Understanding Asian Americans' Attitudes Towards Practices that Address Racial Inequality: The Role of Belief in the Model Minority Myth and Colorblind Racial Ideology

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Abstract

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The 2023 Supreme Court ruling on affirmative action in higher education (Students for Fair Admissions vs. President and Fellows of Harvard College, 2023) as well as the 2025 executive order instructing the termination of all Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion-related work within the federal government (Exec. Order No. 14151, 2025) have been two major recent examples of large-scale opposition to practices that seek to address racial inequality in the United States. Asian Americans, who have been labeled as the "model minority" of the different racial groups in America have especially been portrayed within the affirmative action conversations as being monolithically opposed to this practice in higher education (Poon et al., 2016), despite survey results suggesting a wider variety of opinions within this population regarding both affirmative action and race-based workplace DEI practices (Pew Research Center, 2023; Pew Research Center, 2024). The present study seeks to understand the different factors driving the variance in beliefs within the Asian American population regarding these practices that address racial inequality. The study focuses on two main predictors, the internalization of the model minority myth by Asian Americans and colorblind beliefs regarding race and racial dynamics in society. Results suggest that internalizing the model minority myth predicts greater opposition to both affirmative action and DEI, driven by the belief that Asian Americans have achieved greater success than other racial minorities due to individual merit-based explanations such as hard work and persistence. Holding more colorblind beliefs, particularly those that deny the existence of

racial privilege and institutional discrimination in society, is also associated with greater opposition to both practices that address racial inequality. Colorblind beliefs also serve to mediate the relationship between internalization of the model minority myth and support for practices that address racial inequality. Results also indicated that all of the relationships identified between the model minority myth, colorblindness, and support for practices that address racial inequality were significant above and beyond the impact of political orientation and gender. Additional factors such as generational status, perception of the integration between racial minority identities, and the perception of practices being seen as helpful or harmful to Asian Americans also appeared to shape beliefs about the model minority myth, colorblind racial ideology, and the support for practices that address racial inequality. The present research contributes insights about the Asian American population which is still a burgeoning demographic in empirical research, particularly under-represented in organizational research. By understanding the wide and complex array of demographic factors and personal beliefs that are associated with the degree of support for practices that address racial inequality, Asian Americans and their colleagues across different organizational contexts can have more nuanced and constructive conversations instead of being pigeon-holed into sweeping stereotypes.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

At different junctures of United States history, the Asian American demographic has been leveraged as a sociopolitical wedge to reinforce a racial hierarchy that often maintains White American power and privilege at the top and oppresses other racial minority groups, particularly Black Americans (Kim, 1999). For example, when Black Americans were fighting for racial justice during the Civil Rights Movement, mainstream media amplified a narrative of Asian Americans as the "model minority", a racial minority group that had supposedly overcome racial discrimination to achieve success through values such as hard work. This narrative aimed to invalidate the social justice movement and move blame from structural racism to a victim blaming approach that placed accountability for underachievement on individuals (Suzuki, 1977; Choi, Israel, & Maeda, 2017; Yoo, Miller, & Yip, 2015). Several indicators of societal success appear to support the valorization of Asian Americans, such as having the highest median household income of any racial group (Asante-Muhammad & Kurani, 2023) and having the highest average standardized test scores of any racial group (National Center of Education Statistics, 2019). However, the model minority stereotype is commonly referred to as the model minority myth because the overly sweeping portrayal of Asian Americans as a monolithically successful group obscures the realities of continued discrimination against this population (e.g., the severe uptick in anti-Asian violence and discrimination during the COVID–19 pandemic) as well as the stark heterogeneity of experiences within the Asian American population (e.g., Asian Americans having the highest within-race income gap of any racial group in the United States).

Since the model minority myth is so widely known and spread in society, Asian Americans often internalize these stereotypes as a means of survival within the racial hierarchy (Thompson & Kiang, 2010; Kiang, Huynh, Cheah, Wang, & Yoshikawa, 2017; Jost & Major,

2001). In doing so, they perpetuate the narratives that pit Asian Americans against other racial minorities and even within their own group, all of which serves to maintain existing racial hierarchies (Keum, Miller, Lee, & Chen; 2018; Hwang, 2021). Asian Americans who strongly believe in the model minority myth may also ascribe to strong colorblind racial ideology (CBRI). For example, when they perceive their own group to have achieved their success due to hard work and do not face any race-based structural barriers, they are likely to deny the impact that racial barriers play against any racial minority group. In line with this belief, they may assert that nowadays, society should judge people by their individual merits rather than acknowledging the color of one's skin (Yoo, Burrola, & Steger, 2010; Lin, 2020). Asian Americans may also endorse CBRI as a coping response to the extreme pressures placed upon them through the model minority myth, such as the expectations for high academic and economic achievement as well as keeping up the image of being the "problem-free" minority group (Chao & Tseng, 2002; Fuligni & Yoshikawa, 2004; Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal, & Torino, 2007). Indeed, the endorsement of CBRI has been linked to short-term reductions in feelings of helplessness, cognitive dissonance, and other negative psychological experiences (Kay, Gaucher, Napier, Callan, & Laurin, 2008; Wakslak, Jost, Tyler, & Chen, 2007). In turn, both using CBRI as a basis to attribute individual success to individual merit or leveraging it as a means of reducing negative psychological experiences may influence Asian Americans' support for strategies designed to combat racial injustice in contexts within which they inhabit, such as race-based affirmative action policies in higher education and race-based diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices in organizations.

The purpose of the study is to extend previous research into how Asian Americans view their racial status in society and how these beliefs affect their motivations for pursuing collective

action against racial injustice for racial minorities. In particular, the study seeks to understand the relationships between the ideological endorsement of the model minority myth, CBRI, and support for efforts to combat racial injustice in higher education and the workplace. In addition, we seek to gain insight into the subdimensions of internalization of the model minority myth construct (achievement orientation, unrestricted mobility orientation) and learn about their individual relationships to the different dimensions of CBRI (power and privilege evasion, color and bias evasion). We then investigate the relationships between these subdimensions and support for affirmative action in higher education and race-based DEI practices in the workplace. Additionally, we explore the relationships between several variables such as identity integration, perception of practices addressing inequality as helping Asian Americans, and generational status and their relationships with the variables in the main study. The study also aims to provide new data in a societal timeframe that is particularly tenuous for practices that address racial inequality, following the relatively recent Supreme Court ruling that essentially banned the use of race-based affirmative action in higher education (Students for Fair Admissions vs. President and Fellows of Harvard College, 2023) as well as the executive orders removing all DEI work associated with the federal government (Exec. Order No. 14151, 2025).

