexual reported stronger solidarity and empathy toward other marginalized groups (Sung et al., 2015). As such, among Asian Americans who do not necessarily have well-developed critical consciousness, COVID-19 anti-Asian discrimination might engender empathic

concern and perspective taking on shared experiences with other marginalized groups, which might facilitate BIPOC solidarity.

Limitations

The results of the current study should be understood in consideration of its several limitations. First, the current study is a cross-sectional study. The cross-sectional data limit interpreting the casual relationships between variables. While correlational designs clarify how study variables are associated with each other, casual inferences cannot be made (Heppner et al., 2008). Thus, casual direction needs to be explored using a longitudinal or experimental study. Despite the clear theoretical framework for the proposed model (RIM and intra-ethnic othering), there has been lack of existing empirical data examining such variables among Asian American samples. Though this study contributed to a preliminary understanding of collective identity and critical consciousness in relation to BIPOC solidarity, a longitudinal study could reveal how these factors evolve over time (i.e., development of critical consciousness or exploration of one's collective identity status) in relation to intergroup relations. Future studies should consider the findings of this study and examine alternate models (e.g., incorporating empathy and/or perspective taking) to better understand how BIPOC solidarity is cultivated among Asian Americans.

Secondly, another potential limitation pertains to sampling. The survey questionnaires were made available online to recruit nationwide participants by sending e-invitations through personal contacts (e.g., family, friends), listservs (e.g., Asian American Psychological Association, Korean Psychological Network), and through an online crowdsourcing platform (e.g., Amazon Mechanical Turk). Among MTurk responses, over 200 responses were excluded for not meeting inclusion criteria and/or failing two validity check questions (e.g., please select

four for this item). While some questioned whether MTurk participants are paying attention, Paolacci (2010) suggests that the rate of failing attention on MTurk is no higher than other formats (e.g., lab or internet survey). To catch careless responders, the current study only kept participants who correctly answer all built-in screening questions with reasonable responding time.

However, it is possible that educational bias was introduced due to the online nature of the survey. For example, participants in the current study were highly educated compared to the general population of Asian Americans: 84.7% of the participants reported having a bachelor's degree or higher (in addition to 15% holding at least some college or associate degree), compared to the national group averages of 54% with a bachelor's degree or higher (Pew Research Center, 2021). One explanation could be due to sampling strategies employed using professional online forums (e.g., AAPA) and snowball sampling. This could be attributed to individuals who are well-versed in technology or computers are also likely to be more educated.

In addition, the current survey was only available in English via the internet, which may have excluded first-generation immigrants or elderly populations. As such, our sample comprised of mostly second generation and above (71.9%) with a mean age of 35 (*SD* = 9.95). Furthermore, the current sample was largely represented by East Asian (i.e., Chinese, Korean, Japanese; 39%) and multi-ethnic individuals (24%). What it means to be Asian Americans in the United States can vary widely based on diverse cultural backgrounds, generational status, languages, and family's ethnic origins (Maeda, 2012). Certain social identity groups (e.g., elderly women, sexual minorities) among Asian Americans who have primarily been targeted in the United States for anti-Asian hate crimes (Takamura et al., 2022) may not have been well represented in the current sample. While the current study shed lights on how collective identity

as Asian American is important for BIPOC solidarity, this group-based identity has overlooked differences within the group. Future research should consider underscoring the intersectionality of Asian American social identities and their racial/ethnic experiences with solidarity.

Thirdly, the current study modified perceived discrimination (Scale of Ethnic Experiences; Malcarne et al., 2006) to capture the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, each question was specified to reflect on participants' experiences "during the COVID-19 pandemic and anti-Asian hate climate." While the Cronbach's alpha was .72, it may not fully capture the racism solely due to COVID-related discrimination. Future study may consider controlling general racism experiences in measuring COVID-specific discrimination. In addition, the collective identity (Ingroup identification scale – solidarity and centrality subscales; Leach et al., 2008) and intergroup solidarity (Coalitional Attitudes Scale; Craig et al., 2020) scales were modified to reflect Asian American experiences and their intergroup solidarity with other BIPOC groups. While these measures were previously adapted by other research focused on Asian Americans (Tran & Curtin, 2017), the psychometrics of these modified measures have not been examined for Asian Americans. Scholars also voiced that lack of validated measures may reflect the lack of Asian American representation in the intergroup solidarity literature (Tran & Curtin, 2017). Thus, developing reliable and valid measures to examine collective identity and BIPOC solidarity among Asian Americans is needed. Further qualitative work will expand our understanding of how Asian Americans collective identity facilitated BIPOC solidarity and augment our understanding of critical consciousness in the process.

