Asian Racialization of U.S. Public Policy: How the “model-minority” myth colors white Americans’ political attitudes toward Asian Americans

Yoon, Handeul Hanna

Political Science Department: Senior Thesis

Thesis Advisor: Matthew Incantalupo

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Chapter I. Introduction

Research on political attitudes has demonstrated that some opinions are racialized. In the 1990s, Martin Gilens set out to study why Americans had negative attitudes toward welfare. He concluded that negative attitudes formed as a result of 1) strong association of negatively charged stereotypes about black Americans and 2) applying those stereotypes as a judgment of work ethic and character. I take this approach and apply it to a different racial group and see whether the phenomenon generalizes: Asian Americans. I choose Asian Americans for a few reasons. First, Asians have a clear set of stereotypes associated to them commonly referred to as the “model-minority” myth. Second, Asians are not only underrepresented in pop media and culture but also in academic and political studies. Yet the model-minority myth offers potential for promising research; the stereotype seems widely spread and recognized, even though the title of “model-minority myth” may not be as well known.

The model-minority myth describes Asians as high-achieving, successful, intelligent, docile, and overall hard working. Through this study, I hope to observe just how widely this myth affects Americans’ perceptions of Asian Americans, even though there might be wide disparities amongst Asian ethnic groups. Though some sociological research studies the why and how of the myth, this topic remains understudied. This thesis aims specifically to study national attitudes toward public policy areas related to the model-minority myth. I conduct an original survey experiment to assess white Americans’ political attitudes and perceptions of Asian Americans.

Three public policy areas serve as case studies for racializing effects of the model-minority myth: welfare immigration, and education. It is important to study welfare in the context of the model-minority myth because numerous Asian Americans groups live in poverty at a higher rate than the US national average (López et al. 2017). As of the year 2015,
Hmong, Burmese, and Bhutanese had the highest rates of poverty amongst Asian Americans. However, this statistic is overshadowed by the model-minority myth that stems from generally high-achieving South and East Asian Americans. This study achieves two large purposes: first, to debunk the myth that all Asians are high-achieving and socioeconomically well off and second, to draw attention to Asian Americans that do not fit the model-minority and track how that might affect Americans’ perceptions of welfare.

Additionally, studying Asian Americans and immigration is particularly pertinent given the large population of Asian immigrants residing in the United States. Despite the more common perception that most immigrants come from Latin America, the vast majority of immigrants in the last 10 years have actually come from Asia (López et al. 2015). If Asians make up the majority of the immigrant population, then white Americans’ attitudes toward immigration should reflect their perceptions of Asian Americans.

Education represents the one area where Asian Americans have most often received attention. Discourse about affirmative action policy often lead to discussions regarding the different academic standards Asian students are held to, according to the model-minority myth. Asian students often get caught in the middle of the discourse where they are categorized as a non-white minority, but are perceived as academic competition. This study aims to gather empirical survey data to measure the validity of these discussions. Although these results do not correlate to policy areas as well as the previous case studies, conclusions can still provide valuable insight about perception of the model-minority myth and how much claim it has against affirmative action policies.

If the data show that Americans attitudes can be and are influenced by racial stereotypes previously understudied, there are many implications to draw. For one, racial descriptions made in mass media have a significant effect in the way individuals begin to form their political opinions. Data from this research can reveal that individuals do not have
to see stereotypes as a reality to have racialized political attitudes. This study can better explain how racialization of political attitude occurs – exactly which factors may be driving positive attitudes toward one issue but not the other. This type of analysis is also revealing of Americans’ core values and what they see as necessary to take advantage of the public policy system.

In Chapter 2, I provide a review of studies pertaining to policy attitudes, criteria individuals use often to determine deservingness, and how racialized perceptions have affected attitudes in the past. I also review literature about the model-minority myth, using ethnographic studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the model-minority myth establishes stereotypes about Asian Americans. Ultimately, the chapter concludes with an introduction to the hypotheses and expectations. Chapter 3 elaborates each hypothesis and establishes clear expectations and criteria for supporting or rejecting each one. I point out any puzzling aspects of the case studies and what the puzzles mean for evaluating the hypotheses. In Chapter 4, I review the methodology of this project, explaining each part of the survey experiment. Chapter 5 provides a detailed analysis of the empirical data. I discuss responses to each question as well as how some responses show significant results when cross analyzed with other factors. I then discuss these results relative to the larger scope of this thesis in Chapter 6, where I also draw conclusions from the data analysis in response to the hypotheses. Finally, Chapter 7 closes out with final thoughts about significant takeaways and larger implications for public policy attitudes. Appendices in the back provide full texts of the survey as well as supplementary tables.

The results from this study are not meant to implicate individuals in issues of stereotyping, but to further understand how political attitudes are formed. A very significant factor of attitude formation seems to stem from racialized perceptions built from an established set of stereotypes surrounding a specific demographic. In this case, survey
responses show that white Americans are affected by the model-minority myth, and regardless of whether or not it is a conscious effect, this set of stereotypes colors their political attitudes in very specific ways, as well be explained throughout this thesis.
Chapter II. Literature Review

Introduction

Racialization plays a significant role in the way public policy is accepted (or rejected) by Americans. The most salient example is Americans’ negative attitudes toward welfare, which can be traced back at least several decades (Kluegel and Smith 1968). In the case of welfare, stereotypes about black Americans led white Americans to hold negative attitudes toward welfare, despite the fact that a majority of welfare recipients were in fact, white (Gilens 1996). Another case of racialization can be seen in immigration policy, where white Americans’ attitudes toward a racial group shaped whites’ political attitudes toward how immigration policy ought to be shaped. Historically, legislation such as the Alien and Sedition Act, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the Immigration Act of 1924, Executive Order 13769 i.e. the Muslim ban, and more have been implemented to inhibit targeted groups from entering the United States. Most often, these legislations passed as a result of political conflict, arguably in conjunction with racial prejudices sensationalized through mass news and other media. One group that has been targeted over and over again is Latinxs and Hispanics, who have been stereotyped as lazy, “illegal aliens” that create a burden on the United States (US) economic system by taking advantage of social systems without reciprocation.

However, Asian Americans have largely disappeared from mass media since the era of “yellow peril,” when Asian immigrants were seen as a threat to the US. The lack of attention on Asian Americans is surprising for three reasons. (All data for the following contentions come from López et al. 2017.) First, Asians make up a significant population of the US, particularly in large, densely populated cities such as Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco (Zong and Batalova 2016). Second, Asians make up the fastest growing immigrant group. Between 2000 and 2015, there has been a 72% increase in Asian American
population, compared to 60% growth of Hispanic populations. This rush of Asian immigration is so recent that 59% of Asians in America are 1st generation immigrants, meaning they were born outside of the U.S. Third, Asians make up approximately 11% of undocumented immigrants in the US yet, debate surrounding unauthorized immigration always seems to revolve around Hispanics and Latinxs. Asians are not salient in these discussions, yet they are DACA recipients and are just as likely to be deported as their Hispanic/Latinx peers (Sullivan 2017).

Furthermore, Asian Americans are strongly associated with a very specific stereotype that has been labelled the “model-minority” myth (also to as MMM). In short, this myth creates a narrative of Asian Americans as high-achieving, high-skilled, successful in school, and generally a group that peacefully follows the law and represents idyllic fulfilment of the American Dream. While these qualities sound positive at face value, they are primarily harmful for Asian Americans, neglecting ethnic variation and oppression of other racial minorities such as blacks and Latinxs, as well as potentially having racializing effects on public policy. The MMM is quite salient in Americans’ perceptions of Asians, yet it does not receive the same political attention that other racial stereotypes receive. The political implications of the MMM helps lead to my research question:

What effects does the “model minority” myth have on the racialization of public policy in the United States and how does this inform white Americans’ attitudes toward immigration, welfare, and education?

In order to evaluate this topic, I first begin with a review of existing literature, including an in-depth exploration of the MMM, analyzing negative consequences of the model-minority myth on the Asian American community including the way Asian Americans have been used as a scapegoat community for affirmative action debate. I aim to deepen and
complicate the surface understanding of the model-minority myth more often portrayed in media and shows the significance for understanding these complexities. Then, I review studies from two previously racialized areas of public policy: immigration and welfare. Each section includes two main parts: first, a brief history of how welfare and immigration have been racialized in the past and second, how the model-minority myth fits in and is relevant in the way Americans perceive the current Asian American community and accordingly form their political attitudes.

**The Model-Minority Myth**

In the United States (and perhaps in other countries as well) Asians are given a title, a role, a name as the “model minority.” At face value, a “model minority” refers to a group of people that a majority exemplifies as high-achieving, with a high socioeconomic status. Currently, Asians in the United States hold the societal burden for manifesting this role and the set of expectations that come with it. Asians are seen as high-achieving, highly skilled, successful, law-abiding, and a group that is low in crime. Asians are overachievers, intelligent, gifted in math and sciences, polite, family oriented, and successfully entrepreneurial (Wu 2002). Asian children often grow up hearing that they are the “good Asian kid” and it is not uncommon for their high marks in grade school to be brush off as “expected” or “obvious,” since they are Asian.

Aside from the fact that Asian Americans face harsh racial discrimination and outright racial aggression (and have faced for over a century in history), the model-minority myth is harmful for Asian American life in the United States. Perhaps it is misleading to argue that a set of positive stereotypes for a “model minority” creates harm. However, the reasons are plenty.

First, the MMM makes Asian Americans invisible. They are underrepresented in not only pop culture and media, but also in places such as history and politics. Rosalind Chou
tells of how her students were shocked to learn about Asian American oppression and demanded to know why history books do not include such stories (Chou 2015). Historical events such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the 1917 Immigration Act, the Asian Exclusion Act of 1924, Japanese internment camps, exclusion of Asians from becoming naturalized citizens, and monthly state tax on Chinese men serve as timeline events for Asian American oppression and discrimination. Yet, the MMM that persists now ignores the violent history to which Asian Americans have been subjected.

Asian Americans have above average rates of mental health issues (Abe-Kim et al. 2007, Hijioka and Wong 2012). The highest number of suicides in females from age 18-24 comes from Asian Americans. The shooter at the unfortunate Virginia Tech mass shooting was a Korean student suffering from and showing symptoms of mental health issues. Of the Japanese men interned during World War II, 40% of them died before the age of 55 from alcoholism. At Cornell University, over 15% of students are Asian, yet they make up half of completed suicides. (Chou 2015). However, these tragic histories and are neither published nor politicized. The MMM tells Americans that Asian Americans are not a demographic that need additional care or attention; Asians are independent and do not combat serious societal problems because the MMM says that Asians are highly productive and successful.

Second, the MMM paints Asians as a monolith, disregarding differences between various ethnic groups. The Pew Research Center reports that in 2015, the median income for Indian households was $100K, $70K for Chinese households, $50K for Bangladeshi, and a little over $35K for Burmese (López et al. 2017). This trend in ethnic differences is consistent in homeownership rates as well. Pew also reports that Chinese have one of the higher homeownership rates at 62% compared to Bangladeshi households at 43%, one of the lower rates. Nationally, Asians, Native Americans, and Pacific Islanders altogether have a homeownership rate of 54.2% compared to whites at 72.7% for this calendar year (U.S.
Lastly, “Asian” also encompasses a wide range of welfare beneficiaries, again, correlating to ethnic identity.

Third, the MMM unjustly demands more from other minority groups such as blacks and Latinxs, propagating a façade that success from the American Dream is easy enough for anyone to achieve. Labelling Asian Americans as the “model minority” implicitly removes any structural explanations behind higher poverty or crime rates from non-Asian minorities compared to Asians. That Native Americans were subject to ethnic cleansing, Latinxs’ lands were imperialized and stripped away, and blacks were enslaved, dehumanized, and segregated does not seem to arise as possible contexts when comparing them to Asians as exemplar minorities. While Asian Americans also faced many political challenges and racial discrimination as previously mentioned, such a comparison is misdirected and ungrounded. White Americans began to associate Asian Americans with positive attributes only after the Second World War when Japan adopted Western democracy and during the civil rights movement in the 1960s in order to rationalize blacks’ economic failure (Shim 1998).

This leads to a natural transition to the contention that the MMM allows whites to use Asian Americans as political puppets and scapegoats. Since the positive adaptation of Asians in the US, Asian Americans have been used as the poster child for immigrant assimilation in the US. The media shows Asians as quiet, meek, and humble; they have strong family values as white families do (Chou 2015, Shim 1998, Wu 2002). In today’s day and age, this dynamic is most apparent within debates surrounding education policy – more specifically, with affirmative action policy. Conservative, white politicians and political pundits often stand against affirmative action policy by arguing that it harms Asian students because students from less represented racial groups will be accepted to college over them (Hirsch and Gonzalez 2017, Lewis 2010). In reality, repealing affirmative action policies would not benefit Asian students because Asians are not primarily affected by affirmative action. Asian
students are subject to “negative action,” which refers to the phenomenon in which Asian students are seen as a competitive, overachieving force and have a decreased chance at school acceptance (Kidder 2006). However, the invisible force of negative action is not mentioned during debates about affirmative action; rather, Asians are seen as direct victims of affirmative action, a discriminative policy.