This dissertation contains five chapters. Chapter 2 reviews the multidisciplinary literature on the model minority myth, CBRI, and practices addressing racial inequality, as well as the theoretical bases for relationships between these main study variables. Chapter 3 introduces the methodology used to collect survey data from Asian American participants, describing the specific measures used for the main study variables in addition to introducing several exploratory variables to be used in the analyses. Chapter 4 lists the results of the study captured through statistical methods such as linear regression, mediation, and moderation analyses. Lastly,

Chapter 5 contains a discussion of the study outcomes, including theoretical and practical implications, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The Model Minority Myth

Throughout American history, Asian Americans have been the recipients of a wide range of stereotypes, which are beliefs about certain individuals based upon perceived characteristics of the group to which that individual belongs (Jones, 1997). Stereotypes can be descriptive (describing perceived traits or behaviors) and prescriptive (beliefs about how individuals from a group should behave), and can be knowingly or unknowingly internalized and perpetuated by both members outside of or within the group (Fiske, 1993). Perpetuation of stereotypes can be an insidious issue because they can influence how people treat members of other groups, often in a prejudicial manner (Jones, 1997).

Asian Americans are simultaneously recipients of both positive and negative stereotypes, with the positive labels sometimes eliciting feelings of respect and admiration from others (Ho & Jackson, 2001; Gupta, Szymanski, & Leong, 2011). Although the data is much more nuanced than it appears, descriptive statistics suggest that Asian Americans have achieved great success in the United States compared to other racial minorities and at times, even surpassing White Americans. For example, Asian Americans have the highest median household income of any racial group (Asante-Muhammad & Kurani, 2023), hold the highest standardized test scores of any racial group (National Center of Education Statistics, 2019), hold a greater ratio of bachelor degree attainment over the age of 25 compared to White Americans (Budiman & Ruiz, 2021), are perceived to be more technically competent than even White employees in the workplace (Sy et al., 2010), and are less likely to be criminal offenders than other groups (Johnson & Betsinger, 2009). Overall, these statistics lend to the stereotyping of Asian Americans as being highly educationally, occupationally, and economically successful, highly competent and intelligent,

and having few adjustment difficulties compared to other racial minority groups (Sue, Sue, Sue, & Takeuchi, 2013; Lin, Kwan, Cheung, & Fiske, 2005; Oyserman & Sakamoto, 1997; Rosette, de Leon, Koval, & Harrison, 2018; Zou & Ceryan, 2017). In addition to these aforementioned stereotypes, Asian Americans are also often seen as having overcome or not experiencing racial discrimination (Choi et al., 2017; Yoo et al., 2015). The combination of these positive stereotypes is closely associated with why Asian Americans are often labeled as the model minority relative to other racial minority groups in the United States (Suzuki, 1977). According to Yoo et al. (2010), all of these stereotypes can be grouped into two overarching components that make up the model minority stereotype: compared to other racial minority groups, (a) Asian Americans have an "achievement orientation", such that they are high-achieving in academic and economic domains because they value hard work and determination, and (b) Asian Americans have "unrestricted mobility", such that they are less likely to experience racial prejudice and discrimination in society. The achievement orientation places the locus of control within the group by highlighting intrinsic merits of hard work and persistence. In contrast, unrestricted mobility places the locus of control externally by painting a picture of a fair and non-racist U.S. society (Yoo et al., 2015; Yoon et al., 2023).

However, the model minority terminology is not rooted solely in statistics. Instead, it is crucial to understand the decades of sociopolitical history involving racial minority groups, particularly the social racial narratives that were constructed by those aiming to suppress changes to the relative power of different racial groups. The origin of the model minority stereotype generally dates back to the 1960s; with the passage of the Hart-Celler Act in 1965, Asian immigrants that had highly sought-after educational backgrounds and skills (e.g., doctors, engineers) were able to move to the United States due to the lifted restrictions of the act, creating

a significant change in the racial and ethnic landscape of the nation at the time (Kiang, Tseng, & Yip, 2016; Kiang et al., 2017). In the same decade, the Civil Rights Movement was politically front and center, with racial justice issues being spearheaded most notably by Black Americans demanding systemic changes (Wollenberg, 1978, Kiang et al., 2017). With the Civil Rights Movement gaining significant traction, it was proposed that a strategy was needed by primarily White Americans, who at the time had the greatest sociopolitical power, to suppress the burgeoning sociopolitical power of Black Americans and cast doubt on the validity of existing social justice movements of racial minorities as a whole (Hurh & Kim, 1989; Suzuki, 2002). Thus, the concept of the model minority was born, with landmark publications in the 1960s such as the New York Times Magazine and U.S. News and World Report valorizing Chinese and Japanese cultures for overcoming racial adversity in order to achieve academic and economic success due to strong values such as hard work and perseverance (Lee, Wong, & Alvarez, 2009). Within the civil rights conversation, the narratives asserted that success for all races was possible as long as they followed the example of Asian Americans (Gupta et al., 2011) and empowered many to dismiss those fighting for racial justice as complaining, disruptive, and responsible for any of their own academic or economic shortcomings (Kiang, Cheah, Huynh, Wang, & Yoshikawa, 2016, Kiang et al., 2017). Thus, the model minority stereotype was used as a legitimizing ideology, which are narratives that maintain that a society is fair and that individuals are solely responsible for their outcomes and social standing rather than attributing unequal relationships among groups to systemic inequality (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). In the decades that followed, these narratives were continually reinforced, such as the branding of high-achieving Asian American "Whiz Kids" in the 1980s (Brand, 1987). Through the constant reinforcement by society, the model minority stereotype is widely known by teachers, institutions, and

members of majority and minority groups, especially by Asian Americans themselves, with one study suggesting that nearly all Asian American youth surveyed had some prior experience with the stereotype (Thompson & Kiang, 2010; Kiang et al., 2017).