Implications

The current findings revealed that, aligning with RIM (Branscombe et al., 1999), perceived discrimination highlights shared experiences of racial oppression and increases within group identification, which in turn, facilitates greater BIPOC solidarity. Specifically, critical consciousness strengthened the positive direct path between perceived discrimination and intergroup solidarity with other BIPOC groups. Of note, individuals with high levels of critical consciousness, regardless of perceived discrimination, showed high levels of BIPOC solidarity. Conversely, for individuals with low levels of critical consciousness, higher perceived discrimination indicated stronger BIPOC solidarity. Several practical, social justice interventions, and research implications can be gleaned from the findings of the current study.

Clinical Implications

In terms of implications for clinical practice, the present findings suggest that clinicians may pay attention to how Asian Americans' experiences of COVID-related anti-Asian discrimination impact their collective identity and feelings of solidarity with other people of color in the United States. From our findings, COVID-related anti-Asian discrimination is positively associated with Asian Americans' collective identity. Exploring the impact of anti-Asian discrimination in relation to how individuals identify with their Asian American identity may help therapists better understand and facilitate positive within-group and out-group solidarity. Consistent with the larger racism literature, I underscore the need to emphasize discrimination as negative and specifically detrimental as it harms people of color (Kim & Tummala-Nara, 2022; Pieterse et al., 2012; Tessler et al., 2020). Thus, understanding Asian Americans' experiences of racism and discrimination should be rooted in the larger framework of White supremacy and racial triangulation (Kim, 1999). For example, when clients bring up

their experiences of COVID-related anti-Asian discrimination, therapists could begin to engage in dialogue to help them reflect on their experiences and collective identity and using them as beginning of venture to discuss critical consciousness and systemic racism. While our finding supported RIM (Branscombe et al., 1999), therapists should also be aware of intra-ethnic othering behaviors as a reaction to discrimination based on their different racial contexts (Pyke & Dang, 2013). Othering dynamics may present based on one's internalized racial beliefs and identity development status as a part of adaptive responses to racism and derogatory messages from the dominant society (Pyke & Dang, 2013). For example, Pyke and Dang suggested the construction of the "FOB" and "whitewashed" labels describe co-ethnics who present as 'too stereotypical,' or 'too white,' respectively. Thus, therapists should explore Asian American identity based on individuals' identity development status to help them unlearn internalized racial beliefs. Having such awareness and knowledge about clients' potential responses may help therapists practice with greater cultural sensitivity and humility.

The current results also suggest that increased in Asian American collective identity demonstrates positive association with intergroup solidarity with other marginalized groups. This solidaristic attitude could be encouraged by exploring clients' understanding of shared similarities with other BIPOC groups. Recent empirical research suggests that engaging in solidarity and advocacy activities is positively associated with psychological well-being and even buffers the adverse impact of discrimination among sexual and gender minority individuals (DeBlaere et al., 2014; Watson et al., 2018). As such, clinicians promoting collective identity and BIPOC solidarity is a useful intervention for supporting clients' well-being and coping with discrimination (DeBlaere et al., 2014; Kim et al., 2022; Watson et al., 2018). On the other hand, engaging in such efforts may unavoidably lead to burnout and feeling hopelessness facing

systemic oppression (Gorski, 2019). Particularly, more unique challenges may be experienced by racial justice activists of color compared to activists with privileged identity (Gorski, 2019). Thus, therapists working with Asian American clients should attend not only to their identity development and building solidarity, but also to prevent activism fatigue and burnout.