Finally, the MMM attempts to hide the fact that Asian Americans experience socioeconomic hardships and racial discrimination (Wu 2002). Generalizing Asians as high-achieving and successful ignores discrimination and inequality in everyday places and political policies. Following the financial crisis of 2008, Asian Americans suffered from the highest level of increased poverty and longest term of unemployment. Asians saw a 38% increase in poverty compared to the national rate of 27% and 20% in the black community, as well as the highest rate of long-term unemployment – defined as being unemployed for over half a year (Chou 2015). Yet, Asians are not targeted as a welfare receiving group – the MMM assumes that Asians do not need external help and are in control of their socioeconomic situations. Furthermore, 57% of Asians in the workforce hold a bachelor’s degree, yet they also have lower income levels than whites on average (Chou 2015, Wu 2002). Part of the reason is that Asians face a “glass ceiling” in workplaces, where they are perceived as “best as technical workers and not as executives” (Chou 2015). Asians in the workplace are not given a chance to continue climbing the socioeconomic ladder. Racial diversity and representation is sorely lacking when it comes to managerial positions. Compared to their white peers who are able to climb to the executive top, Asians get less return on investment in education (Wu 2002).

However, my objective is not to create a critique of racial discrimination in the U.S., but to analyze the existence and persistence of the MMM, which goes unrecognized in the national arena. The MMM has clear effects on the formation of whites’ attitudes toward
minorities’ obligations and achievements in the United States. Such a strongly salient and pervasive stereotype is likely to have racializing effects on public policy as well. In fact, public policy surrounding affirmative action shows support for the idea that the MMM has racializing effects on policy. The lens with which affirmative action policy is often debated is through hypothesized impacts on Asian students, which is primarily influenced by the MMM. The mere concept of affirmative action is so closely tied to Asian Americans that a Google search including search terms “Asian” and “policy” will give rise to thousands of hits about affirmative action policy.

In order to evaluate racialization of policy, I include two public policy areas that can be used as case studies as both existing examples of racialized policy and as potential policy spheres to test for racialization of policy specific to the MMM. Because white Americans’ attitudes toward public policy may differ based on the racial group receiving treatment from the policy, I first include extensive research into these case studies, to observe how racialization exists outside of the context of Asian Americans.

**Case Study A: Welfare**

A prime example of racialized policies is the racialization of welfare. There have been stigmas against welfare policies for decades of US history (Gilens 2000). Perhaps not surprisingly, many of Americans’ negative attitudes toward welfare line up with their attitudes toward economic inequality as well. I begin with the history of Americans’ perceptions on inequality because it is informative about their perceptions of general economic success in the U.S. versus economic “failure” and welfare utilization. Ultimately, I will tie the narrative of welfare together with the model-minority myth and describe how the MMM might affect attitudes toward welfare as well as why this interaction is significant.

Americans’ negative attitudes toward welfare policy have been studied through three schools of thought serve as possible explanations for Americans’ perceptions of inequality: a)
a stable “dominant ideology” b) individual socioeconomic status and c) “social liberalism” attitudes (Kluegel and Smith 1968). “Dominant ideology” refers to the idea that in the US, opportunities are plentiful and individuals are consequently responsible for their economic fate so that where an individual ends up is directly dependent on their abilities. This ideology can be seen in the way that Americans have a more favorable view toward redistributive policies such as government-guaranteed jobs but not toward welfare. Americans also favor job-training programs for black people, but not preferential treatment for blacks through affirmative action (Kluegel and Smith 1968). Kluegel and Smith conclude that the “dominant ideology” explanation primary influences Americans’ attitudes toward inequality, as Americans seem to place most emphasis on merit over anything else, which welfare undermines.

Individual socioeconomic status (sometimes also referred to as the economic self-interest theory) predicts that individuals look out for what benefits them most such that Americans on a high socioeconomic level want their tax money to go toward causes that benefit them. Thus, they will have negative attitudes toward the poor and welfare policies that support them. Conversely, the poor look out for themselves and consequently have positive attitudes toward welfare policies because they might depend on welfare or they remember and empathize with the challenges of being on welfare. Although I imagine the poor also have an incentive to have negative attitudes toward other poor people because the others are seen as competition for resources. Since government spending is budgeted and allotted very carefully, welfare programs each have specific qualifications or requirements that must be met for an individual to be considered for aid. One criterion contributing to these different possibilities may be perception of economic inequalities and whether they are a result of systemic issues or lack of individual work ethic. If a poorer individual perceives their situation as a result of systemic troubles, they may have positive attitudes toward others
on welfare. In contrast, if they place their situation as a result of laziness, their self-interest might shape negative attitudes toward others on welfare.

Finally, “social liberalism” refers to leftist social ideology that favors redistribution of wealth in order to bring the extremes ends of the socioeconomic ladder closer together. Kleugel and Smith’s final prediction is that Americans’ political ideology determines support versus opposition toward the poor. Americans who identify as left-wing liberal are expected to have more sympathetic attitudes toward the poor, as opposed to those that identify as right-wing conservative who are expected to have more negative attitudes toward the poor.

Williamson (1974) evaluates explanations about inequality and welfare by conducting a study with 300 white women about their attitudes toward the poor and welfare programs. He finds that the socioeconomic status theory is a very weak predictor for determining attitudes toward the poor; this result is not consistent with recent publications during that time. The work ethic explanation is stronger – those with a high work ethic ideology have negative attitudes toward the poor as lazy and unmotivated. Williamson compares the work ethic ideology to the political right-wing because of shared ideas such as competition, individualism, and economic success. He finds that those who identify as left-wing liberal have significantly more positive attitudes toward the poor and their motivation to work.

When looking at Americans’ attitudes toward aid for welfare, the socioeconomic status explanation is again, weak. Again, the ideology explanation is the strongest in that those with high work ethic less support toward welfare as aid for poor people. Williamson also finds that education levels and religion may also have effects on individuals’ attitudes toward the poor and support for welfare aid.

However, Martin Gilens brings a new perspective to the discussion: the effects of race and racial stereotypes. Gilens conducts a telephone survey testing for white Americans’ attitudes toward welfare, race, economic self-interest, and work ethic ideology. The
categories cover questions about opinions on welfare, blacks as lazy, the poor as lazy, welfare mothers, government’s role versus individualism, their own partisan identification, and left versus right wing ideology self-placement. Demographics of respondents include race, age, and family income. By including tests for income and perceptions of the poor, Gilens tests for both economic self-interest and work ethic ideology. However, he finds that these schools of thought do not stand up against the effects of racialization on whites’ attitudes toward welfare.

The strongest predictor of whites’ welfare attitudes is racial attitudes toward blacks. Those who see blacks as lazy also have the most negative attitudes toward welfare. The next strongest predictor of welfare attitudes is work ethic ideology. Whites who saw poor people as lazy scored negative attitudes toward welfare, but not as strongly as with the racial effects. Individualism – the idea that government intervenes too much with what the market ought to do – showed low effects on whites’ attitudes for welfare, which corresponds with the weak partisan effect Gilens finds as well. Finally, the correlation between income levels (testing for economic self-interest) and negative attitudes toward welfare is the weakest. Economic self-interest has more to predict about individuals’ attitudes toward spending in welfare rather than their attitudes toward welfare recipients themselves.

Both Williamson and Gilens find that the ideological explanation regarding work ethic is a stronger predictor of welfare attitudes than is the economic self-interest explanation. White Americans in middle or upper classes do not see the poor as necessarily undeserving of welfare benefits. Rather, they see more importance in the individuals’ desire to be deserving of welfare, namely, their work ethic. This reason may be why racialization of welfare policy has been so powerful and significant in the formation of whites’ political attitudes, precisely because blacks have been stereotyped as a lazy, unproductive group of individuals.
The arguably most significant result Gilens finds is that these negative stereotypes of blacks persist even though blacks do not make up a majority of welfare beneficiaries. While 63% of welfare recipients were nonblack at the time, whites’ perceptions of welfare did not come from ideas about nonblacks; ideas about blacks as lazy or undeserving were the largest factors in analyzing welfare.

The idea of deservingness prevails throughout these studies. What is implicit beneath the respondents’ negative attitudes toward the poor, laziness, or blacks is the thought that some are less deserving than others. For example, white mothers are perceived as more deserving of welfare than black mothers (Gilens 1996). The theory on deservingness plays a more overarching role as it contains ideas also found in the other explanations for political attitudes. Jeene (et al. 2013) and van Oorschot (2000) use five different factors as criteria in order to determine individuals’ attitudes toward welfare recipients:

- Need: the more an individual is in need of welfare, the more deserving of welfare
- Control: the poor’s control over or responsibility for their neediness; the less control, the more deserving
- Identity: the closer to “us,” the more deserving
- Attitude: attitude toward receiving aid; the more compliant (or grateful or docile), the more deserving
- Reciprocity: the more the poor can do in return for aid or the more they can do, the more deserving.

Jeene et al. (2013) use need, control, and reciprocity to evaluate the deservingness of disability pensioners in the Netherlands, using a national survey from 2006. First, they find that individuals that are vulnerable to needing welfare (e.g. elderly, unemployed, less educated, poor, women) emphasize the deservingness criteria more than those who have
previously received welfare. Thus, it seems previous welfare recipients feel more empathy for current welfare recipients as opposed to the former group, a manifestation of resource competition. Right-wing political ideology and a strong work ethic ideology emphasize the deservingness criteria more.

Though found in a different national and sociopolitical context, this study brings a new perspective that previous welfare recipients will feel empathetic toward current recipients. However, Jeene et al. do not evaluate identity and attitude, which coordinates with racial attitudes the most. Since the model-minority myth describes a set of stereotypes significantly different than stereotypes regarding black Americans, the deservingness factors can contribute to understanding where racialized difference in welfare attitudes might come from. Perhaps Americans emphasize certain deservingness factors over others when forming their political opinions. If so, it makes sense political attitudes would differ based on perceptions of racial stereotypes.

**Case Study B: Immigration**

Another example of racialization of public policy can be found in Americans’ attitudes toward immigration policy. I will not be delving into specific policy steps around immigration, but looking at past and current white attitudes toward immigration as a public policy sphere.

There exists a range of factors that might affect whites’ attitudes toward immigration policy: age, gender, religion, ideology, partisanship, race/ethnicity, education, job skill, etc.

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1 I specify “white” attitudes as opposed to broad terms such as “general” or “public” American attitudes because the “public” American population may consist of individual with various racial and ethnic backgrounds. As whites have been and remain the majority demographic, they are the racial group most interconnected with any formation and perpetuation of racial stereotypes. On a pragmatic level, including other racial groups outside of whites would create additional variables – many researchers have published studies about significant impacts of racial contexts when it comes to measuring political attitudes – that go beyond the scope of this project. In any case, studies that ask questions about “public” or “general” attitudes have shown to almost always be surveying or testing for whites’ attitudes, making “general” or “public” synonymous to “white.”
Some factors such as age, gender, and religion do not seem to have significant impacts toward immigration attitudes. While age may have slight effects on immigration where older individuals tend to have more negative attitudes toward immigration, these factors are overshadowed by effects of factors such as ideology, partisanship, race/ethnicity, and education (Wilkes et al. 2008, Ha 2010, Ilias et al. 2008).

The most consistent factor that contributes to whites’ attitudes toward immigration is education and partisanship. Higher education levels associate with more positive attitudes toward immigration because a higher level of education fosters a more global perspective and critical thinking that allows individuals to think beyond restricted contexts that surround them (Ha 2010, Ilias et al. 2008). When filtered for this demographic factor, whites with college level degrees did in fact have lower negative attitudes toward restricting immigration (Ha 2010, Ilias et al. 2008, Wilkes et al. 2008). Furthermore, partisanship also seems to be a strong indicator of whites’ attitudes toward immigration. Self-identification as a Republican reveals more negative attitudes toward immigrants and immigration itself (Ha 2010, Ilias et al. 2008, Wilkes et al. 2008).

Less apparent yet still arguable is the effect of ideology on whites’ attitudes toward immigration. While ideology and partisanship are distantly related, partisanship seems to outweigh in significance when compared with ideology. However, Peter Hays Gries argues that Americans hold coherent ideologies that affect international attitudes. He tests specifically for Americans’ attitudes toward Mexico, Brazil, and Haiti as the study analyzes Americans’ attitudes toward immigration and international aid. Focusing on immigration attitudes, American conservatives are shown to have cooler attitudes toward Latin American countries than liberals do in a survey from 2011, as much as 30° cooler toward Mexico (Gries 2016). Conservatives espouse stricter border control and regulations, which seems consistent with partisanship-motivated attitudes, where Republicans hold the same perceptions (Gries
However, Gries differs by specifying the scope of ideology to four specific areas: cultural, socioracial, political, and economic.

There may be some merit to acknowledge ideology as a minor contributing factor because cultural conservatism clearly has an impact on whites’ attitudes toward immigration. They fear that immigrants from Mexico will have a negative impact on Christian values and WASP national identity (Gries 2016). This identity differs from a solely religious marker because the WASP (white, Anglo-Saxon protestant) identity resembles a social marker for descendants of the white settlers and colonists and the corresponding society.

Emotions also seem to play a role to an extent, as one explanation for warmer or cooler attitudes comes from empathy and normative judgments. Gries ultimately concludes that liberals are found to have warmer attitudes toward Mexico because they empathize with vulnerable immigrants and thus see their positions as unfair. However, conservatives place the normative judgment on their own group, saying that immigration is unfair from the perspective of vulnerable WASP Americans.