The amplification of the model minority stereotype was used by some as a strategy to maintain the racial status quo in terms of power, using the prototype of successful Asian Americans as a means of keeping Black Americans at the bottom of the racial hierarchy (Wang & Santos, 2023). If one were to only view Asian Americans' sociopolitical standing through the model minority stereotype, it may almost seem that Asian Americans are "honorary White Americans" and have achieved parallels to White Americans' social standing in the United States, affording them the same privileges (Espiritu, 1996; Tawa, Suyemoto, Tauriac, 2013). However, the model minority narrative only allows Asian Americans to hold relative power within the racial hierarchy compared to Black Americans (Tawa et al., 2013). The hypothesis is that if different racial minority groups are pitted against each other (and at times competing within race, such as pitting East Asian communities against Southeast or South Asian communities), White Americans can maintain their higher societal standing (Kim, 1999). Another way in which Asian Americans may be wedged into an intermediary position in order to maintain the racial hierarchy of power is through a process of racial triangulation (Kim, 1999; Bonilla-Silva, 2004). Despite being valorized relative to Black Americans, Asian Americans are also the recipients of several negative stereotypes, most notably that of being a "perpetual foreigner" (Lee et al., 2009; Tuan, 1998; Wu, 2002). Several instances throughout history have reinforced that Asian Americans would always be oppressed to the extent that they do not achieve the social standing of White Americans. For example, the Japanese American internment camps during World War II, the Chinese Exclusion Acts, and Asian Americans being sent to

schools for “colored people” during segregation highlighted Asian American’s non-White status and barred them from securing privileges and basic freedoms afforded to White Americans (Chen, LePhuoc, Guzmán, Rude, & Dodd, 2006; Takaki, 1989).

Due to these glaring examples throughout history of blatant discrimination against Asian Americans while simultaneously perpetuating a valorized image of Asian Americans as the model minority, the model minority stereotype is more commonly referred to as the model minority myth, alluding to how the stereotype is socially constructed and renders invisible the myriad of problems that Asian Americans still face in the United States (e.g., Chou & Feagin, 2015). Although the aforementioned events occurred several decades ago, more contemporary events still support that the model minority stereotype is a myth due to the ongoing pervasive discrimination against the Asian American community. In general, recent studies found that over half of Asian Americans reported experiencing occasional to regular racial discrimination in the United States (Huang & Tsai, 2022; Lee, Perez, Boykin, & Mendoza-Denton, 2019). One catalyzing event that brought the rampant discrimination against Asian Americans to the forefront of American consciousness was the COVID-19 pandemic. Resulting from the longstanding legacy of the Yellow Peril, in which Asian bodies are seen as unclean and diseased (Lee, Yoon, & Chang, 2024), the media amplified rhetorics of the “Chinese Virus” or “Kung Flu” (Gover, Harper, & Langton, 2020; Tessler, Choi, & Kao, 2020). The Federal Bureau of Investigation reported a 77% increase in hate crimes against Asian people from 2019 to 2020 as a result of the global pandemic (2020 FBI Hate Crimes Statistics, 2023). Between 2020 and 2022, Stop AAPI Hate cataloged over 11,500 reports of verbal harassment, deliberate shunning, physical assault, online harassment, and workplace discrimination against Asian Americans (Yellow Horse et al., 2022).

Asian Americans have also been facing discrimination in many aspects of society outside of the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the workplace, Asian Americans are disproportionately underrepresented in leadership positions despite having the qualification and experience required, a dynamic named the "Bamboo Ceiling" (Lu, Nisbett, & Morris, 2020). Asian Americans also reported discrimination when applying for jobs and being paid or promoted equally (NPR, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, & Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, 2017). In addition, they face discrimination while trying to rent or buy housing, applying to or attending college, interacting with the police, accessing necessary services, and report experiencing racial slurs, insensitive or offensive comments, and negative stereotyping based on their race (NPR et al., 2017; President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, 2014). Asian Americans who reported experiencing significant amounts of racism and discrimination have also reported having serious physical and mental health consequences (Ong et al., 2013; USDHHS, 2011; Wang et al., 2011), and in one study even after accounting for the impact of perceived discrimination, awareness of the perpetual foreigner stereotype still significantly predicted reports of lowered life satisfaction and greater feelings of hopelessness in Asian Americans (Huynh, Devos, & Smalarz, 2011). Other negative stereotypes are also well-documented in the literature, such as East Asians being perceived as less warm and dominant than White Americans, with individuals violating these expectations experiencing greater harassment and being less liked (Berdahl & Min, 2012). Asian men are also stereotyped as not being masculine enough, and Asian women are stereotyped as too feminine, submissive, or subservient (Oguntoyinbo, 2014; Ong & Hee, 1993). Even despite these undeniable examples of discrimination and bias against Asian Americans, it is alarming that the overly positive, problem-free image of the model minority myth may cause Asian Americans to actually discount

and underreport their experiences of actual racism (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2007; Sue et al., 2007), suggesting that the reported rates of discrimination and the ensuing consequences could be even greater.

Yet another reason that the model minority stereotype is labeled as a myth is that it severely oversimplifies the economic and educational realities of Asian Americans (Fong, 2008; Yoo et al., 2010). More specifically, it ignores the heterogeneity of Asian American groups and their significantly varied levels of success based on factors such as specific ethnic group, skin tone, religion, immigration status, and more (Yi & Todd, 2020; Pew Research Center, 2018; Wong, Ramakrishnan, Lee, & Junn, 2011). This is often driven by studying only mean racial group differences (e.g. Kristof, 2006; Richwine, 2011) while overlooking the nuance and significantly different realities for subgroups within the Asian American population. For example, Asian Americans now have the largest income gap of any racial group in the country, after having the lowest income gap between the top 10% and bottom 10% of any racial group in 1970 (Kochhar & Cilluffo, 2018). In the educational context, while many South and East Asian Americans groups have been successful in receiving high school, bachelor's, and advanced degrees, most Southeast Asian Americans never finished high school, with rates comparable if not lower than other racial minority groups (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). Different ethnicities are also differentially stereotyped, with some Asian subgroups targeted more heavily by the perpetual foreigner stereotype as well as seen as less associated with the model minority stereotype, such as Filipino Americans being stereotyped as criminals or less intelligent, or Sikh Asian Indians stereotyped as terrorists resulting in their racial profiling and hate crimes against this population (Nadal et al., 2012; Nadimpalli et al., 2016). In addition, some youth, particularly those with Southeast Asian ancestry, are reported to struggle in school and in other