In addition, the current study found that individuals with high levels of critical consciousness show stronger intergroup solidarity with other marginalized groups regardless the levels of perceived discrimination. The present findings highlight the positive association of critical consciousness with intergroup solidarity. Similarly, exploring different ways of engaging in intergroup solidarity may be pertinent for a client with high levels of critical consciousness. For example, therapists should be ready to brainstorm or suggest avenues for becoming involved in social justice activities or organizations for solidarity and collective action with other people of color. The findings from specific moderation suggests that individuals with low level of critical consciousness showed stronger intergroup solidarity when they perceived more discrimination, suggesting opportunities to engage in dialogue regarding critical consciousness and exploring their attitudes towards BIPOC solidarity through other mechanisms such as empathy (Cortland et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2022). Moreover, therapists should explore their clients' critical consciousness level and be prepared to engage with clients to develop and improve critical consciousness if and when appropriate. For example, therapists can provide psychoeducation about critical consciousness and discuss the impact of systemic racism. This may involve introducing the concept of critically analyzing disparities and marginalization with a structural understanding that reflects both the systemic and historical roots of inequalities (Burson & Godfrey, 2020; Diemer et al., 2017; Freire, 1993). The literature suggests that having awareness of the root of systemic oppression (e.g., government policies, historical injustices) can

not only empower individuals to engage in solidarity among marginalized groups, but also act as a protective factor from internalizing attributions of racism which can lead to victim blaming (Watts et al., 2011). By critically analyzing the racial reality, individuals can conceptualize collective identity and BIPOC solidarity with a bigger picture behind individual experiences of racism, removing blame from within-group and other marginalized groups that have historically been pitted against each other (Burson & Godfrey, 2020; French et al., 2020). In that sense, the greater focus encompasses fighting anti-Asian racism and dismantling white supremacy to expand cross-racial solidarity.

Importantly, the current study suggests that COVID-related anti-Asian hate could promote intergroup solidarity with other marginalized groups through collective identity. This is one of the first studies that supports RIM among Asian Americans, suggesting perceived group-based discrimination can promote within group identity, which encourages BIPOC solidarity. While the purpose of the study focuses on Asian American experiences of COVID-related discrimination, given the rise in anti-Asian hate incidents at the time, this study did not examine mental health and well-being variables. The findings suggest that perceived discrimination could be a basis to elicit greater collective identity and cross-racial solidarity. However, there are many mediating and/or moderating paths (e.g., identity, social support) that influence well-being, and the harmful effects of racism, discrimination, and the larger negative impact of white supremacy on marginalized communities need to be underscored. Indeed, centering healing beyond the impact of racism requires disrupting systemic oppression (French et al., 2020; Miller, 2018).

Social Justice Implications

While the field of counseling psychology has been at the forefront of promoting social justice, more collectivistic efforts are needed in engaging in solidarity and advocacy work

beyond individual interventions to dismantle systemic racism (Vera & Speight, 2003; O'Leary Wiley, 2021). This points to advancing beyond traditional individual-level approaches to engage in structural advocacy in areas of education and training. Intentional efforts are needed in training the future psychologists who not only engage/participate but lead the work of social justice, solidarity, and advocacy in the field. More training opportunities including system-focused interventions such as policy change and political level advocacy could empower future psychologists to develop the skills needed to move toward system-level change. Furthermore, psychologists and psychologists-in-training are encouraged to engage in self-exploration and dialogue about their own critical consciousness, identity development, and attitudes toward intergroup solidarity. Studies show that engaging in non-traditional activities such as storytelling can facilitate healing and connection (Stuckey & Nobel, 2010). As such, training programs and clinical practice settings could integrate such activities to make intentional space and promote dialogues among psychologists, staff, and trainees. For example, SPOKENproject (https://www.youtube.com/spokenproject) is a valuable resource that provides an accessible storytelling approach, sharing how to cope and heal from racism.