Another commonly found hypothesis is that the “cost” of immigrants helps inform Americans’ attitudes toward immigration. The more that Americans perceive immigrants to be an additional “cost” on the economic system, the more negative attitudes they hold toward immigration. This hypothesis makes most sense in relation to discourse regarding unauthorized, or undocumented, immigration. Surveys from 2004 and 2006 find that a majority of white respondents see “illegal” immigration as hurting the US economy. A third of respondents believed that “illegal” immigrants use more in public services than they pay taxes for, and another third thought that “illegal” immigrants took jobs away from the job market (Ilias et al. 2008).

In other words, economic self-interest has effects on Americans’ attitudes toward immigration. The perception of immigrants as a driver of labor market competition and fiscal
burden comes from Americans’ desires to make decisions that satisfy their economic situations (Gerber et al. 2017). Thus, economic self-interest theory serves as an important tool in setting a framework to evaluate whites’ attitudes toward immigration policy.

While negative effects of undocumented immigration is quite significant and salient in public discourse, positive effects are rarely seen. For example, poor economic conditions lead to increased negative attitudes toward immigration, but good economic conditions do not show positive attitudes in increasing immigration (Wilkes et al. 2008). It is important to note that a directional change in attitude does not draw a conclusion about attitudinal change in the opposite direction.

The one exception to this conclusion comes from Hainmueller and Hiscox, who study the effects of immigrants’ skill levels on Americans’ perceptions of immigration (2010). While the economic self-interest theory explains some extents of Americans’ political attitudes, Hainmueller and Hiscox argue that these previous studies omit any attention to the difference between low and high skilled immigrants, which they hypothesize will play a significant role in determining Americans’ attitudes toward immigration. They find that both high-skilled and low-skilled Americans favor high-skilled immigrants over low-skilled immigrants. While both high-skilled and low-skilled Americans exhibit generally negative attitudes toward low-skilled immigrants, support for both low- and high-skilled immigrants increases as the respondents’ skill level increases.

The latter conclusion is reminiscent of the way increased levels in respondents’ education correlates with increased positive attitudes toward immigrants. Both Hainmueller and Hiscox (2010) and López et al. (2015) cite skill-level of immigrants as a large determinant of Americans’ attitudes toward immigration. In this context, “skill” refers to an individual’s ability to do work and/or contribute a specific type of labor. That Americans, to a large extent, form their attitudes toward immigrants based on skill-level signals that one of
Americans’ paramount criterion for judging deservingness of an immigrant is their ability to reciprocate, or give back to the economy by joining the labor market, paying taxes, and offering new skills. However, a positive attitude toward immigrants should not be assumed to also mean a positive attitude toward increasing immigration levels. As such, the earlier caveat about directional change in attitude still stands.

In contrast, social and political participation does not seem to be as important in determining the favorability of an immigrant. While López et al. (2015) does report that Americans wish more immigrants would learn English, they do not voice opinions about if immigrants ought to observe American holidays or vote more (or less) often. Whether or not the Pew survey did not report it because they did not ask questions regarding social and political behaviors or because results were not significant is unknown. However, it does seem to follow media trends that economic contribution of immigrants is a significant factor in Americans’ eyes.

One topic of immigration that has yet to come up is illegal or undocumented immigration. In addition to economic productivity, legal status is a widely debated area of immigration policy. Most Republicans fear that birthright citizenship in the US provides implicit approval of unauthorized immigration (López et al. 2015). Overall, Americans wish to see better border control and changes in immigration policy. President Trump’s loud initiative to build a wall between the US and Mexico explicitly shows Americans’ concern that undocumented immigration largely comes from Latin America. What Americans often overlook is that approximately 11-13% of undocumented immigrants are in fact Asian (López et al. 2017). This number is statistically significant yet does not seem to affect Americans’ negative attitudes toward immigration and the association of “illegal” to “immigration.”

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2 The terms “illegal,” “undocumented,” and “unauthorized” are used interchangeably throughout.
Whites’ attitudes seem fairly consistent with expectations about partisanship and other demographics, but what happens when we introduce a multiracial context to immigration attitudes? Attitudes toward immigration seem to shift when multiple racial immigrant groups are introduced, namely Asian and Hispanic. Whites living close in proximity to Asians hold positive attitudes toward immigration while whites living close to Hispanics have negative attitudes toward immigration (Ha 2010). The race of the immigrant population changes whites’ attitudes toward immigration. In other words, racialization of immigration policy exists.

Ha evaluates the results through two schools of thought: the threat theory and the contact theory. Threat theory refers to the idea that racial heterogeneity increases racial tensions and the larger the minority group becomes, the more they are viewed as competition for economic resources. On the other hand, contact theory states that heterogeneity creates more harmonious relations between racial groups through increased interaction and cooperation. While Ha theorizes that racial stereotypes may play a role in signaling a switch between whites’ immigration attitudes based on immigrant race, there is no clear conclusion because the white respondents in this study are not surveyed for their perceptions of minority races and stereotypes.

I emphasize the role of stereotypes when observing possible effects of racialization on Americans’ political attitudes because the formation and establishment of stereotypes represents a sociological phenomenon that goes beyond just cultural differences. In other words, the fact that immigrants to the US are culturally distinct may not necessarily have negative effects on Americans’ attitudes toward immigration (Hopkins 2014). In his study, Hopkins explains that ethnocentric theories do not sufficiently explain Americans’ attitudes toward immigration. If true, then racial stereotypes must offer an additional dimension beyond cultural differences that effect changes in Americans’ attitudes toward immigration.
For example, stereotypes of Latinx and Hispanic immigrants as being a fiscal “burden” makes more of an economic and political implication than a cultural one. Therefore, cultural or ethnocentric differences must not be equated to racial differences that ultimately lead to polemical stereotyping of entire groups of immigrants.

Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that Ha’s study evaluated the geographical context as well, and these racialized effects were only prominent in census tract, smaller neighborhoods compared to large, metropolitan cities. Therefore, racialization effects decrease in metropolitan areas where competition for jobs, economic resources, and political power may overshadow social interactions that contact theory espouses (Ha 2010). The most significant takeaway is that whites’ attitudes toward a single policy area – immigration – can differ based on the race of immigrant groups. This idea paves the way for the opportunity to study exactly how non-Latinx immigrant groups such as Asians influence Americans’ immigration attitudes. Because Latinx immigrants are stereotyped in different manners than Asian immigrants, the direction of racialization in forming immigration attitudes may change accordingly.

**Concluding Thoughts**

Different public policies in the United States gain salience for various reasons such as voters’ socioeconomic status, a dominating ideology, or racialization due to stereotypical associations with a particular demographic. Some policies become so connected with a specific racial and socioeconomic group that it begins to affect others’ perceptions of the policies themselves. In other words, stereotypes or tropes surrounding a race are ascribed onto policy.

Because the model-minority myth is so specific to the Asian American community, it seems plausible that specific traits of the MMM may drive different parts of the racialization
process when it comes to public policy. Therefore, Americans’ attitudes toward public policy will vary depending on the race of the target individual or group of a policy.

I hypothesize that white Americans will have positive attitudes toward immigration based on the MMM’s narrative that Asians are hard-working, high-skilled, and high-achieving. When it comes to welfare however, it is unclear in which direction white Americans’ attitudes line up. I hypothesize that based on the deservingness factors of attitude, reciprocity, and identity, whites will have positive attitudes toward welfare policy in relation to Asian Americans because the MMM portrays Asians as being high-skilled, law-abiding, and family oriented individuals, which lines up with ideas of reciprocity and conservatism prevalent in the US. In contrast, I also hypothesize based on the factors of need and control that whites will have negative attitudes toward welfare policy when Asian Americans are involved because the MMM does not portray Asians as a group in need of social services. Asians are stereotyped as being in control of their socioeconomic status, which may lead to negative perceptions of welfare, if Asian beneficiaries are not deserving.
Chapter III: Hypotheses and Implications

The hypotheses for my question vary based on the policy sector: welfare or immigration. Because of this differentiation, each policy area acts as a case study from which I can compare results. My hypotheses can only vary from one policy area to the other due to the characteristics of the model-minority myth: that Asians are self-reliant, highly-skilled, high-achieving, intellectual, and keep-their-head-down-responsible-citizens. The perception that Asians are the “model” for minority populations has implications about how “deserving” the population is. I use the term “deserving” in the same way as seen in Jeene et al. (2013) where respondents are asked about how much a group of pensioners deserve to have certain welfare benefits. Gilens’ research that white Americans perceive blacks as “lazy” welfare recipients can also be stated that white Americans perceive blacks as a group that is not very deserving of welfare benefits. Part of my hypothesis is that the characteristics of the model-minority myth will increase or decrease the deservingness of Asians to receive welfare or immigration status. The change in deservingness perception will then be reflected in white Americans’ attitude toward the policies themselves. Additionally, respondents will have negative attitudes toward Asian Americans in light of education because Asian students are often perceived as high-achieving, thus becoming academic competition. These attitudes are measured through data collected from an original survey experiment.

Case Study A: Welfare

Welfare as a public policy realm poses many questions regarding Americans’ perceptions and attitudes toward it. Gilens (1996) and Gilens (2000) show years of studies assessing Americans’ attitudes toward welfare and how they form. Gilens concludes from his nationwide survey experiments that Americans have negative attitudes toward welfare because they have racialized perceptions of welfare. These racialized perceptions stem from public associations and media coverage of welfare to black Americans who are stereotyped as
lazy and unskilled. These negative stereotypes rubbed off onto the idea of “welfare,” that lazy Americans are taking advantage of welfare services.

Attitudes toward welfare and welfare deservingness has not been largely studied on such a scale with other minority groups since then – especially not with Asian Americans. Using National Election Studies from 1992, 1996, and 2000, Fox (2004) demonstrates that approximately 1 in 10 Americans want to increase the amount of welfare even though they increasingly see Latinx immigrants as hardworking. On the other hand, at least 5% of Americans consistently view blacks more as lazy than hardworking in each of the survey years. These results are significant because they suggest that Americans’ attitudes toward welfare may not necessarily be driven neither by the deservingness of welfare recipients nor by racialized perceptions. However, Fox (2004) reports that this 5% figure is not significant when controlling for white Americans’ perceptions of blacks’ work ethic (e.g. lazy or hardworking). Thus, the study concludes that there is no compelling evidence for the racialization of white Americans’ attitudes when considering stereotypes about Latinxs.

So what really drives white Americans’ attitudes toward welfare? Over 10% of Asian Americans receive some form of welfare but a majority of welfare recipients are white or black (López et al. 2017; Shapiro et al. 2017). The Asian American Federation of New York City, New York determined in a 13 year analysis that from 2002 to 2014, Asian Americans in NYC received 1.4% of the social services contracts offered in New York City (Sato et al. 2015). From these pieces of information, it is plausible to conclude that Asian Americans probably receive minimal welfare even though approximately 12.1% of Asian Americans lived under the poverty line in 2015 nationwide (López et al. 2017). This lack of participation in government-assistance programs – i.e. welfare – may either be a sign of a) the independence and self-reliance of Asian Americans or b) minimal sociopolitical assimilation into US society.
Based on the model-minority stereotypes and the deservingness criteria, I hypothesize respondents' attitudes toward Asian Americans on welfare will differ depending on which deservingness factor is emphasized. Respondents will have warmer perceptions of Asians receiving welfare when “identity,” “reciprocation,” and “attitude” are emphasized, but cooler perceptions when “need” and “control” are emphasized. This hypothesis presents a puzzle. On one hand, Americans will have negative attitudes about Asian Americans receiving welfare because the model-minority myth depicts Asian Americans as a group largely in control of their socioeconomic status (hence low poverty rates) and thus would have low need for government assistance programs. The more control an individual is seen to have, the less deserving they are seen of a service. Additionally, the less need an individual seems to demonstrate, the less deserving they are of a service.

On the other hand, white Americans will also have positive attitudes toward Asian Americans receiving welfare. Asian Americans can be seen as deserving of welfare because they have a positive attitude and would appreciate welfare benefits rather than taking advantage of them. Additionally, the model-minority myth would place Asians higher on the reciprocity scale so they are seen as a group that will contribute back to society. With respect to Asian Americans, I hypothesize that welfare is seen as a stepping stone to rise above poverty lines. Thus, white Americans would be more willing to view Asian Americans as deserving of welfare.

This puzzle can respond to two different questions, the first being which aspect of the model-minority myth influences Americans’ perceptions the most. Secondly, the data can also tell us which deservingness criteria Americans believe are more significant when evaluating welfare participation. If the race of the welfare participant really does create group-specific racialized perceptions of welfare, then white Americans’ attitudes will change based most likely on the “attitude,” “reciprocity,” and possibly the “identify” criteria. I
specifically point to these three criteria because they seem most relevant to how white Americans judged deservingness of blacks receiving welfare from Gilens (1996 and 2000). The most salient descriptions of blacks was as “lazy” and as having a poor work ethic, which ties into negative attitude and lack of reciprocity. However, the “identify” criterion may be harder to judge. If white Americans have a more positive attitude toward welfare when Asians are in context, that signals a racializing effect, that the model-minority myth colored respondents’ perceptions. I hypothesize the “attitude” and “reciprocity” criteria will have a stronger effect on white Americans’ perceptions rather than “control” or “need.”

By randomly-assigning the race of the target, I can control for how much the model-minority myth might contribute to specific racialized perceptions of welfare. Of the three randomized races, “white” and “black” act as the controls as white Americans’ attitudes toward these racial groups already exists. The data collected from these two groups can be compared to those of Gilens (1996 and 2000) and other studies. “Asian” acts as the experimental variable to measure racialization of welfare attitudes based on stereotypes surrounding Asians rather than blacks.