developmental domains despite the model minority myth stereotyping Asian Americans as academically high achieving (Asian American Federation, 2014). When the model minority myth holds enough weight to overlook the significant disparities in experiences within the Asian American population, there are alarming consequences: overlooking the income gap excludes Asian Americans from public discourse and policy related to poverty and income inequality (Yip et al., 2021), Asian American youth who struggle academically may be prevented from receiving necessary resources or support (Ho & Jackson, 2001; Kiang et al., 2017), and Asian Americans who exist at the intersection of different cultural, linguistic, migration, gender, skin tone, and socioeconomic conditions, just to name a few, may be multiply marginalized and further rendered invisible (Ching, Lee, Chen, So, & Williams, 2018; Mukkamala & Suyemoto, 2018).

While the model minority myth may have been constructed by those with power in the system to maintain the racial hierarchy, meaning that all racial minorities are victimized by this weaponization, legitimizing ideologies such as the model minority myth are unfortunately conditional on Asian Americans accepting their role as model minorities and perpetuating the dominant ideology (Kim, 1999). In one qualitative study, despite the Asian American participants explicitly and persistently naming the model minority myth as untrue, harmful, and a major cause of anti-Asian racism, they showed signs of still having internalized the stereotype, being both victims and perpetrators of the myth (Wang & Santos, 2023). Internalizing the model minority myth is an example of a larger dynamic called internalized racism, where victims of oppression identify with their oppressor by internalizing their oppressive actions, beliefs, and values, resulting in the inferiorizing of their own people and anyone else targeted by the oppressive strategy (Hwang, 2021). Internalized racism works to drive tension between minority communities and groups, leading them to fight amongst themselves in an effort to not be at the

bottom (Hwang, 2021). It is often considered a self-protective mechanism that serves an adaptive function in the short-term to reduce the cognitive dissonance that results from being oppressed (Chou & Feagin, 2015; Jost & Hunyady, 2005). More specifically, an individual that acknowledges racial injustice in the system should be motivated to fight against these injustices, aligning their attitudes and behaviors in order to reduce cognitive dissonance. However, choosing to take action against a system can understandably increase an individual's levels of fear and uncertainty. Therefore, the easier path, unfortunately, is to remain passive and act in line with the status quo and realigning attitudes to match the behavior (Speight, Hewitt, & Cook, 2016). The realigned attitudes would then be in line with the oppressor's beliefs, which ultimately works against minority group interests but serves a short-term, adaptive function necessary for survival (Jost & Major, 2001). Although it is also rooted in means of survival within the system, Asian Americans may however also internalize the positive descriptive and prescriptive stereotypes of Asian American success and values and use them as a source of pride or motivation (Yoon et al., 2023).

There are a variety of factors that influence the internalization of the model minority myth for Asian Americans. First, there is a sizable amount of research that studies how primary caregivers, such as Asian American parents, socialize their children through the model minority myth (Juang, Yoo, & Atkin, 2017). Parents may pass on their beliefs to their children both implicitly and explicitly, such as through encouraging or pressuring their children to live up to high educational expectations, instilling a sense of hope that their children can attain the "American dream" through this academic prowess (Chao & Tseng, 2002; Fuligni & Yoshikawa, 2004). While socializing their children through the model minority expectations may have some positive results when it comes to achievement, they are also paired with a host of negative

psychological symptoms in terms of their children's mental health and well-being (Yoo et al., 2015). For example in one study investigating the associations between mothers' and children's internalized model minority myth beliefs and outcomes of success, health, and well-being, results showed that mothers' levels on the achievement orientation of the model minority myth influenced children's belief in Asian Americans unrestricted mobility, which then positively affected their grade point average in school (Yoon et al., 2021). However, mothers' internalized achievement orientation also harmfully impacted youth outcomes of depression while unrestricted mobility beliefs were associated with greater antisocial behavior in their children (Yoon et al., 2021), both findings possibly due to the high expectations and pressures placed upon the children. Aside from academic achievement, parents may also socialize their children through the model minority myth as a means of distancing their family from the negative stereotypes of other racial minority groups (Yoon et al., 2023), with studies finding that Asian Americans received and adopted anti-Black and colorblind messages from their parents that reinforced unjust racial hierarchies and dismissed structural barriers to success (Atkin & Ahn, 2022). Such messages may reflect positive feelings of racial or cultural pride, but at the expense of identifying with the oppressor and potentially causing harm to other racial minority groups.

Internalization of the model minority myth may also depend on the level of acculturation to the United States mainstream culture and generational status. More acculturated Asian Americans may be more educated regarding racial dynamics within the United States, leading them to be less likely to endorse the model minority myth (Yoon et al., 2021). On the other hand, less acculturated individuals may be less aware of the history behind the racial stereotypes, leading them to endorse the model minority myth to maintain racial and cultural pride as well as a sense of hope and control in the face of their newer environment shift (Yoon et al., 2021). In

terms of generational differences, first-generation individuals have shown a more positive association between the internalization of positive stereotypes regarding competence, competitiveness, and well-being, whereas second-generation individuals actually show a negative correlation (Padgett et al., 2020). Another study by Gupta and colleagues (2011) also suggested that endorsement of positive Asian stereotypes was inversely related to generational status.