The present findings have practical implications for social justice efforts. In particular, the findings suggest that increased perceived discrimination promoted both collective identity and BIPOC solidarity. From a first glance, the impact of COVID-related anti-Asian discrimination on Asian Americans' collective identity and BIPOC solidarity seem beneficial. However, racism is ubiquitous and experiencing discrimination is inescapable. The degree to which racism has negatively impacted the health and well-being of all BIPOC communities including Asian Americans is well-documented (Liang et al., 2004; Maeda, 2012; Sue et al., 2007; Yam, 2020). Thus, it is important to reiterate the adverse impact of discrimination on

BIPOC populations. Previous literature encouraged rechanneling the sting of COVID-related discrimination towards collective solidarity as a form of intervention (Gruber et al., 2020). This could suggest potential avenues for supporting Asian American individuals by providing online support groups, psychoeducational workshops, or accessible webinars. Studies suggest that untraditional forms (e.g., webinar, psychoeducation) are well-received by Asian Americans compared to traditional psychotherapy, given the lessened stigma attached to them (Fang et al., 2010). It could be more salient to create interventions based on shared identities among Asian Americans (e.g., Korean immigrant older women or second generation Asian graduate students). For example, the Korean American Wellness Association (KAWA) hold an annual convention providing free workshops and webinars to Korean immigrants, youths, and families on topics such as unlearning anti-Black attitudes, reconciling Korean American identity, and responding to COVID-19 anti-Asian discrimination.

In addition to intervention efforts, it is important to discuss prevention efforts to support Asian American communities. Vera (2020) addressed the importance of environmental-focused prevention from Bronfenbrenner's socioecological structures to macrosystem such as policy and governments. In that sense, systemic preventative effort is warranted. For example, not only is providing psychoeducation to Asian American groups about the impact of COVID-related discrimination on their collective identity, critical consciousness, and BIPOC solidarity important, it is crucial to start educating non-Asians to be allies to the Asian American community. This may include raising awareness of how COVID-related racism manifests differently in Asian American communities including physical attacks, verbal harassment, and hate-crimes leading to death (e.g., Atlanta shooting in 2021). Another preventative way is to train better bystanders, who can stand up when they see someone being targeted (e.g., Hollaback;

AAJC, 2022). Studies suggest that these trainings are most effective when it is an ongoing, continuous process rather than a single, one-time event (Bezrukova et al., 2016).

Although the current study showed that highlighting or bringing more awareness of Asian Americans' perceived discrimination can be a basis for both collective identity and BIPOC solidarity, psychologists should consider other ways to promote solidarity and advocacy without experiencing discrimination. Solidarity is two-way street; understanding how solidarity is built among Asian Americans with other marginalized groups is an important area of study, but also understanding how larger society needs to actively dismantle structural inequities to remove blame and responsibility from people of color.

Research Implications

There are numerous research implications that can be inferred from this study. This research builds upon both the RIM and intra-ethnic othering literature, which argues that perceived group-based rejection leads to increased or decreased group identification, respectively. Firstly, future research should consider using longitudinal studies to examine the impact of anti-Asian discrimination on Asian Americans' identity, BIPOC solidarity, and critical consciousness. Longitudinal data can shed light on how an individuals' critical consciousness evolves over time, which may differently influence identity development and solidarity building. This research should also include different types of discrimination (e.g., direct, vicarious, cyber-racism), which have been documented to negatively impact Asian American communities (Kim & Tummala-Nara, 2022; Tessler et al., 2020). Moreover, future research should consider examining how COVID-discrimination is experienced among different subgroups of Asian American communities (e.g., diverse ethnicity, age and generation cohorts, immigration status, and gender and sexual identities). Particularly, the intersectionality of social identities can

meaningfully inform various Asian subgroups positionality in social, cultural, economic, and political power.