**Case Study B: Immigration**

With immigration, I hypothesize that traits of the model-minority myth will lead to respondents having a positive attitude toward Asian immigrants. The model-minority myth portrays Asians as highly-skilled and responsible citizens, which signals they would make a good group to contribute to American society and help with economic growth. Therefore respondents will have more positive attitudes toward Asian immigrants as opposed to non-Asian immigrants.

If the model-minority myth helps shape racialized perception toward immigration, I expect to see specific differences between each randomly assigned race. In the immigration block, the three randomized races are changed to European, Latinx, and Asian to better
reflect the relevant racial groups to immigration in the United States. The “European” variation acts a category that white respondents would relate to the most on the “identity” deservingness factor but also controls for any xenophobic sentiments from respondents. On the other hand, the “Latinx” variation is a group white respondents most likely will not closely identify with so it serves as a control for xenophobic sentiments toward a non-similar racial group. Additionally, unlike the correlation between European and Asian immigrants, I expect respondents’ attitudes toward Latinx immigrants will be less sympathetic than toward Asian immigrants. Differences between responses toward the “Latinx” and “Asian” variations point to the influence of the model-minority myth whereas similar perceptions toward the two groups could signify either general xenophobic sentiments or a lack of statistical significance.

If white Americans hold the most positive attitudes toward Asian and European immigrants as opposed to Latinx immigrants, that may signify that white Americans feel that they identify closer with Asians and Europeans. Such results might also verify the model-minority myth as a set of stereotypes that separates Asians from other minority groups in the US. Another reason to expect positive responses for the Asian immigrant is that Asians are stereotypically viewed as a well-behaved, docile group. These traits illustrate Asian immigrants as law-abiding and appreciative immigrants that would not upset the status quo and quietly assimilate into the society, being productive members of society i.e. giving back to the economy.

**Case Study C: Education (and Competition)**

One of the reasons why the model-minority myth can be detrimental to the Asian American community is because of the way it allows politicians to use Asian students as a scapegoat for affirmative action. Arguments opposing affirmative action policy are supported with claims that it will hurt Asian students, who are more frequently represented in academia
as opposed to other non-white students (Hirsch and Gonzalez 2017). If Asian students are truly seen as academic competition, respondents will both agree more with the model-minority myth and the claim that Asian students are held to a higher academic standard.
Chapter IV. Survey and Methodology

Introduction to the Survey Experiment

In order to test my hypotheses, I conduct an original online survey experiment. The survey asks questions about respondents’ perceptions toward various aspects of welfare and immigration, and toward various racial groups in America including blacks, Latinos, and Asians, essentially expanding upon Gilens’ conclusion that racialized perceptions of public policy matters.

Whereas Gilens’ research analyzed one non-white racial group – blacks – I look at blacks and Asians together in the welfare case study, then Asians and Latinos in the immigration study. The reason for expanding the non-white groups is twofold: first, acknowledge that the non-white population in the United States grows every year and second, evaluate the way stereotypes of newer non-white groups can also have racializing effects on white Americans and how their perceptions of public policy may vary based on the minority race in context. The goal of my survey experiment is to find differences in attitudes toward welfare or immigration based on the different races in question. To do so, I randomly assign the race of the group that each survey respondent analyzes. Average differences in respondents’ attitudes based on race on the race of the target mentioned in the question signals a racialization effect within white Americans’ perceptions of public policy.

Methodology

The questions were largely inspired by the 1991 National Race and Politics Survey conducted at the Survey Research Center at the University of California, Berkeley by Paul M. Sniderman, Philip E. Tetlock, and Thomas Piazza. This method seems most sensible as I aim to expand upon Gilens’ studies and conclusions. The parts of the survey most influenced by Sniderman et al. (1991) included respondents’ demographics, questions about welfare perception, and respondents’ attitudes toward various sociopolitical issues. Small aspects of
the survey were modified to adapt to recent times and larger modifications were made to expand the range of topics covered in the questions. The most significant changes I made to the 1991 National Race and Politics Survey include asking respondents about their perceptions toward Asians and Latinos and adding questions about respondents’ attitudes toward immigration. Since Gilens (1996) focused on welfare and perceptions of black Americans, original questions were written for the sections about immigration, education, and perception of the model-minority myth.

This survey collects responses only from white respondents and directs non-white respondents out of the survey. Because this survey asks for respondents’ perceptions and attitudes toward several non-white groups – Asian, black, and Latina/o – utilizing responses from non-white respondents might provide a different dataset than from utilizing responses from white respondents only. This way, the experiment keeps race as the largest variable in responses. Additionally, questions regarding respondents’ political ideology or partisanship are not included in the initial demographic module. Including party identifications at the start of the survey might prime respondents to have their political ideology in mind. Consequently, questions regarding party identification were strategically located at the conclusion of the survey.

Welfare and immigration serve as the two main case studies of public policy areas because they are both heavily racialized sectors. The questions related to welfare are randomized among three variables: blacks, whites, and Asians, which introduces “Asian” as my new, experimental variable compared to Gilens’ study. The others serve as control variables that can be compared to the 1991 survey results to either support or reject the idea that negative stereotypes of black Americans continue to shape negatively racialized attitudes about welfare.
In the next section, I provide vignettes about an immigrant residing in the US and asks respondents to respond how likely this individual is to assimilate to life here. The race of the described immigrant is randomized between three races: Asian, Latinx, and European. Because race is kept as the single experimental variable, we conclude respondents’ responses as general attitudes toward that racial group. If respondents think of the immigrant capable of assimilating well into life in the US, that signifies a positive attitude toward that immigrant group. If respondents do not think it likely that the individual described will assimilate well, that signals a negative attitude toward that group. The “Latinx” variation creates a contrast between respondents’ attitudes toward Asian immigrants. The “European” variation acts as a control variable and a measure for identity – in other words, the extent to which a white respondent identify with immigrants that might be closer in racial identity to them than Asians or Latinos. Both racial groups have stereotypes strongly associated to them such that if responses differ between those randomly assigned questions about Latinos versus Asians, the conclusion points toward racialization of policy attitudes based on specific racial stereotypes.

**Survey Structure and Variables**

The experimental aspect of the survey occurs in the middle four modules where I ask respondents about their attitudes toward welfare, immigration, and academic competition, which act as case studies for the sake of this project. In order to narrow in on attitudes specifically toward policy sectors with respect to Asians, I asked about respondents’ attitudes toward blacks, whites, and/or Latinos, in addition to attitudes toward Asians. This way, the other races – black, white, or Latinx – served as controls for the new, experimental group: Asians. To achieve this, I created three versions of each of the modules, where each one only varied by the race described in the questions. Each respondent was randomly assigned one of

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^3 A full text of the survey can be found in Appendix A p. __
the three. For the welfare module, the three possible racial groups were Asian, white, or black, which correlates with Sniderman et al. (1991). Within the immigration module, I use Asian, European, and Latinx as those groups are pertinent immigrant groups that may gauge various attitudes toward immigration. The Latinx group serves an important role in evaluating my hypothesis because I expect for white respondents to have opposing perceptions of Asians and Latinos based on widespread racial stereotypes. Moreover, the Latinx and black groups can actually be seen as experimental groups that test for differences in white Americans’ attitudes toward another minority group in addition to Asians. In any case, any differences between respondents’ attitudes between races demonstrate racialization effects on white Americans’ attitudes toward public policy.

Following demographics are questions that ask about the respondent’s attitudes toward various aspects of welfare and welfare recipients. An individual’s “attitude toward welfare” might encapsulate their perceptions of the poor and their work habits, government spending, deservingness of welfare recipients, financial cost of welfare, and governments’ role in the lives of citizens. All of these aspects combined might inform an individual’s opinion as to whether or not welfare policies are necessary or valuable, thus forming their attitudes toward welfare. Finally, a question with a brief vignette about a woman is given, with her race varied randomly in each survey, between black, white, or Asian. The survey possibilities of a “black or white woman” act as a negative control for racialized attitudes toward welfare based on stereotypes about black or African Americans. The responses from the surveys asking about a black or white woman should hypothetically remain congruent to results from Gilens’ study. The “Asian woman” represents the experimental variable where differences in respondents’ responses about an Asian woman signal a distinct and different racialization effect on respondents’ attitudes toward welfare, based on stereotypes about Asians – in other words, the model-minority myth.
Following welfare, the survey asks questions regarding perceptions about immigrants and incoming immigration to the United States. This section largely uses four-point agree/disagree scales to evaluate respondents’ attitudes toward various charged statements about immigrants. Again, several of the statements are randomized with either “Asian” or “Latina/o” immigrant to test for multiple experimental variables. Differences in opinion between those receiving statements about Asian immigrants versus Latina/o immigrants indicate a difference in racial perceptions. If race-specific stereotypes do not have distinguishable effects on white Americans’ attitudes toward immigration, no notable difference should occur between the random groups of respondents. The style and manner of questions are also adaptations from the earlier Gilens’ questions regarding welfare and the poor.

In the immigration module, respondents are also given a slider scale and asked what percentage of immigrants from their randomly assigned group is undocumented or illegal. They are asked about the same group – Asian, European, or Latinx – that they were asked about during the previous immigration questions. This slider measures respondents’ perceptions of an immigrant group. High percentages can imply that respondents have a heavy association of a particular immigrant group to unauthorized immigration. I hypothesize that respondents will have more negative attitudes toward an immigrant group the higher the percentage on the slider is. In contrast, a slider score with lower percentages should signal a more positive attitude toward that immigrant group. I hypothesize that legal immigrants will be perceived as more responsible or reliable. Additionally, the slider score may also reveal the extent to which respondents may have associated the previous immigration questions to undocumented immigration. This connection is significant because it illustrates a strong association that could be a racialized perception toward specific immigrant groups.
Finally, I ask respondents to evaluate stereotypes of the three racial groups – black, Asian, Latino – to receive identifying data about the respondent’s perceptions and attitudes toward these non-white races. In other words, this question confirms or denies that respondents’ perceptions of other racial groups are affected by racial stereotypes. Additional four-point agree/disagree scales test for respondents’ attitudes toward deservingness of an individual, which may mean an individual’s deservingness for welfare benefits or for the ability to immigrate to the United States. Each statement represents a factor of deservingness from Jeene, van Oorschot, and Uunk (2013): need, control, identity, attitude, and reciprocity.

Combined, this survey gathers data about white Americans’ general attitudes toward government – through demographic questions – as well as their perceptions of non-white, minority racial groups. Respondents then answer questions that reveal their attitudes toward these racial groups in the context of welfare and immigration as larger public policy areas. By randomizing the process by which respondents are asked about Asians, blacks, or Latinos, differences can suggest a change in white Americans’ attitudes toward welfare or immigration based on race. Such a racialization effect holds larger implications about the role of stereotypes and prejudice within the United States democratic system.

**Notes Regarding Question Wording**

Wording for the survey questions was chosen very carefully so each statement had the exact implications necessary for this study. This helped with gathering very precise, clear responses and left small room for misinterpretation of the questions. Especially since respondents were given vignette questions, accurate wording was necessary to portray the right scenario.

**Immigration**

In this module of the survey, respondents are given a vignette of a fictional family with the race of the family randomized:
Now think about a (European/Latinx/Asian) immigrant family, fairly new to the States, with three children newly entered into the public school system. They family immigrated to the US, in pursuit of the American Dream. The parents are unemployed and do not speak fluent English.

The vignette includes plots that reflect different generalizations of immigrants: the children “newly entered” in school signals recent entry into the country; including the “American Dream” creates an appeal to pathos; and lack of English proficiency informs respondents about the family’s cultural assimilation. Additionally, the parents are described as unemployed, – another disadvantageous factor – which tests for economic reciprocation. Differences in respondents’ perception between randomizations will show effects of racialization on political attitudes. How well a respondent thinks a disadvantaged immigrant family will assimilate into US society is then dependent upon the respondent’s perceptions of Asians, Latinxs, and European immigrants, where “European” is used as an immigrant group that white respondents might perceive as someone they can racially identify with more.

*Education (and Competition)*

In the Education module, I ask respondents to imagine that a) they have a child enrolled in a prestigious high school and b) desire for their child to attend a prestigious college. Given that a significant part of the student body is of one race, respondents are asked, “Do you see these students as competition for college acceptance?” Labelling the high school as “prestigious” signals an academically competitive campus, implying students there are more driven to continue to higher education institutions most likely with selective admissions. The predominant population of the school is randomized between black, white, and Asian students. Any differences in responses between the racial groups support the claim that racial stereotypes can lead to racialized perceptions.
Chapter V. Data Analysis

General and Political Demographics

In order to measure any effects of racialization on Americans’ political attitudes, I collected data from 1,224 respondents through a survey administered via Qualtrics. All participants were recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk, which collected responses anonymously nationwide. The average age of the respondents was 38 years old and 59.3% were college educated, which is younger and more educated than the average respondent from the 1991 National Race and Politics Survey. Respondents tended to lean toward liberal ideology and toward the Democratic party, which was expected for a sample from Mechanical Turk. Most respondents had a yearly income close to the national average for white households, which is 61,858 USD according to the U.S. Census Bureau report (2016). Of all respondents, 62.44% self-reported an annual income of $64,999 or lower and 75.37% self-reported their annual income as $79,999 or lower.