Although Asian Americans can come to internalize the model minority myth in a variety of ways, a rapidly growing body of research shows the devastating consequences to Asian Americans themselves as a result of this internalization, as the stereotypes place extreme pressure on Asian Americans to conform to high educational, occupational, and economic expectations (Gupta et al., 2011). For example, scholars suggest that internalization of the model minority myth is associated with greater psychological distress (Chen, 1995; Chu, 2002; Wong & Halgin, 2006). Asian American youth also experienced chronic stress and anxiety due to increased pressure to succeed as a result of internalization (Lee, 2008), and pressure to conform to the stereotype increased risk of imposter feelings, depression, and anxiety (Wei, Lu, Ko, Wang, & Du, 2020). In studying the unrestricted mobility dimension of the model minority myth, the degree to which this dimension was internalized was positively associated with the level of depressive symptoms when there is high perceived discrimination and high self-critical perfectionism among Asian American college students (Suh, DeBlaere, Kwag, & Osborne, 2023). In the Gupta and colleagues (2011) study, higher levels of endorsement of positive Asian stereotypes in line with the model minority myth were related to more somatic complaints and higher levels of psychological distress. Other studies have shown that internalization of the model minority myth may additionally negatively impact ethnic identity development among

Asian Americans on top of the negative psychological outcomes (Chan & Mendoza-Denton, 2008). When Asian American youth are seen through the lens of the model minority myth, they may feel a sense of embarrassment and shame for standing out, and being preferentially treated by their teachers at times may make them more likely targets for harassment from their peers (Rosenbloom & Way, 2004; Tenebaum & Ruck, 2007; Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000; Greene, Way, & Pahl, 2006). These feelings may lead to disidentification and decreased pride, understanding, and engagements in one's ethnic group membership (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999; Lee, 2005; Pyke, 2003). The negative outcomes may also be exacerbated by group differences; for example, while both high- and low-achieving Asian Americans reported experiencing anxiety because of the model minority myth, low-achieving students also felt depressed and embarrassed, which prevented them from getting the help that they needed (Lee, 1994). An interview study with Asian American women found that this demographic seemed to be particularly burdened by the model minority myth, with the unrealistically high expectations of achievement causing them severe psychological distress including suicidal ideations and attempts (Noh, 2018).

Internalization of the model minority myth may also have a direct impact on performance in some situations, primarily through the function of stereotype threat, defined in this case through which the fear and cognitive burden of confirming a stereotype can undermine performance (Steele, 1997; Steele & Aronson, 1995). In one study, when Asian American participants were made to draw attention to their ethnicity, it created difficulties in concentration that translated to significantly impaired performance (Cheryan & Bodenhausen, 2000). The authors attributed these cognitive burdens to the participants' contemplation of the possibility that they could fail to exhibit the positive quantitative skills commonly expected of Asians

(Cheryan & Bodenhausen, 2000). To make matters worse, Asian American students who performed poorly on a mathematical test were given substantially fewer points by graders than White American students who performed identically (Ho, Driscoll, & Loosbrock, 1998). Therefore, failing to meet the stereotype-driven high expectations could be grounds for greater punishment, reinforcing the fear and burdens Asian Americans may feel when asked to perform in the first place (Cheryan & Bodenhausen, 2000). Since the model minority myth paints Asian Americans as well adjusted, having no problems, hesitant to "rock the boat", and highly self-sufficient (Suzuki, 2002; Danico & Ng, 2004; Yi & Todd, 2023), Asian Americans may ignore or minimize their own psychosocial difficulties if they have internalized the model minority myth (Gupta et al., 2011). This may prevent them from getting the help that they need in order to address these psychological consequences.

In addition to the harm to the self that the model minority myth can have on the Asian Americans who have strongly internalized the stereotype, internalization may also cause Asian Americans to distance themselves from other oppressed groups because they are perpetuating the stereotypes that oppress different minority groups and attempting to claim power within the social hierarchy that they are reinforcing (Keum et al., 2018). One such way of differentiating is intraethnic othering, during which Asian Americans define hierarchies within one's own ethnic group (Hwang, 2021). For example, Asian Americans who were born in the United States may differentiate themselves from first generation immigrant Asian Americans, in an attempt to claim more power in a system that closely relates "American" to "White" (Devos & Banaji, 2005). Insensitive terms such as "fresh off the boat" is an example often used to create this othering. Asian Americans may also use interethnic othering strategies to perpetuate the hierarchy, during which members of one ethnic group oppress another ethnic group within the same race (Hwang,

2021). As mentioned previously, while the sweeping model minority myth supposedly applies to Asian Americans as a race, there are some ethnic groups that are less associated with the model minority label and receive more perpetual foreigner stereotyping (Nadimpalli et al., 2016). Asian Americans who are more associated with the model minority label may latch onto the positive stereotyping of their ethnicity and distance themselves from the ethnic groups that have been socially labeled as inferior, again as a form of maintaining any power they may have in the system.

Lastly, Asian Americans may partake in interracial othering, which is when members of a racial group attempt to distance from and oppress another racial group that they see as inferior (Hwang, 2021). Studies have shown that when Asian Americans internalize the model minority myth's achievement orientation, damages to interracial solidarity have included greater endorsement of anti-Black stereotypes, decreased support for Black Lives Matter, and less engagement in intergroup collective action (Matriano et al., 2021; Ouch & Moradi, 2022; Yi & Todd, 2021). Even Asian Americans that do not fit into the traditional model minority stereotype, such as low-income Asian Americans, still had higher anti-Black attitudes when they more strongly internalized both achievement orientation and unrestricted mobility beliefs (Le et al., 2023). The authors suggest that internalization of the myth for these groups may be a self-protective strategy to cope with the intersectionality of race and class by believing they are "at least better than Black Americans" (Le et al., 2023). Thus, Asian Americans who internalize the model minority myth may perpetuate the original reason the model minority myth was constructed: as a means to justify the oppression of Black Americans. Within the context of the model minority myth, viewing superiority over other groups is often shaped by the belief that those who are the model minorities have achieved their success through their own hard work and

efforts (achievement orientation) and perceiving that racism does not impose any barriers to them being able to continually achieve greater success (unrestricted mobility orientation; Yoo et al., 2010). In other words, they perceive a fair system in which individual merit is the only criterion for pulling oneself out of poverty (Wu, 2002; Yoo et al., 2010). Thus, their negative attitudes towards other groups cause them to ignore the racist policies and practices which disproportionately impact Black, Brown, and more marginalized Asian American communities to drive socioeconomic inequality (Lin, 2020). All together, the self-protective mechanisms that drive endorsement of the model minority myth among Asian Americans causes them to have stronger colorblind perspectives when it comes to racial inequality in the United States (Kim, 1999; Neville et al., 2000; Wu, 2002; Yoo et al., 2010). Indeed, previous literature has drawn parallels between the model minority myth and colorblind racial ideology (CBRI), as both share several commonalities including the denial and minimization of the existence of racial differences and institutional racism, the endorsement of hard work as the sole means to success and engaging in victim-blaming explanations for inequality (Neville et al., 2013).