Secondly, future scholars should fully examine the complexity of relationships between the current study variables. For example, Asian Americans' identity development should be explored more in-depth utilizing a racial identity profile (Chen et al., 2006; Helms, 1995). For example, five statuses are proposed (e.g., conformity, dissonance, immersion-emersion, internalization, and integrative awareness) as part of people of color racial identity development (Helms, 1995). Asian Americans who are in the early stage of identity development (e.g., conformity status) may exhibit stronger intra-ethnic othering behaviors and reject their own ethnic peers, whereas Asian Americans who are in integrative awareness may recognize similarities that all marginalized groups experience and show greater solidarity. As scholars suggested that individuals may experience different or more than one identity status simultaneously, it is important to understand how each status interplays with one's critical consciousness. Perhaps most importantly, acknowledging Asian Americans' complex racial positioning and racial triangulation could further expand the cross-racial solidarity literature. Even though Asian Americans are victims of anti-Asian racism, the Asian American community can also victimize Black Americans by perpetuating anti-Black attitudes (Wang & Santos, 2023). More nuanced research rooted in naming structural issues of white supremacy could capture the interplay of anti-Asian and anti-Black racism and other intergroup relations among marginalized groups.

In addition, future study should consider including racial, ethnic, and bi-cultural identity to examine the unique role they may play in intergroup solidarity research. Even though scholars recognized that there are considerable overlaps between racial and ethnic identities (Helms &

Richardson, 1997), past research found that perceived group-based rejection resulted in lower ethnic identification but stronger racial identification and bicultural identification among first-generation Latino immigrants (Wiley, 2013). As Asian Americans are comprised of diverse subgroups with differing religion, language, cultural backgrounds, and refugee experiences (Maeda, 2012), future research needs to address how individuals experience themselves through their racial identity, ethnic identity or bi-cultural identity (e.g., Asian American, Chinese or Chinese American) in relation to intergroup solidarity. Although the current research sheds light on the relations between COVID-related discrimination, collective identity, critical consciousness, and intergroup solidarity, it did not address the outcomes of these variables on their well-being or psychological distress. Asian Americans increased collective identity and BIPOC solidarity may confer positive mental health outcomes as previous empirical studies suggest that solidarity is positively associated with life satisfaction, positive affect, and meaning in life (Klar & Kasser, 2009). On the other hand, engaging in solidarity and advocacy could have adverse mental health outcomes when they are reframed as risk factors (Boehnke & Wong, 2011). Thus, future research on the effects of wellbeing and mental health outcomes could provide a more in-depth picture of Asian Americans' experiences on intergroup solidarity.

Finally, future research should also consider including both empathy and critical consciousness in understanding collective identity and BIPOC solidarity. The current findings showed that collective identity and intergroup solidarity with other marginalized groups are still achievable without critical consciousness, which suggests that there may be alternative paths that promote collective identity and BIPOC solidarity. Intergroup relation literature suggests empathy as one of the key components in positive intergroup solidarity (Cortland et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2022). Thus, understanding how cognitive critical analyzing and emotional empathy similarly

and differently promote solidarity remains unclear and requires further investigation. In addition, the current study focused on Asian Americans' intergroup solidarity attitudes towards other BIPOC communities. In fact, a major future direction of this research should also include collective action in addition to solidarity attitudes. Grounded in Freire's (1993) conceptualization, critical reflection works in tandem with critical action. Thus, critical reflection could promote solidary attitudes "without efficacy or action" (p. 1374; Godfrey et al., 2019). In other words, individuals with high levels of critical consciousness – it is unclear if they are high on critical reflection but low on political efficacy – may show solidaristic attitudes without action to support other groups. Future study should consider examining development of critical consciousness with intergroup solidarity and collective action.

In sum, the current study presents empirical examination of the RIM and intra-ethnic othering theories, aimed to capture the process of Asian Americans' collective identity and cross-racial solidarity during the time of heightened anti-Asian racism during the COVID-19 pandemic. During pervasive anti-Asian racism and discrimination, fostering greater collective identity helped build and strengthen cross-racial solidarity. Rooted in the overarching framework of White supremacy, the eradication of racism and discrimination necessitates all levels of participation (Pieterse et al., 2023). Given the complex racial positioning of Asian Americans triangulated between White and Black groups (Kim, 1999), we must underscore the significance of solidarity and advocacy that extends beyond the confines of combating anti-Asian hatred, towards actively dismantling and eradicating systemic injustices experienced by all marginalized groups.

APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA SHEET

Screening questions:

1. Are you 18 years old or older?
2. Do you identify as Asian/ Asian American?
3. Do you live in the United States (including its territories)?