Model-Minority Myth Scale

I first generated factor scores designed to capture subscription to the model-minority myth. Subscription to the model-minority myth refers generally to the “acceptance of” or “adherence to” the model-minority myth which might include respondents being aware of Asian-specific stereotypes, being sympathetic toward Asian-Americans, acknowledging the existence of the model-minority myth, and perceiving Asian-Americans as model, non-white individuals whether intentionally or not. Respondents were given the following nine descriptions of Asians and asked to judge the accuracy on a scale 0 to 10 with 0 being “Not accurate at all” and 10 being “Completely accurate.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lazy</td>
<td>Doctors and engineers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardworking</td>
<td>Dangerous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly-skilled</td>
<td>Self-reliant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsible citizens</td>
<td>Low-income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial burden to society</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The items scale with a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of 0.9 which signals that all the factors scaled very well together. I then used factor analysis to generate factor scores for adherence to the model-minority myth. Then, the factor scores helped analyze survey responses with respect to respondents’ perceptions toward Asian Americans and the model-minority myth. The sample was evenly split into three groups of low, medium, and high subscription to the model-minority myth, which I refer to as Low, Medium, and High.

Additionally, I ran a regression analysis on these factors which showed that subscription to the model-minority myth varied by gender, age, adherence to current events, and political ideology. Females, the elderly, and conservatives had higher levels of sympathy, or subscription, to the model-minority myth. Respondents who claimed to follow politics and current events were less likely to subscribe to the model-minority myth. When controlled for political ideology, partisanship had no significance.

Responses about attitudes toward welfare, immigration, and academic competition are analyzed in relation to this generated scale. The average response from each group is compared to the others in order to observe any differences based on respondents’ perception of the model-minority myth. This method of analyzing attitudes over racial perceptions mirrors that of Gilens’ studies, which forms a parallel that can imply continuity of racialized political attitudes, if the data supports my hypotheses.

**Case Study A: Welfare**

To first measure general attitudes toward welfare, respondents were given the following four statements and asked to respond on a four-point agree/disagree scale with 1 being “Agree strongly,” 2 being “Agree somewhat,” 3 being “Disagree somewhat,” and 4 being “Disagree strongly.”

1) Most people on welfare could get by without it if they really tried.
2) The high cost of welfare puts too big a burden on the average taxpayer.

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4 A set of supplemental tables can be found in Appendix B p. ___
3) When people can’t support themselves, the government should help by giving them enough money to meet their basic needs.
4) Most people on welfare would rather be working than taking money from the government.

Responses to the four statements were scaled to each other using an alpha factor analysis. The statements scaled well together, with 0.84 as the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. Responses to the first statement contributed the most to the factor variables, indicating a possible emphasis on work ethic in the formation of welfare attitudes.

Respondents then received a vignette of a mother in her early thirties where only her race was randomized between white, black, and Asian, and randomly assigned to a respondent. The “white” variation acts as a control variable to measure respondents’ attitude toward welfare without any racializing effects. The “black” variation serves as a non-white variable to measure welfare attitudes with possible racializing effects, but unrelated to the model-minority myth; it also acts as a control to allow comparison to Gilens (1996, 2000). Lastly, the “Asian” variation is the main experimental variable testing for effects of the model-minority myth on welfare attitudes. The woman is described as a high school dropout with a ten-year-old child who has been on welfare for the past year. Two questions about the mother were then posed, repeated from the 1991 survey for continuity:

1) How likely do you think it is that she will have more children in order to get a bigger welfare check?
2) How likely do you think it is that she will really try hard to find a job in the next year?
   1 = Very likely, 2 = Somewhat likely, 3 = Somewhat unlikely, 4 = Very unlikely.

Starting with the white mother, we see that the more respondents subscribed to the model-minority myth, the more unlikely they thought the woman would have more children to get a larger welfare check.
The Low and Medium groups do not differ significantly from one another while groups Low and High do hold relative significance. This means that respondents who do not subscribe to the model-minority myth believe that white mothers are more likely to have more children for increased welfare benefits. Those in the High group find it somewhat unlikely that a white mother would have more children to exploit her benefits.

Moving onto the second question, Table 2 shows that the more respondents subscribed to the model-minority myth, the more they believed it was likely that the white mother will work hard to search for employment opportunities.

Again, the Low and Medium groups are not significantly different so it is not possible to draw a clear conclusion about perceptions of those that do not or minimally accept the model-minority myth and those that moderately accept. Groups Low and High are significantly different from one another, which demonstrates that while both groups believed the woman would work hard for a job search, the High group more strongly believes the white mother will be productive.

It is important to note that this vignette illustrates respondents’ racial perceptions based on work ethic and to an extent, skill level. Each question in response to the vignette holds underlying meaning, which the response values help illuminate. For example, the first
question signals to the respondent that the mother is lazy and might find ways to take advantage of government resources through immense measures. Then, the second question questions not only the work ethic of the mother but also the skillset she might have in order to avidly look for job opportunities. Thus, these questions serve as an important marker for respondents’ attitudes toward welfare, how it is distributed and who receives it.

Moving on to the black mother, Tables 3 and 4 show the mean values of responses from the group randomly assigned a black instead of white mother.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>[95% Conf. Interval]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2.5797</td>
<td>0.0768</td>
<td>2.4287  2.7308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>2.9098</td>
<td>0.0766</td>
<td>2.7593  3.0603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>2.8732</td>
<td>0.0853</td>
<td>2.7055  3.0409</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>[95% Conf. Interval]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2.4493</td>
<td>0.0756</td>
<td>2.3006  2.5979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>2.0746</td>
<td>0.0746</td>
<td>1.9279  2.2213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>2.1127</td>
<td>0.0825</td>
<td>1.9506  2.2748</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I intentionally include a black mother along with white and Asian for a couple reasons. First, doing so allows me to compare my results with those of Gilens and use Gilens’ studies as a control where “Asian” is the new, experimental factor. Second, the results from the “black mother” vignette can either support or reject the notion that welfare continues to be negatively racialized in current times. A quick glance at the above tables shows the range of the mean values is not as wide between the three groups compared to the data of the “white mother” vignette. The first question shows significant difference between Low and Medium, which indicates that respondents who do not subscribe to the model-minority myth perceive black mothers as slightly more likely to have children to increase welfare benefits. Looking at the second question, Low is significantly different from both Medium and High, but the latter
two are not significantly different. Similarly with the “white mother” vignette, respondents are more likely to see the black mother as hard-working if they subscribe to the model-minority myth to any extent, even moderately. However, the mean values for the black mother were overall higher than those for the white mother, which may gesture that respondents have a more positive attitude toward white mothers on welfare. They are more likely to perceive the white mother as hard-working and skilled.

Lastly is the “Asian mother” vignette in which I expect respondents’ attitudes to be strongly influenced by the model-minority myth.

| Table 5. Mean values for Asian mother (How likely do you think… she will have more children…?) |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Group    | Mean      | Std. Err. | [95% Conf. Interval] |
| Low      | 2.6806    | 0.0722   | 2.5387 - 2.8225    |
| Medium   | 3.0515    | 0.0593   | 2.9348 - 3.1681    |
| High     | 3.3308    | 0.0728   | 3.1877 - 3.4738    |

| Table 6. Mean values for Asian mother (How likely do you think… she will try really hard to find a job…?) |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Group    | Mean      | Std. Err. | [95% Conf. Interval] |
| Low      | 2.2153    | 0.0670   | 2.0837 - 2.3469    |
| Medium   | 2.1471    | 0.0702   | 2.0086 - 2.2855    |
| High     | 1.7923    | 0.0822   | 1.6307 - 1.9540    |

The differences between all three groups are statistically significant for the “Asian mother” vignette. This indicates a strong influence of the model-minority myth on respondents’ attitudes toward an Asian-American on welfare. The stronger respondents’ perception was of the model-minority myth, the more they sympathized with the Asian mother. The High group particularly believes that Asian mothers on welfare would not take advantage of the system, reflecting the stereotype that Asian-Americans are responsible citizens. Respondents seemed to have a generally sympathetic perceptions of the Asian mother as the mean value for the second question was relatively lower compared to the black or white mother. Additionally, High was strongly influenced by the model-minority myth; on average the group agreed the
Asian mother would work hard to find employment in the next year, confirming the
terception that Asian Americans are hardworking and highly-skilled. While Low and
Medium do not show significant different between each other, they are both significantly
different with relation to group High. Even respondents from the Low group responded on
average that they agree the Asian mother would be somewhat likely to begin searching for a
job.

These results indicate that the model-minority myth influenced respondents’
perception of Asian mothers in the predicted direction. Those in High, with higher
subscription to the model-minority myth, displayed significantly different attitudes than those
in the Low or Medium groups. Asian American mother are perceived by these respondents as
model individuals who are less likely to have children for the sake of welfare benefits and
more likely to work hard to search for jobs.

Finally, I tested for sympathy toward Asian Americans on welfare based on federal
spending levels. Respondents were posed the following:

Supposed you had a say in making up the federal budget. Would you
prefer to see more spent, less spent, or the same amount of money
spent on welfare as it has been?

where -1 coded for “less spent,” 0 for “keep the same,” and +1 coded for “more spent.” When
split into groups by subscription to the model-minority myth, the data did not show any
significant differences. The model-minority myth had no measurable influence on
respondents’ attitudes toward welfare spending. This aspect of welfare may be affected by
other factors unrelated to racializing influences as it does incorporate more political beliefs.

**Case Study B: Immigration**

This section of the survey included questions regarding respondents’ attitudes toward
a variety of topics: general statements about immigration in the United States; a vignette
regarding an immigrant family whose race was randomized; and the level of undocumented
immigrants in the United States. The objective of providing a variety of questions was to gather immigration attitudes on various levels. Responses to the generalized statements measure what respondents think about immigration as a whole, based on wide-ranging judgments of immigrants. The immigrant family vignette collections perceptions of immigration based on a more particular case where respondents are pushed to think about specific individual lives that might be affected by immigration policies, which appeals to a different rhetoric. Finally, I ask respondents for their estimate of undocumented or illegal immigrants in the United States to gauge the extent to which they associate or think of illegal immigration when asked generally about “immigration.”

Respondents were asked to give their honest opinion for a set of statements regarding immigration in the United States. Two statements were randomized based on race, just as with the vignettes:

1) (European/Latinx/Asian) immigrants are highly-skilled.
2) More (European/Latinx/Asian) immigrants would benefit the country.

The other statements were not randomized and universally applied to the sample:

3) Immigrants are productive members of society and pay their fair share of taxes.
4) Immigrants are less educated and pose a financial issue.
5) The US is losing jobs to immigrants.
6) People from outside the United States ought to have the opportunity to start a new life in the United States.

Responses were recorded on a four-point agree/disagree scale, 1 for “Agree strongly,” 2 for “Agree somewhat,” 3 for “Disagree somewhat,” and 4 for “Disagree strongly.”

First, an alpha factor analysis helped measure how well these six statements scaled together. The alpha coefficient was 0.86 which signals strong scaling between these factors. Without the randomized statements, the alpha coefficient came to 0.85 which suggests the specification of race in the two randomized statements do not largely affect the way these
immigration factors scale together. The strongest contributing factor was the first statement, referring to issues of work ethic and economic reciprocation.

Overall, respondents showed no significant different in attitude toward Europeans and Asians for both statements. Asians and European immigrants are seen as equally skilled. However, attitudes toward European and Asian immigrants each differed significantly from those toward Latinx immigrants. For both statements, respondents had significantly more negative attitudes toward Latinx immigrants, perceiving them as less skilled and less beneficial for the country compared to European and Asian immigrants.

When the data is analyzed across the model-minority factor scale, the High group showed significant differences from Low and just barely so with Medium when measuring attitudes toward European immigrants’ skill-level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7. Mean values for European immigrant (highly-skilled)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those who subscribe to the model-minority myth showed significantly more positive beliefs in European immigrants’ skill level than those from Medium or Low. There was no significant difference between Medium and High which suggests that perception of Europeans’ skill-levels are not significantly affected by a moderate or lack of sympathy toward the model-minority myth. Looking at perceptions of Latinx immigrants, there is no significant difference between respondents based on how much they subscribe to the model-minority myth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8. Mean values for Latinx immigrant (highly-skilled)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The “Asian” randomization however, shows significant differences between each group of respondents. The more respondents followed the model-minority myth, the more positively they thought of Asian immigrants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>[95% Conf. Interval]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2.0959</td>
<td>0.0553</td>
<td>19,873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>1.6944</td>
<td>0.0444</td>
<td>1.6072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.3440</td>
<td>0.0441</td>
<td>1.2572</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents’ attitudes toward immigrants changed significantly when answering for Europeans and Asians. Based on responses from High, Asian immigrants were viewed 10% more positively than European immigrants. This result also suggests that respondents value skill-level or ability more than identity when forming immigration attitudes. If identity were the defining deservingness characteristic for immigration attitudes, respondents would have shown clear sympathy for European immigrants. However, the data definitely shows respondents view Asian immigrants as the most highly-skilled immigrant group.