Colorblind Racial Ideology

The CBRI belief system holds that within the United States, race is no longer a factor when it comes to outcomes and that the nation represents a meritocratic society where individual efforts and hard work are the determinants of success (Forman, 2004; Gallagher, 2003; Neville et al., 2000). The logic behind CBRI is that if people do not see differences between groups, then there is no basis for discrimination, prejudice, or stereotyping of others (Yogeeswaran, Verkuyten, Osborne, & Sibley, 2018). While the end goal of non-discrimination sounds ideal, in reality CBRI minimizes, ignores, and distorts the existence of race and racism in shaping people's lived experiences (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Neville et al., 2013). As such, it is similar to the

model minority myth as both are legitimizing ideologies that are used as rationales for the advantages and disadvantages majority and minority groups experience and as ways for individuals to explain their own position within society (Jost & van der Toorn, 2012).

The conceptual framework of CBRI contains two core interrelated dimensions of racial color-blindness: power and privilege evasion, and color and bias evasion (Frankenberg, 1993; Neville et al., 2013). Power and privilege evasion is characterized by the belief that systems treat individuals the same regardless of their racial group membership and is further separated into three core subdimensions: (a) blatant forms of racism (e.g., "Racism is a thing of the past and is no longer a problem today"), (b) institutional racism (e.g., "Certain policies and practices unfairly benefit racial and ethnic minorities"), and (c) racial privilege (e.g., "White people do not have certain advantages because of the color of their skin"; Neville et al., 2000). The emphasis is more about power relationships in society and accessibility to opportunities and less focused on the color of an individual's skin (Neville et al., 2013). Since there is a denial of institutional differences in how individuals are treated and as such, individuals can deny any privileges they may have over other groups (Neville et al., 2013; Block, 2016). The other dimension of CBRI, color and bias evasion, are about the beliefs that all individuals are the same regardless of racial group membership, emphasizing universal fundamental similarities across groups (Neville et al., 2000). While color and bias evasion can be wielded through a rationale of being fair-minded when treating each person as an individual, the reality is that when individuals choose not to see race, then individual racism can be denied in their perspective (Knowles, Lowery, Hogan, & Chow, 2009; Block, 2016).

Language of CBRI-related principles have at times been reflected within the United States for over a century, dating back to when U.S. Supreme Court justice John Harlan argued

that the U.S. constitution was colorblind and did not tolerate classes among its citizens (Plessy & Ferguson, 1896). Since then, CBRI-related principles have appeared throughout the United States' mainstream sociopolitical history, such as when Dr. Martin Luther King delivered his famed "I Have a Dream" speech which envisioned a world where race was not an obstacle to achievement equality between Black and White Americans (King, 1963). After the Civil Rights Movement when discrimination became both illegal and amoral and thus racism began to take on more subtle, covert, and harder to identify forms (Quillian, 2006), CBRI began to gain more traction as a response to allegations of increased modern racism, laissez-faire racism, symbolic racism, and aversive racism (McConahay, 1986; Bobo, Kluegel, & Smith, 1997; McConohay & Hough, 1976; Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986). CBRI is also inseparable from the concept of the "American Dream" ideology, which states that hard work is the prerequisite to achieving success in society, often defined as earning a high salary, having a prestigious job, or other common high-status symbols (Hochschild, 1995). Ideologically, the American Dream assumes a fair playing field in which everyone willing to participate has equal access to opportunities (Hochschild, 1995).

While ignoring race as a strategy to promote equality sounds desirable in an ideal world, evidence strongly suggests that the United States is still far from having achieved the necessary fair playing field for such a strategy to actually combat inequality (Appiah & Gutmann, 1966; Neville et al., 2013). For example, public opinion polls suggest that White adults' views on racial policies have changed very little between 1998 and the election of President Obama (Hutchings, 2009) and some even indicate an increase in explicit and implicit anti-Black racial prejudice since President Obama's election (Agiesta & Ross, 2012). In terms of representation, many social institutions such as colleges, degree programs, or high-level positions in several

organizations are still heavily skewed in favor of White American (Bialik, 2019; Espinosa et al., 2019; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020). Despite the large body of research that clearly indicates that racism is very much still rampant throughout the United States, many people still assert that society is now in an era of colorblindness and racism is no longer a major issue due to the national and local policies that have outlawed it, with individuals saying common phrases such as "I do not see color" or "race does not matter to me" (Wilson, 2012; Bonilla-Silva, 2018; Quillian, 2006). CBRI is a norm endorsed by many White Americans and is prevalent across a wide range of domains, such as in the form of educational initiatives to manage diversity (Pollock, 2004; Sue, 2004) or as the focus of legal debate (Duncan, 2000; Norton, Sommers, Vandello, & Darley, 2006). When White Americans ascribe to CBRI, they may see themselves as being absolved of the label "racist", but their beliefs actually serve to maintain their racial privilege within the societal hierarchy through the denial of blatant racism, the denial of White racial privilege, and the denial of institutional racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2001; Gallagher, 2003; Mueller, 2017; Neville et al., 2013).