1. Age: _____

2. Gender _____ Male_____ Female _____ Transgender _____ nonbinary_____ other (specify)

3. What is your sexual orientation?
Heterosexual, Bisexual, Gay or Lesbian, Queer, Asexual, Pansexual, Not listed, please specify if you choose _____

4. Ethnicity
(e.g., Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Hmong, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese, Vietnamese, Chinese and White, Filipino and Japanese, etc.)
_____

5. Generation in the U.S. (check most applicable one)

_____I was born outside the U.S. (e.g., China) and moved to the U.S.
_____I was born in the U.S. but both parent(s) immigrated.
_____One parent and I were born in the U.S. (other parent immigrated).
_____Both parents and I were born in the U.S.
_____Grandparents, parents, and I were born in the U.S.
_____Great-grandparents and beyond were born in the U.S.

6. How would you describe your social class?

_____ lower class
_____ lower-middle class
_____ middle class
_____ upper-middle class
_____ upper class

7. What is your approximate <u>household</u> income before taxes?

_____ Under $ 30,000
_____ $30,000 to less than $50,000
_____ $50,000 to less than $80,000
_____ $80,000 to less than $100,000
_____ $100,000 or more

8. What is your highest education level?
Less than 7th grade
Middle school or junior high (7th to 9th grade)
High School diploma
Associates degree
College degree (e.g., B.A., B.S.)
Advanced degrees (e.g., M.A., Ph.D., J.D.)

APPENDIX B

THE SCALE OF ETHNIC EXPERIENCES

** Please indicate your agreement with the following items using the 1-5 scale below. Respond based on your experiences as an Asian/Asian American **during the COVID-19 pandemic and anti-Asian hate climate**.

1……..…….……2……..……..…….3……..……..4……5
Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree or disagree Agree Strongly agree

1. During the COVID-19 pandemic, I feel that my ethnic group is respected in America.
2. During the COVID-19 pandemic, my ethnic group has been treated well in American society.
3. My ethnic group **does not** have the same opportunities as other ethnic groups during the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. During the COVID-19 pandemic, I often have to defend my ethnic group from criticism by people outside of my ethnic group.
5. During the COVID-19 pandemic, discrimination against my ethnic group **is not** a problem in America.
6. My ethnic group is often criticized in this country during the COVID-19 pandemic.
7. In America, the opinions of people from my ethnic group are treated as **less** important than those of other ethnic groups during the COVID-19 pandemic.
8. During the COVID-19 pandemic, I have experienced prejudice because of my ethnicity.
9. During the COID-19 pandemic, I **have not** felt prejudiced against in American society because of my ethnic background.

APPENDIX C

THE INGROUP IDENTIFICATION SCALE

**Please indicate your agreement with the following items using the 1-7 scale below. There are no right or wrong answers. Please be open and honest in your responding.

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7
Strongly disagree slightly neither agree slightly agree strongly
disagree disagree nor disagree agree agree

1. I feel a bond with Asian Americans.
2. I feel solidarity with Asian Americans.
3. I feel committed to Asian Americans.
4. I often think about the fact that I am Asian American.
5. The fact that I am Asian American is an important part of my identity.
6. Being Asian American is an important part of how I see myself.

APPENDIX D

CONTEMPORARY CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS MEASURE

**Read each of the following statements. Using the 1–7 scale below, please rate your level of agreement with each statement. 1 strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 slightly disagree, 4 neither, 5 slightly agree, 6 agree, and 7 strongly agree.

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7
Strongly disagree slightly neither agree slightly agree strongly
disagree disagree nor disagree agree agree