In response to the second statement, the datasets show the same patterns in each randomized group. Those receiving the “European” variation had significant differences in attitude between both Low and Medium, and High. Positive attitudes toward Europeans immigrating to the United States most likely correlate with positive attitudes toward skill-level and identity. It follows that High shows positive attitudes toward European immigrants in response to both statements. On the other hand, there is no significance difference in responses within the Latinx randomization. Again, this result still has critical implications as it can act as a control for xenophobic sentiments. It may also be indicative of separate racializing factors specific to stereotypes surrounding Latinxs, which is outside the scope of this study.
Table 10. Mean values for European immigrant (benefit country)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>[95% Conf. Interval]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2.2296</td>
<td>0.0639</td>
<td>2.1040-2.3553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>2.2878</td>
<td>0.0656</td>
<td>2.1589-2.4167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.9851</td>
<td>0.0711</td>
<td>1.8454-2.1248</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12. Mean values for Latinx immigrant (benefit country)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>[95% Conf. Interval]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2.4560</td>
<td>0.0799</td>
<td>2.2989-2.6131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>2.4222</td>
<td>0.0804</td>
<td>2.2642-2.5803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>2.2635</td>
<td>0.0870</td>
<td>2.0925-2.4346</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within the Asian randomization, there are again significant differences between all three groups Low, Medium, and High in response to the second statement. All three groups leaned toward sympathetic perceptions of Asian immigrants.

Table 13. Mean values for Asian immigrant (benefit country)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>[95% Conf. Interval]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2.4178</td>
<td>0.0636</td>
<td>2.2929-2.5427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>2.0347</td>
<td>0.0525</td>
<td>1.9315-2.1380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.5920</td>
<td>0.0591</td>
<td>1.4758-1.7082</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the whole, the mean values from the Asian randomization tend to have more positive values than the European or Latinx variations. The High group of the Asian randomization shows an extremely positive attitude toward Asian immigrants, which supports the expectation of effects of the model-minority myth. In fact, this group held a significantly more positive attitude than the High group of the European randomization, which reveals that respondents had a more positive attitude toward immigration when asked about Asian as opposed to European immigrants, both in context of the model-minority scale.

Moving onto individual-based questions, respondents were given a vignette about an immigrant family where, just as in the welfare case study, the race of the family was randomly assigned to a respondent between European, Latinx, and Asian. The family is described as having three children newly entered in the public school system and immigrated to the US in pursuit of the American Dream. The parents are stated as unemployed, without
fluent English speaking skills. Respondents were asked the following two questions in response to the scenario:

1) How likely do you think it is that the family will assimilate well into the United States?
2) How likely do you think it is that the parent(s) will contribute to society or economy?
   1 = Very unlikely, 2 = Somewhat unlikely, 3 = Somewhat likely, 4 = Very likely.

The first question measures general sentiments that respondents have toward that racial group as immigrants in the US. A significant range in responses might signal changes in attitude based on various deservingness factors such as identity and attitude as there is no targeted aspect of immigration the question wording refers to.

Without taking into account subscription to the model-minority myth, responses did not show significant differences in attitudes toward each racial group. However, evaluating responses in conjunction with the model-minority scale factor shows more significant data. As Table 14 shows, Low, Medium, and High do not show significant differences but the mean values generally show that respondents in this assignment leaned toward favorable attitudes toward European immigrants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>[95% Conf. Interval]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2.6000</td>
<td>0.0658</td>
<td>2.4706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>2.6187</td>
<td>0.0657</td>
<td>2.4896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>2.8209</td>
<td>0.0748</td>
<td>2.6739</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data from those assigned the Latinx vignette similarly does not show any significant differences between all three groups. However, that the numbers are insignificant also reveals that general xenophobic sentiments can be ruled out when determining white Americans’ attitudes toward immigration. In other words, respondents’ attitudes toward Latinx immigrants was not affected by their subscription to the model-minority myth and also did not diverge widely from the mean values of responses for the European vignette. In fact, the
range of values for the European immigrants was not significantly different from the range for Latinx immigrants.

**Table 15. Mean values for Latinx immigrant family (How likely… will assimilate well…?)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>[95% Conf. Interval]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2.4240</td>
<td>0.0693</td>
<td>2.2877 - 2.5603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>2.5556</td>
<td>0.0741</td>
<td>2.4099 - 2.7012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>2.6284</td>
<td>0.0726</td>
<td>2.4857 - 2.7710</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses from the Asian vignette display the most significant dataset for the first question. The mean values for Asian immigrants are generally higher than for the other groups, which shows relatively more sympathy toward Asian immigrants. Additionally, Low and High have significant differences. Respondents who highly subscribe to the model-minority myth, in the High group, have a very positive perception of Asian immigrants compared to Low whose mean is about 10% lower. Thus it is possible to conclude that the model-minority myth is a very influential factor in determining respondents’ general attitudes toward immigration. There is no other significant difference within the European or Latinx data so the model-minority myth is the main driving force behind the difference in attitude between Low and High. Traits of the model-minority myth such as “responsible citizenship” and “appreciative/docile” meet the “attitude” and “identity” deservingness criteria and most likely influence respondents’ positive attitudes toward Asian immigrants.

The second question deals more with perceptions of economic and societal productivity, which acts as a measure for control and reciprocity of the deservingness factors and for general skill level and achievement. Summarizing the data for the second question without factoring for the model-minority myth, it is evident that there is no significance between respondents’ perceptions of European versus Latinx immigrants. However, the response for “Asian” is nearly significantly different to the response for “European” meaning the confidence intervals just slightly overlap.
Table 16. Mean values for Asian immigrant family (How likely... will assimilate well...?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>[95% Conf. Interval]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2.5342</td>
<td>0.0576</td>
<td>2.4209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>2.6667</td>
<td>0.0583</td>
<td>2.5521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>2.9200</td>
<td>0.0758</td>
<td>2.7709</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The general mean value shows that attitudes toward Asians contributing toward United States society and economy is almost significantly more positive than attitudes toward European immigrants. This difference is significant because it quite literally illustrates Asians as the “model” minority.

Now putting the responses to the second question in relation to the model-minority scale, there is slight significance in the difference between Low and High in the “European” variation. High has a more positive attitude toward European immigrants and supports the hypothesis that the model-minority myth shapes more positive attitudes toward immigration. In the “Latinx” variation, Low has significant differences with both Medium and High, but Medium and High are not significant from each other. This data shows a negative trend: respondents’ attitudes become more negative the less they subscribe to the model-minority myth.

Table 17. Mean values for European immigrant family (How likely... parents will contribute...?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>[95% Conf. Interval]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2.7333</td>
<td>0.0699</td>
<td>2.5959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>2.8273</td>
<td>0.0707</td>
<td>2.6884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>3.0149</td>
<td>0.0814</td>
<td>2.8550</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18. Mean values for Latinx immigrant family (How likely... parents will contribute...?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>[95% Conf. Interval]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2.5520</td>
<td>0.0823</td>
<td>2.3903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>2.9037</td>
<td>0.0800</td>
<td>2.7465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>3.8986</td>
<td>0.0823</td>
<td>2.7368</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finally, the “Asian” variation shows significant differences between all three groups. There is an increase in sympathy toward Asians as respondents subscribe more to the model-minority myth. The model-minority myth has impressive impacts on respondents’ attitudes especially because “Asian” is the only racial variation to show significant differences between each group. The effects are presumably very impactful and influential for shaping attitudes toward immigration.

Table 19. Mean values for Asian immigrant family (How likely… parents will contribute…?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>[95% Conf. Interval]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2.6644</td>
<td>0.0675</td>
<td>2.5316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>3.0347</td>
<td>0.0627</td>
<td>2.9116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>3.3760</td>
<td>0.0715</td>
<td>3.2354</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the datasets, respondents think of Asians as they do Europeans, if not better. The Asian and European variations consistently receive more positive responses relatively and the Asian variations show significant differences depending on the level of sympathy for the model-minority myth. Through the model-minority myth, Asians are seen as in control of their socioeconomic status and as likely to give back to society by offering higher skills. The corresponding deservingness factors evidently play a significant role when white respondents decide who is deserving of immigration.

In measure immigration attitudes I also sought to see to what extent respondents correlated these attitudes toward immigration to issues of unauthorized immigration and to which population respondents held the strongest correlation for. Therefore this question was also randomized between European, Latinx, and Asian to see if the model-minority myth had an effect on how respondents viewed unauthorized immigrants. I did not expect respondents to estimate high numbers of undocumented Asian immigrants in part because of how Asian Americans are painted through the model-minority myth and in part due to the lack of inclusion of Asian Americans in immigration discourse in the mass media. The latter is
surprising given that a) Asians are projected to become the largest immigrant group in the United States within the next few decades and b) Asian Americans make up an estimated 11-13% of undocumented immigrants in the country (López et al. 2017).

Again, this question was randomized with the same three variations as the earlier questions. Respondents were asked: What percentage of immigrants from Europe/Latin America/Asia do you think are illegal or undocumented? Answers were recorded on a sliding scale from 0 to 100 percent. Overall, respondents did not have significantly different estimations for European and Asian immigrants. However, the average respondent estimated significantly higher for immigrants from Latin America by 12-14%. When responses are tabled by adherence to the model-minority myth, the data shows similar patterns as the previous immigration questions.

Table 20. Mean values for estimate of European undocumented/illegal immigrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>[95% Conf. Interval]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>28.0222</td>
<td>1.7120</td>
<td>24.6568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>31.3876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>21.4964</td>
<td>1.3157</td>
<td>18.9100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24.0828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>17.4627</td>
<td>1.2172</td>
<td>15.0700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19.8554</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most significant difference when randomized for European immigrants is between Low and High. Those who subscribe more to the model-minority myth thought the number of undocumented European immigrants as significantly lower than those who do not subscribe to the model-minority myth. In the Latinx randomization, there is no significant difference between any of the three groups though the margins between Low and High were very close to statistical significance. These data imply that the model-minority myth did not affect the way respondents perceived the level of undocumented Latinx immigration, which supports that differences between attitudes toward Latinx versus Asian immigrants shows racializing effects specific to the model-minority myth.
Table 21. Mean values for estimate of Latinx undocumented/illegal immigrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>[95% Conf. Interval]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>39.0560</td>
<td>1.9473</td>
<td>35.2279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>32.7704</td>
<td>1.7379</td>
<td>29.3539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>31.4932</td>
<td>1.9466</td>
<td>27.6666</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data from respondents randomly assigned to answer about Asians reveal significant results. Each group in this variation was significantly different and also showed the widest gap in estimation when comparing Low and High.

Table 22. Mean values for estimate of Asian undocumented/illegal immigrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>[95% Conf. Interval]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>29.9178</td>
<td>1.7096</td>
<td>26.5571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>19.1667</td>
<td>1.2806</td>
<td>16.6494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>12.5360</td>
<td>0.9927</td>
<td>10.5847</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average estimation of undocumented Asian immigrants decreased exponentially as subscription to the model-minority myth increased. On average, the Low group estimated more undocumented Asian immigrants than Group 3 did by 17%, the widest range amongst all three randomizations. Additionally, respondents estimated Asian immigrants with the lowest “undocumented” status, even more so than European respondents. Comparing group High from the Asian randomization to the European one, perception of undocumented immigrants was significantly lower for Asians.

Positive attitudes toward Asian immigrants is also supported by the sample as a whole. Respondents were universally asked whether or not Asian Americans communities seem to follow ideal immigrant assimilation into American society. Where there options were “Agree” or “Disagree,” the sample leaned heavily toward “Agree.” Once responses were measured based on the model-minority myth factor scale, the effects of the myth were salient. Each group had significantly different responses and High showed a near unanimous response for “Agree.”
Table 23. Mean values (Asian American communities follow ideal assimilation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>[95% Conf. Interval]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>1.2365</td>
<td>0.0211</td>
<td>1.1950 1.2779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>1.1101</td>
<td>0.1533</td>
<td>1.0800 1.1401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.0393</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td>1.0204 1.0582</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly with the welfare spending question from Case Study A, I asked respondents about attitudes toward current immigration levels. The survey sample was universally asked if the level of immigration into the United States should be increased (+1), kept the same (0), or decreased (-1). Again, the average responses did not differ significantly between model-minority factor scale groups, most likely because this question implicates many other factors regarding political and economic ideology outside of the scope of this study.

**Case Study C: Education (and Competition)**

One last case study includes questions regarding academic competition. Although this section is not as comprehensive as the others, the questions posed in this section might contribute additional insight to the racializing effects of the model-minority myth. If the model-minority myth has been salient in mass media, it would be due to debates around affirmative action and academic competition in schools. Asian students are seen as high-achieving and successful in school. To test white Americans’ perceptions of this aspect of the model-minority myth, they were asked to respond to two statements about Asian students:

1) Asian students are always successful in achieving their academic goals.
2) Asian students need higher test scores to get accepted into colleges or universities.

Answers were recorded on a four-point agree/disagree scale with 1 as “Agree strongly” and 4 as “Disagree strongly.”

Overall, respondents leaned toward a sympathetic response for the first question, on the whole agreeing that Asian students are successful in achieving their academic goals. When broken up into groups based on the model-minority scale factor, Low and High were
significantly different. Those in High perceived Asians students as academically successful significantly more than those in Low, showing the model-minority myth does have clear effects.

### Table 24. Mean values (Asian students are always successful)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>[95% Conf. Interval]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2.3916</td>
<td>0.0356</td>
<td>2.3217 – 2.4615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>2.2057</td>
<td>0.0320</td>
<td>2.1430 – 2.2685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>2.0860</td>
<td>0.0368</td>
<td>2.0138 – 2.1583</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses to the second question however, seem to move in the opposite direction. There are no significant differences between the three groups. The model-minority myth does not seem to have clear effects on respondents’ attitude toward test score standards for Asian students.