Since the maintenance of the racial hierarchy is enforced through the oppression of other groups (Jost & van der Toorn, 2012), it is no surprise that a sizable body of literature has suggested several connections between CBRI and various forms of prejudicial attitudes and behaviors. For example, White Americans may use colorblind strategies as a mechanism to hide their racist and prejudicial thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors, but to no avail; in a study between Black and White Americans paired together in conversation, Black participants reported that the White participants who used color and bias evasion strategies seemed more racist (such as decrements of nonverbal friendliness) than Whites who openly talked about race (Apfelbaum et al., 2008; Apfelbaum et al., 2012). Similarly, Correll et al. (2008) found that in high-conflict

situations, participants who read a passage about color and bias evasion strategies for prejudice reduction were actually more likely to increase prejudice toward ethnic minorities compared to a multicultural strategy. In addition, while one study has shown that while White Americans who believed that racial categories hurts non-White Americans and also wanted to appear less racist were more likely to endorse CBRI's color and bias evasion strategies (Goff et al., 2013), employing these strategies can lead to higher levels of subtle discrimination behaviors, greater racial attitude bias measured both explicitly and on more unobtrusive reaction time measures, (Goff, Steele, & Davies, 2008; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004). Even with samples of children, exposure to a colorblind mindset (a color and bias evasion prime) for elementary school populations led them to be less likely to detect an overt instance of racial discrimination compared to a mindset that valued diversity (Apfelbaum, Pauker, Sommers, & Ambady, 2010). In addition, research suggests that CBRI's power and privilege evasion is related to more negative attitudes towards racial diversity, greater prejudice towards Black Americans, greater racial bias for medical health diagnoses, and greater beliefs that the world is fair and people get what they deserve (Gushue, 2004; Neville et al., 2000).

In organizations, White American's endorsement of colorblindness predicted racial minorities' psychological disengagement within the organization and minority distancing within the team, perhaps due to the minority members sensing the implicit and explicit biases from the dominant group (Plaut, Thomas & Goren, 2009; Meeussen, Otten & Phalet, 2014). In studies with Asian Americans as the target group for discrimination, one study found that White college students who reported more unawareness of blatant racial issues and institutional discrimination (power and privilege subdimensions of CBRI) reported more specific prejudicial attitudes toward Asian Americans (Dinh, Weinstein, Nemon, & Rondeau, 2008). Similarly in another study, when

White Americans believed in the unrestricted mobility dimension of the model minority myth, they were more likely to endorse power and privilege evasion beliefs, and in turn, endorse anti-Asian sentiments such as perceiving Asian Americans as perpetual foreigners and having unfavorable prejudicial attitudes toward Asian Americans (Parks & Yoo, 2016). The authors suggested that when White Americans believed in unrestricted mobility for Asian Americans, they were more likely to believe that racism no longer exists and equal opportunities are available to everyone. If so, then Asian Americans posed a threat or challenge to their White privilege, which led them to express anti-Asian sentiments as a way to reinforce the racial hierarchy (Parks & Yoo, 2016; Bonilla-Silva, 2003).

Since CBRI gained more traction as a response to more modern and subtle versions of racism following the Civil Rights Movement, a majority of the research on CBRI has been conducted on White samples to continually understand how this population has endorsed other frameworks that relate to maintaining their power in the racial hierarchy (Quillian, 2006; Cox, 2022). However, CBRI is fundamentally a cognitive schema that can be used by all racial groups to understand how people interpret racial stimuli (Neville et al., 2000). While studies suggest that White Americans tend to espouse greater levels of CBRI than members of racial minority groups, perhaps due to the difficulty of racial minority members to deny the existence of injustice when in the face of overt or subtle discrimination and systemic disparities (Awad, Cokley, & Ravitch, 2005; Neville et al., 2000; Oh, Choi, Neville, Anderson, & Landrum-Brown, 2010; Worthington, Navarro, Loewy, & Hart, 2008; Keum et al., 2018), racial minority members may still endorse CBRI for several nuanced group interest-related purposes (Cox, 2022).

One of the primary reasons the racial minority members may endorse CBRI is as a short-term protective strategy. To avoid the distress that recognizing racial inequality causes, racial

minority members may instead internalize the distorted and minimized messages about race, racism, and their group, resulting in a state of "false consciousness", defined as "the holding of false or inaccurate beliefs that are contrary to one's own social interest and which thereby contribute to the maintenance of the disadvantaged position of the self or the group" (Jost, 1995, p. 400; Jost & Banaji, 1994). In line with this strategy, previous research has shown that while higher endorsement of system justification has a negative long-term impact on self-esteem and psychological well-being (Jost & Thompson, 2000), it appears to serve a short-term palliative function by reducing feelings of uncertainty, helplessness, cognitive dissonance, moral outrage, and other negative psychological experiences (Kay et al., 2008; Wakslak et al., 2007). In turn, the reduced moral outrage leads people to resist social change and to perceive social change as a threat to the status quo, which then further reinforces the racial hierarchy that maintains White privilege (Jost & van der Toorn, 2012). The endorsement of CBRI as a protective strategy is a specific example of system justification that follows the same protective strategy pattern; for example, in a study of Korean American students at a predominantly White suburban school, Korean students reported adopting CBRI values such as being "culture free" in order to assimilate within the school and be academically successful (Marinari, 2005).

However, internalizing racism through adopting CBRI still has several insidious consequences. First, racial identity is important for providing a collective sense of self, history, connection, and belonging for many racial minority members and the diminishing of race and racial identity can negate a key aspect of self and be related to issues regarding ethnic identity development and other psychosocial factors (Speight et al., 2016; Thompson & Neville, 1999). One study using a college student sample found that the CBRI's power and privilege evasion attitudes among racial minority members were negatively related to engagement in formal

campus diversity experiences (Spanierman, Neville, Liao, Hammer, & Wang, 2008). In addition, when racial minority members endorsed power and privilege evasion, they were more likely to internalize racial stereotypes, engage in victim blaming, identify with the oppressor, and justify the existing social inequities (Neville, Coleman, Falconer, & Holmes, 2005).