1. All Whites receive unearned privileges in U.S. society.
2. The overrepresentation of Blacks and Latinos in prison is directly related to racist disciplinary policies in public schools.
3. All Whites contribute to racism in the United States whether they intend to or not.
4. More racial and ethnic diversity in college and universities should be a national priority.
5. Reverse racism against Whites is just as harmful as traditional racism.
6. Poor people without jobs could easily find work but remain unemployed because they think that jobs like food service or retail are beneath them.
7. Social welfare programs provide poor people with an excuse not to work.
8. Most poor people are poor because they are unable to manage their expenses well.
9. Raising the minimum wage takes away the motivation for poor people to strive for better paying jobs.
10. Overall, Whites are the most successful racial group because they work the hardest.
11. Raising minimum wage would hurt businesses and make it too hard for them to provide jobs.
12. Asian Americans are proof that any minority can succeed in this country.
13. Preferential treatment (e.g., financial aid, admissions) to college students that come from poor families is unfair to those who come from middle or upper class families.
14. Anyone who openly identifies as lesbian, gay, or bisexual in today's society must be very courageous.
15. Gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals should be able to adopt children just as easily as heterosexual people.
16. Discrimination against gay persons is still a significant problem in the United States.
17. I support including sexual orientation in nondiscrimination legislation.
18. Gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals should have all the same opportunities in our society as straight people.
19. I believe the U.S. society generally promotes hatred of gay individuals.

APPENDIX E

COALITIONAL ATTITUDE SCALE

Please indicate your agreement with the following items using the 1-7 scale below. There are no right or wrong answers. Please be open and honest in your responding. Examples of other racial groups include **Black/African American people, Latina/o/Hispanic people, Native American/Indian American people, and other racial/ethnic minority populations.

1.....2.....3.....4.....5.....6.....7
Strongly disagree slightly neither agree slightly agree strongly
disagree disagree nor disagree agree agree

1. The same forces which have led to the oppression of Asian Americans have also led to the oppression of other racial groups.
2. The struggle for Asian Americans' equality in America should be closely related to the struggle of other racially oppressed groups.
3. Asian Americans should learn about the oppression of other racial groups.
4. Asian Americans should treat other racially oppressed people as allies.
5. The discrimination Asian Americans has experienced is similar to that of other racial minority groups.
6. There are other people who experience injustice and indignities similar to Asian Americans.
7. Asian Americans will be more successful in achieving their goals if they form coalitions with other racially oppressed groups.
8. Asian Americans should try to become friends with people from other racially oppressed groups.
9. The dominant society devalues anything not White male oriented.

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE CONSENT FORM

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Project Title: Asian Americans' experiences of COVID related discrimination
Researcher(s): Han Na Lee, M.A., and Eunju Yoon, Ph.D.

You are being asked to take part in a research study being conducted by Han Na Lee, a doctoral candidate in Counseling Psychology at Loyola University Chicago, under Dr. Eunju Yoon's supervision. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of COVID-19 related racial experiences among Asian Americans. Approximately 300-400 Asian/ Asian American adults (i.e., 18 y.o. or above) residing in the U.S. will be asked to participate in this study. Please read this form carefully and asked questions you may have before deciding whether to participate in this study.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of COVID-19 on racial experiences of Asian Americans.
Procedures: If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to answer a set of questionnaires about your demographic information, COVID-19 related discrimination experiences and other racial experiences as Asian/ Asian Americans. It should take about 15-20 minutes to complete the survey.

Risks/Benefits: There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. There are no direct benefits to you from participation, but you may gain a greater understanding about yourself in relation to racial experiences in the U.S. You will also be helping counseling/psychology professionals in their work with Asian American populations.

Compensation: At the completion of the survey, you may choose to enter a raffle with a chance to win one of two $25 Amazon e-gift cards. You are free to withdraw from the study at any moment, but the compensation is only for completed surveys.

Confidentiality: Confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. Please do not indicate your name or other identifying information on the questionnaire. Worker IDs are kept confidential and secure, are not lined back to survey data, and are deleted after use. Information obtained as a result of this survey will be kept confidential. There is no way a participant can be identified in this study. All data will be kept in a password protected file for five years after completion and publication of the study. Only the listed researchers will have access to the data.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.

Contacts and Questions: If you have questions about this research study, please contact Han Na Lee at hlee30@luc.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Loyola University Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

Statement of Consent: By completing the survey, you are agreeing to participate in the research. Your completion of the survey will indicate consent for an informed participation. If you decide not to participate in this study, you may simply disregard this survey. Thank you very much for your time and effort.

Sincerely,
Han Na Lee, M.A.
Eunju Yoon, Ph.D.

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VITA

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