### Table 25. Mean values (Asian students need higher scores)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>[95% Conf. Interval]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2.6700</td>
<td>0.0369</td>
<td>2.5976 – 2.7423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>2.8469</td>
<td>0.0383</td>
<td>2.7717 – 2.9221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>2.8034</td>
<td>0.0458</td>
<td>2.7136 – 2.8933</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to measure attitudes toward education policies such as affirmative action I posed the following vignette where the dominant race of the student body in a fictional school was randomized:

Imagine you have enrolled your child into a prestigious high school and wish for them to be accepted to an equally prestigious college or university. A significant portion of the student population is (black/Latinx/Asian). Do you see these students as competition for college acceptances?

Respondents answered “Yes” or “No” and on the whole, respondents seemed to lean toward “Yes” in all randomization groups. However, there is no significant difference between the three groups. When splitting the group by model-minority-myth sympathy levels, there is also no significant result from the data. In each of the randomizations, there is no significant difference between all three groups, also possibly signaling a lack of a racialization effect.
**Parsing out the deservingness criteria**

In previous sections, I described the five factors of the deservingness criteria: need, control, attitude, reciprocity, and identity. I hypothesized that each of these five factors would have varying effects on respondents’ attitudes toward Asian Americans depending on which factors are emphasized by a particular issue. To test this, I asked respondents to agree/disagree on a four-point scale where 1 stood for “Disagree strongly” and 4 for “Agree strongly.” The four statements were as follows:

1) Asians in America demonstrate a high need for government aid.
2) Asians in America are in control of their social and financial situations.
3) Asians in America assimilate easily into American culture.
4) Asians are appreciative of government support programs such as welfare.

Respondents generally viewed Asian Americans to demonstrate very low need for aid, to have high levels of social and economic control, to assimilate easily into American culture, and to be appreciative of any government resources. Together, these attitudes meet the description of a model minority group.

When analyzed in conjunction with the model-minority myth scale, there were significant differences between Low, Medium, and High in the expected pattern in all of the statements except the final.\(^5\) The first three statements show significant effects of the model-minority myth on respondents’ attitudes toward the deservingness of Asians. As subscription to the model-minority myth increases, Asians’ perceived need decreases, control increases, and assimilation increases. However, there is no significant difference between groups in response to the fourth statement regarding appreciation. To test how well these statements scaled together, I generated factor scores for an alpha factor analysis. The alpha coefficient was 0.52, indicating the four statements cannot reliably be scaled together which does not contradict the inconsistency in survey responses.

\(^5\) Supplemental tables can be found in Appendix B p. ___
Chapter VI. Discussion and Implications

The key takeaway of this thesis is that the model minority myth is tangible and has measurable implications for whites’ attitudes pertaining to Asian Americans. In almost every question analyzed through the model-minority scale, there are significant differences between those who are sympathetic to the myth and those less sympathetic to it. In most cases, respondents held more sympathetic or positive attitudes toward Asian Americans as a result of the model-minority myth. In other words, the data support the hypothesis by large that the model-minority myth holds unique racializing effects on white Americans’ political attitudes.

Through randomized questions, I controlled for general xenophobic sentiments that may have biased responses toward immigration. I used three variations for the randomization where only the racial description changed: the “Asian” version that conducted the main experiment, measuring for effects of the model-minority myth; the “European” version that portrayed a foreign group with similar racial identity as the respondents; and the “Latinx” version that provided a non-white, but also non-Asian immigrant group that could measure xenophobic or racialized sentiments external to the model-minority myth. However, respondents’ attitudes differed significantly between the randomized samples, which tells that the differences were predominantly based on the model-minority myth.

Welfare and the Deservingness Criteria

Overall, white Americans seem to agree on basic premises of welfare and central issues regarding it. Factor analysis showed a reliable scaling between statements regarding the way individuals interact with government through welfare. For the most part, respondents seem united on what topics of welfare are significant to them and thus affect their attitude toward welfare. What I aimed to do with the survey was to measure changes or differences in attitude toward welfare based specifically on the model-minority myth, thus finding any racializing effects. Because the model-minority myth places emphases on multiple aspects of
the desiringness factors for Asian Americans, I hypothesized respondents will have positive attitudes when *attitude* and *reciprocity* are emphasized, but negative attitudes when *need* and *control* are emphasized.

The data show most clear results in relation to the *attitude* and *reciprocity*. While respondents largely agree that Asian Americans show low need for government aid and have high levels of control over their socioeconomic status, the questions based on *attitude* and *reciprocity* showed direct impacts on their attitudes toward welfare. Respondents with higher subscription to the model-minority myth are more likely to disagree that poor people do not try to get ahead, which likely implies that white Americans have a positive attitude toward welfare when Asian Americans are seen as having a positive *attitude* toward working in society and willing to *reciprocate* economically – i.e. entering the workforce.

It is less clear whether white Americans have negative attitudes when *need* and *control* of Asian Americans are emphasized. While survey results confirmed that respondents follow the model-minority myth when agreeing Asian Americans are a socioeconomically independent group, there is less to say about how that affects how deserving Asians are seen as welfare recipients. Additionally, there was no significant effect of the model-minority myth when measuring for appreciative attitude from Asian Americans on welfare. Such inconclusive results may come from the fact that respondents do not expect Asian Americans to receive government aid at all. Respondents hold the view that Asian Americans have a low need for welfare and a high level of control over their socioeconomic status. Therefore, the fourth statement simply does not provide a logical situation, which may address the contrasting pattern. The empirical data also supports this inconsistency when scaling the four statements to one another. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient is not very reliable which insinuates that these four statements altogether are not effective for cohesively predicting or influencing respondents’ attitudes toward desiringness of Asian Americans in general.
However, there is more theory than the deservingness criteria when analyzing welfare attitudes. Perception of skill-level and work ethic also seemed to contribute significantly to survey responses. Respondents’ attitudes were significantly more positive when they perceived Asian Americans as productive, willing to enter the workforce. Thus, it is most likely that a combination of the deservingness criteria and work ethic levels influence white Americans’ positive attitudes toward welfare. Regardless of the fact that the model-minority labels Asian Americans as low-need, respondents held positive attitudes toward Asian Americans receiving welfare. Adding the fact that respondents sympathetic to the model-minority myth were more likely to want to increase welfare spending within the federal budget, the driving factor behind welfare attitudes may be perception of work ethic and productivity. This conclusion then also remains in line with Gilens (1996) that white Americans view welfare negatively due to blacks portrayed largely as “lazy” and “unproductive.” Because the model-minority myth so strongly shaped respondents’ perceptions of Asian Americans as willing to work and reciprocate to society, it seems safe to conclude that the model-minority myth has positive racialization effects on white Americans’ attitudes toward welfare.

**Immigration: Economic and Social Participation**

Similarly from the welfare case study, the data support the hypothesis; looking at the model-minority myth and Asian immigrants shapes positive attitudes toward immigration. In fact, the data suggest the model-minority has a very strong influence on respondents’ attitudes toward immigration, so significantly that respondents viewed Asian immigrants more favorably than European immigrants at times. The model-minority myth thus seems to have a stronger influence on attitudes than the identity factor does.⁶ Of the survey randomizations, the European variation intended to measure immigration attitudes as an

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⁶ The identity factor comes from one of five deservingness criteria (van Oorschot 2000) used in this case to judge sympathy or favorability of an immigrant group.
racial identity that most closely relates to that of the white respondents. Since the Latinx randomization allows me to distinguish overall xenophobic sentiments, the positive immigration attitudes must most likely be due to effects of the model-minority myth.

The model-minority myth had salient effects and exceeded any effects of the identity factor in all aspects of immigration but one: assimilation into the United States. Respondents who showed agreement toward the model-minority myth perceived Asian immigrants as more favorable than Europeans in skill-level, benefit to the country, documented immigration levels, and societal and economic contribution. Asians are easily perceived as the most high-skilled immigrant group compared to European or Latinx immigrants and are perceived as most beneficial to the United States. According to survey data, Asians are least likely to be undocumented or illegal, which follows with the model-minority trait that Asians are law-abiding and docile. This perception of Asians is so significant that respondents’ estimates were not related to actual numbers of undocumented Asian immigrants. In reality, 1 in 8 undocumented immigrants are estimated to be Asian (López et al. 2017). Regardless, those with higher subscription to the model-minority myth were less likely to opt for decreasing immigration levels into the United States. In fact, the same group nearly unanimously agreed that Asians portray ideal assimilation.

However, respondents showed similarly positive attitudes in response to a vignette about a recently immigrated family. Their attitudes did not significantly differ between the European and Asian randomizations, which is inconsistent with the previous result. Where the parents are described as unemployed and non-fluent in English, the “unemployed” label does not seem to contribute to this puzzle. Respondents remained more sympathetic to the Asian parents’ ability to contribute to society or economy than to the European parents. Therefore the key factor most likely is the non-fluent English levels. Specifically in the instance of both a European and Asian immigrant family unable to speak fluent English, both
are perceived equally able to assimilate. In this way, identity does seem to have a small influence in immigration attitudes, but overall the data implies the model-minority myth largely affects how white Americans view immigration through immigrants’ skill-level, reciprocity, and work ethic. The myth then has an overwhelmingly positive influence on white Americans’ attitudes toward immigration.

**The Model-Minority Myth in Education**

Debates regarding affirmative action in schools always calls on the model-minority myth. Because the two topics seem to implicate each other, I collected survey data for changes in attitude toward academic competition in relation to the model-minority myth. However, there was no clear conclusion to draw from the data. In fact, one set of data defied expectations with the trend moving in the opposite direction. I hypothesized the model-minority myth would affect respondents to view Asian students as strict competition and think that Asian students are held to a higher academic standard.

Respondents do believe that Asian students are high-achieving in academics, which is parallel to the traits of the model-minority myth. However, responses were less clear about whether or not high levels of success lead to academic competition. Based on the model-minority myth, I would have expected to see increased feelings of academic competition when a student body is predominantly Asian as opposed to black or Latinx. Yet the data showed no significant difference between the randomizations. None of the variations was significantly perceived as a more competitive setting than another which insinuates an area for further research. Respondents did not form a clear association between the model-minority myth and the academic setting. Perhaps traits of the model-minority myth is more salient in more societally integrated areas such as the labor force, which is fascinating because the model-minority myth is most mentioned in mass media in relation to issues of affirmative action.
Additionally, responses did not support the hypothesis that Asian students are held to a higher academic standard. However, I attribute this mismatch to most likely to poor question wording. Respondents probably interpreted the question regarding “Asian students needing higher test scores” as Asian students needing higher scores to overcome racial prejudice, which is incoherent with the intention to measure the extent to which respondents believe that Asian students are held to a higher academic standard. The former connotation most likely made respondents feel more inclined to disagree while the latter I hypothesize would reveal similar effects of the model-minority myth as in the previous case studies. In any case, the data from this question cannot be used with clear certainty or significance.

These results require further investigation as they does not support the theory that Asian American students are seen as a competitive academic force. However, the previous data do verify that white respondents perceive Asian students as a very successful group. This puzzling dataset may be due to the fact that respondents do not see academic competition as localized to one racial group (e.g. Asian students versus Latinx or black).
Chapter VII. Conclusions

On the whole, the results from the survey experiment exceeded expectations. The data are significant that the model-minority myth has racializing effects on political attitudes in a manner that is similar to the racializing effects of stereotypes surrounding black Americans in the 1990s as in Gilens (1996, 2000) (though the scope of policy racialization based on the model-minority myth pales in comparison to that based on stereotypes about black and African Americans). The results reflect a sociopolitical change with important demographic implications; the Asian American population has grown in recent years and will only grow more in the future. Within the survey framework, respondents were asked to judge traits of the model-minority myth on a scale from 0 to 10. That responses scaled so well into one measurable factor seems to imply how effective the model-minority myth is as a marker for public perception of the Asian identity. Regression analysis showed females, conservatives, the elderly, and those who do not follow politics often as more susceptible to ascribing to the model-minority myth. However perceptions of the model-minority myth did not change based on party identification (controlled for political ideology) and income and education levels. Regardless of any other descriptive trait, Asian Americans are typecast based on a set of stereotypes about race.

Of course not all respondents adhered to the model-minority myth. Each randomized question was evaluated by dividing the sample into Low, Medium, and High subscription to the model-minority myth and the Low group consistently showed the least sympathetic attitudes toward Asian Americans. However, this trend was common of the other randomized groups, which insinuates more that the Low group may have felt more general xenophobic sentiments.

From both case studies in welfare and immigration, the largest takeaway was that Americans value work ethics and *reciprocity*. No matter what situation the questions posed,
responses were coherent in several themes including using welfare as a stepping stone to enter the workforce, managing family and economic control, giving back to society via taxes, and not taking advantage of public policies. Factors relating to work ethics and reciprocity seemed to trump even social or cultural factors. Even when Asians were described as non-fluent English speakers, they were still seen equally or more positive than their white or European counterparts. In part, perceptions of skill-level also seemed to contribute to the larger idea of a group’s work ethic. Throughout all the case studies from welfare to immigration to even academic competition, Asian Americans were perceived to have the skills necessary to find a new job, contribute as a part of American society, and to succeed in their academic goals.

The only areas where data were insignificant were due to ambiguous question wording or competing perceptions of welfare. Thus the weakest point might remain in welfare attitudes, where appreciation for welfare did not have significant results. The model-minority myth had strongest effects in relation to deservingness of Asian Americans in both welfare and immigration policies, but it is unclear if the results would corroborate if Americans were asked about their attitudes outside of hypothetical situations. In such cases, the identity factor might have a stronger contribution, but such studies can be continued in the future.

These results hold several implications for political behavior and attitude formation. Even though Asian Americans have not been the face of pop culture or media, the ideas from the model-minority myth had a wide range of reception and influence. Although it is not clear exactly what types of media attention led to such a widespread acceptance of the model-minority myth, a combination of positive media coverage of Asian Americans and negative coverage of non-white, non-Asian groups most likely had an effect. One of the most salient takeaways from this experiment was that racialization of policy attitudes can be specific to
race, so that attitudes toward blacks on welfare can differ significantly from attitudes toward Asians on welfare. Therefore, media attention toward negative traits of non-white, non-Asian groups can establish an implicit comparison between non-white groups in the United States.

Furthermore, these results hold implications for democratic behavior as well. Racialized political attitudes might have effects on individual voting behavior if one racial group receives significant public attention. Though I admit the racialization effects of one specific group would have to be very strong to influence voting patterns, this experiment helps explain how some of the decision-making processes might occur. For example, an individual’s vote toward welfare or immigration policy may be dependent on a racialized attitude triggered by certain keywords from political candidates. This phenomenon then centralizes attitude formation around media significance. However, there is still more research to be done regarding political attitude formation and behavior.
Bibliography


https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tablesservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF.


Appendix A. Survey (Full Text)

Demographics

Q1. What is your race? Check all that apply.
   (1) White/Caucasian
   (2) Black
   (3) Hispanic or Latina/o
   (4) Asian
   (5) Pacific Islander
   (6) Native American
   (7) Not listed: __________________

Q2. What is your age?
    __________

Q3. Think of the income before taxes of all of your household living with you now from 2017. Include income from all sources, including wages, dividends, interests, pensions, and other sources. Select the appropriate range below.
   (1) $0 - $19,999
   (2) $20,000 - $34,999
   (3) $35,000 - $49,999
   (4) $50,000 - $64,999
   (5) $65,000 - $79,999
   (6) $80,000 - $94,999
   (7) $95,000 - $109,999
   (8) $110,000 - $124,999
   (9) $125,000 - $139,999
   (10) $140,000 - $154,999
   (11) $155,000 - $169,999
   (12) $170,000 - $184,999
   (13) $185,000 - $199,999
   (14) $200,000 and up

Q4. What is your current educational level?
   (1) 8th grade or lower
   (2) Some high school
   (3) High school graduate (or GED)
   (4) Some college
   (5) College graduate
   (6) Some graduate work or graduate degree

Q5. What is your gender?
   (1) Female
   (2) Male
   (3) Other: __________

Q6. What is your marital status?
   (1) Single
   (2) Married
   (3) Divorced
(4) Separated
(5) Widowed

Q7. How closely do you follow politics and current events?
   (1) Very closely
   (2) Somewhat closely
   (3) Not very closely
   (4) Not closely at all

**Welfare Module**

Q8. Suppose you had a say in making up the federal budget. Would you prefer to see more spent, less spent, or the same amount of money spent on welfare as it has been?
   (1) More spent
   (2) Less spent
   (3) Keep same amount of spending

Q9. Please give your honest opinion about each of these statements.
   1. Most people on welfare could get by without it if they really tried
      (1) Agree strongly
      (2) Agree somewhat
      (3) Disagree somewhat
      (4) Disagree strongly
   2. The high cost of welfare puts too big a burden on the average taxpayer
      (1) Agree strongly
      (2) Agree somewhat
      (3) Disagree somewhat
      (4) Disagree strongly
   3. When people can’t support themselves, the government should help by giving them enough money to meet their basic needs
      (1) Agree strongly
      (2) Agree somewhat
      (3) Disagree somewhat
      (4) Disagree strongly
   4. Most people on welfare would rather be working than taking money from the government
      (1) Agree strongly
      (2) Agree somewhat
      (3) Disagree somewhat
      (4) Disagree strongly

Q10. Now think about a (white/black/Asian) woman in her early thirties. She is a high school drop out with a ten-year-old child and she has been on welfare for the past year.
   1. How likely do you think it is that she will have more children in order to get a bigger welfare check?
      (1) Very likely
      (2) Somewhat likely
      (3) Somewhat unlikely
      (4) Very unlikely
   2. How likely do you think it is that she will really try hard to find a job in the next year?
(1) Very likely
(2) Somewhat likely
(3) Somewhat unlikely
(4) Very unlikely

**Immigration Module**

Q11. Please give your honest opinion about each of these statements.

1. Immigrants are productive members of society and pay their fair share of taxes
   (1) Agree strongly
   (2) Agree somewhat
   (3) Disagree somewhat
   (4) Disagree strongly

2. (European/Latinx/Asian) immigrants are highly-skilled
   (1) Agree strongly
   (2) Agree somewhat
   (3) Disagree somewhat
   (4) Disagree strongly

3. Immigrants are less educated and pose a financial burden
   (1) Agree strongly
   (2) Agree somewhat
   (3) Disagree somewhat
   (4) Disagree strongly

4. The United States is losing jobs to immigrants
   (1) Agree strongly
   (2) Agree somewhat
   (3) Disagree somewhat
   (4) Disagree strongly

5. People from outside the United States ought to have the opportunity to start a new life in the United States
   (1) Agree strongly
   (2) Agree somewhat
   (3) Disagree somewhat
   (4) Disagree strongly

6. More (European/Latinx/Asian) immigrants would benefit the country.
   (1) Agree strongly
   (2) Agree somewhat
   (3) Disagree somewhat
   (4) Disagree strongly

Q12. The amount of immigrants in the United States should be…
   (1) Increased
   (2) Decreased
   (3) Kept the same

Q13. Now think about a (European/Latinx/Asian) immigrant family, fairly new to the States, with three children newly entered into the public school system. The family immigrated to the US, in pursuit of the American Dream. The parents are unemployed and do not speak fluent English.
1. How likely do you think it is that the family will assimilate well into the United States?
   (1) Very likely
   (2) Somewhat likely
   (3) Somewhat unlikely
   (4) Very unlikely

2. How likely do you think it is that the parent(s) will contribute to society or economy?
   (1) Very likely
   (2) Somewhat likely
   (3) Somewhat unlikely
   (4) Very unlikely

Q14. What percentage of immigrants from Europe do you think are illegal or undocumented?
   __________% (from 0 to 100)

**Identifying the Model-Minority Myth**

Q15. Below you will see a few words that people sometimes use to describe Asians. Of course, no word fits absolutely everybody, but please use a number from 0 to 10 how well you think it describes Asians as a group. If you think it is a completely accurate description, give it a 10. If you feel the word is not an inaccurate description at all, give it a 0.
   (1) Lazy
   (2) Hardworking
   (3) Highly-skilled
   (4) Responsible citizens
   (5) Financial burden to society
   (6) Doctors and engineers
   (7) Dangerous
   (8) Self-reliant
   (9) Low-income

   (1) Agree
   (2) Disagree

**Academic Competition**

Q37. Imagine you have enrolled your child into a prestigious high school and wish for them to be accepted to an equally prestigious college or university. A significant portion of the student population is (black/Latinx/Asian). Do you see these students as competition for college acceptance?
   (1) Yes
   (2) No

Q38. Please answer these to the best of your ability.
   1. Asian students are always successful in their academic goals.
      (1) Agree strongly
      (2) Agree somewhat
      (3) Disagree somewhat
2. Asian students need higher test scores to get accepted into colleges or universities.
   (1) Agree strongly
   (2) Agree somewhat
   (3) Disagree somewhat
   (4) Disagree strongly

Deservingness Factors

Q39. What do you think makes most poor people poor? Most of them are poor because…
   1. They don’t get the training or education they need
      (1) Disagree strongly
      (2) Disagree somewhat
      (3) Agree somewhat
      (4) Agree strongly
   2. They don’t try to get ahead
      (1) Disagree strongly
      (2) Disagree somewhat
      (3) Agree somewhat
      (4) Agree strongly

Q40. Please pick the response that best conveys your opinions.
   1. Most people who don’t succeed in life are just plain lazy.
      (1) Disagree strongly
      (2) Disagree somewhat
      (3) Agree somewhat
      (4) Agree strongly
   2. Asians in America demonstrate a high need for government aid.
      (1) Disagree strongly
      (2) Disagree somewhat
      (3) Agree somewhat
      (4) Agree strongly
   3. Asians in America are in control of their social and financial situations.
      (1) Disagree strongly
      (2) Disagree somewhat
      (3) Agree somewhat
      (4) Agree strongly
   4. Asians in America assimilate easily into American culture.
      (1) Disagree strongly
      (2) Disagree somewhat
      (3) Agree somewhat
      (4) Agree strongly
   5. Asians are appreciative of government support programs such as welfare.
      (1) Disagree strongly
      (2) Disagree somewhat
      (3) Agree somewhat
      (4) Agree strongly
**Conclusion**

Q41. Please answer honestly. The government in Washington tries to do too many things that should be left up to individuals and private businesses.

1. Disagree strongly
2. Disagree somewhat
3. Agree somewhat
4. Agree strongly

Q42. Generally speaking, would you consider yourself to be a liberal, a conservative, a moderate, or haven’t thought much about this?

1. Extremely liberal
2. Liberal
3. Slightly liberal
4. Moderate
5. Slightly conservative
6. Conservative
7. Extremely conservative

Q43. Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, or what?

1. Democrat
   a. Do you consider yourself a strong Democrat or a weak Democrat?
      1. Strong Democrat
      2. Weak Democrat

2. Republican
   a. Do you consider yourself a strong Republican or a weak Republican?
      1. Strong Republican
      2. Weak Republican

3. Independent
   a. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party?
      1. Republican Party
      2. Democratic Party

4. Other, specify: ________

Thank you for your participation! Your time and efforts are greatly appreciated.

Q41. Now, you will see a list of problems facing the country. As I read each one, please use a number from zero to ten to tell me how angry it makes you. If something doesn’t bother you at all, give it a zero. On the other hand, if the situation makes you extremely angry or upset, give it a ten. Feel free to use any whole number between zero and ten.

1. A person who collects welfare because they are too lazy to get a job?
2. A person who splits their time between school, work, and childcare and receives welfare.
3. A person who has been laid off from their job and has not been able to find a new job in 12 months.
4. A person who has evaded paying part of their taxes.
5. A newly arrive immigrant who is unemployed (but looking for work) and sending their children to public school.
6. An undocumented immigrant unable to work (at all? full time?) with children in public school.
7. An immigrant with a full-time professional career.
Appendix B. Supplemental Tables

Table 26. Regression analysis of model-minority myth factors

| mmm_factor          | Coef.  | Std. Err. | t      | P>|t|  | [95% Conf. Interval] |
|---------------------|--------|-----------|--------|------|---------------------|
| female              | .1581245 | .0552636  | 2.86   | .004 | .0497016 - .2665474 |
| age                 | .0073683 | .0025712  | 2.87   | .004 | .0023237 - .0124128 |
| income              | .0061225 | .0106434  | 0.58   | .565 | -.014759 - .027004  |
| education           | -.0169198 | .0324303  | -.52   | .602 | -.0805456 - .046706  |
| follow_politics     | -.1215844 | .0396932  | -3.06  | .002 | -.1994593 - -.0437894 |

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<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>[95% Conf. Interval]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed Part-Time</td>
<td>.1548686</td>
<td>.0781094</td>
<td>.001624 - .3081132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>.2621924</td>
<td>.121452</td>
<td>.0239131 - .5004717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed (not loo)</td>
<td>.1371637</td>
<td>.1288113</td>
<td>-.115554 - .3088813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>-.0021001</td>
<td>.1449149</td>
<td>-.2864117 - .2822115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>.2303838</td>
<td>.1623934</td>
<td>-.0882195 - .5489867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled</td>
<td>.0884424</td>
<td>.1947521</td>
<td>-.2936741 - .4705026</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Asian Americans and the deservingness criteria

Table 27. Mean Values (Asians in America demonstrate high need for aid)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Over</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>[95% Conf. Interval]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>q36_2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2.14532</td>
<td>.0374348</td>
<td>2.071877 - 2.218763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>1.667464</td>
<td>.0299906</td>
<td>1.608626 - 1.726303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.358722</td>
<td>.0300915</td>
<td>1.299686 - 1.417759</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 28. Mean Values (Asians in America are in control of social and financial situations)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Over</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>[95% Conf. Interval]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>q36_3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2.768473</td>
<td>.0296174</td>
<td>2.710367 - 2.826579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>3.076555</td>
<td>.0246078</td>
<td>3.028277 - 3.124833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>3.348894</td>
<td>.0301749</td>
<td>3.289694 - 3.408094</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 29. Mean Values (Asians in America assimilate easily)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Over</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>[95% Conf. Interval]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>q36_4</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2.684729</td>
<td>.0336009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>2.913876</td>
<td>.0282289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>3.226044</td>
<td>.0308441</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 30. Mean Values (Asians are appreciative of government support)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Over</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>[95% Conf. Interval]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>q36_5</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2.761084</td>
<td>.0327002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>2.84689</td>
<td>.0295497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>2.963145</td>
<td>.0381461</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>