More recently, there has been a growing body of research specifically investigating the impact of CBRI within the Asian American population, despite there being little to no data existing on the relevance and significance of CBRI just a little over a decade ago (Neville et al., 2013). Studies suggest that power and privilege evasion beliefs among Asian Americans is related to lower levels of collective self-esteem and racial identity and increased negative self-blaming (Tawa et al., 2012; McGee, Thakore, & LaBlance, 2017), in line with findings examining broader racial minority group populations. CBRI may also cause greater false self-attribution of negative racial experiences among Asian Americans (Chen et al., 2006; Watts-Jones, 2002). Asian Americans who reported greater levels of being colorblind on the institutional discrimination and racial privilege dimensions of a power and privilege evasion measure also had higher levels of internalized racism (Chen et al., 2006). As a way to buffer these longer-term negative consequences, Asian Americans may still use CBRI as a temporary self-protective mechanism. For example, CBRI has been found to buffer the adverse effects of discrimination on mental health as measured by anger and anxiety (Lee, 2017). Asian Americans have also been shown to use avoidant coping, where they avoid thinking about and dealing with the source of their stress and relying on wishful thinking (Tran & Paterson, 2018). Moreover, they use avoidant coping when refusing to believe in the negative aspects of their racial experience at a higher rate than Black Americans (Sheu & Sedlacek, 2004; Noh, Beiser, Kaspar, Hou, & Rummens, 1999; Sanders Thompson, 2006). Unfortunately, avoidant coping research

points to the usage of this strategy as being related to several psychological risk factors and resulting in harmful responses to stressful events (Holahan & Moos, 1987). In addition, Asian Americans who reported higher scores on CBRI's power and privilege evasion dimension reported lower racial stress on a measure that captured stress when given scenarios of racist events (Chen et al., 2006). The authors suggested that similar to Alvarez and Helms' (2001) study in which higher levels of internalized racism was negatively related to individuals' awareness of interpersonal racism, the participants may be responding to racist scenarios with denial and avoidance as a protective strategy (Chen et al., 2006). However, when racist events are too blatant to be denied such as the anti-Asian discrimination during the COVID-19 pandemic, heightened perception of racial discrimination was associated with lowered levels of power and privilege evasion (Lee et al., 2024).

With the rise of both CBRI research for Asian Americans and ongoing research on the model minority myth, several theoretical and empirical links have been made between the two. For example, Chan (2020) states that under a regime of colorblind racism, greater numerical representation of a group might be seen as having moved past structural racism. Thus, when the oversimplified statistic of Asian American numerical overrepresentation in higher education is explained through the model minority myth, this narrative upholds colorblind racism and suppresses structural inequalities that exist, serving to justify and maintain the racial hierarchy (Poon et al., 2016; Bonilla-Silva, 2001). In line with this theory, a study by Parks and Yoo (2016) found that when White Americans endorsed the model minority myth more strongly, particularly the unrestricted mobility orientation dimension, they reported higher levels of power and privilege evasion. Similar patterns are found within Asian American samples; in one study, when Asian American undergraduates had higher internalization of the model minority myth,

they also held greater beliefs in power and privilege evasion (Yi and Todd, 2021). In a study by Chen and colleagues (2006), the authors found that when Asian American students had increased internalized racial oppression, they held attitudes that reflected a colorblind, White cultural worldview that minimized the importance of racial issues. In explaining this finding, Chen and colleagues explained that being perpetually bombarded with stereotypes and beliefs of unmitigated Asian American success may drive this population to minimize, deny, and underreport experiences of racism (Yoo et al., 2010; Chen et al., 2006). In addition, Kim (1999) writes that when Asian Americans are unaware of the history behind how Asians have been used as a tool to contribute to systemic racism against Black communities, they are at a higher risk of believing in the model minority myth and are in turn praised for being apolitical and unconcerned regarding interracial struggles. Similarly, Rajagopal and Durkee (2024) explain that Asian Americans who internalize the model minority myth may justify the lower social position of Black and Latinx Americans by believing they do not work as hard or persevere through tough situations rather than acknowledge the impact of structural racism against these groups, a colorblind attitude. All in all, valorization of Asian Americans by both Asian Americans and others serve to mask the ways that racial minorities, including Asian Americans themselves, remain disenfranchised in the racial hierarchy through the maintenance of colorblindness (Chan, 2020).

As a note on measurement, Neville and colleagues (2013) state that there is no one measure designed to assess both the color and bias evasion and power and privilege dimensions of CBRI. Studies that generally investigate color and bias evasion tend to use experimental and quasi-experimental designs, where scenarios are utilized to evoke color and bias evasion or consciousness (Neville et al., 2013). However, there are more measures that capture the power

and privilege evasion dimension of CBRI, most notably the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes (CoBRAS) which captures subdimensions of Unawareness of Racial Privilege, Institutional Discrimination, and Blatant Racial Issues. (Neville et al., 2013). Neville and colleagues (2013) call for more research to be conducted that includes both dimensions in one study as an effort to learn more about how the two are linked empirically and to which specific outcomes they may differentially predict.

In sum, several studies point to the relationship between internalized racism by Asian Americans and their likeliness to endorse colorblind worldviews. Leveraging CBRI in these scenarios could be due to the need to justify the racial hierarchy, as Asian Americans who believe that Asian Americans are more high achieving and successful than other racial minorities due to merit and a lack of racial barriers are obscuring the influence that race plays in promoting unequal outcomes. Leveraging CBRI could also be a self-protective response to the high pressures that come with internalizing the model minority myth, such that by minimizing the salience of race, Asian Americans can temporarily shield themselves from having to meet the expectations of being the high-achieving, problem-free minorities that society expects them to be, as well as potentially denying race to be the primary driver of any discrimination that they may face. However, both internalizing the model minority myth and CBRI may have consequences for how Asian Americans view racial inequality in the United States and in turn, their motivation to support efforts that seek to address these inequalities.

Support for Practices that Address Racial Inequality

When Asian Americans are socially rewarded for their disengagement with racial injustice issues and playing their part in the maintenance of the racial hierarchy, often fueled by factors such as embracing the model minority myth and endorsing colorblindness (Chou &

Feagin, 2015), there are various negative consequences for interracial solidarity and moving towards real racial justice for all minority groups (e.g., Yi & Todd, 2023). When the racial identity of "Asian American" was originally created, one of its goals was thought to be achieving cross-racial solidarity with Black and Brown communities in fighting for social justice rather than assimilating towards Whiteness (Maeda, 2012; Wu, 2002). The identity label acknowledged the linked fate between Asian Americans and other racial minority groups in their shared oppression and searched for opportunities to come together and dismantle the system that has pitted them against each other as a means of maintaining a racial hierarchy (Yoo et al., 2010). Indeed, there are several examples throughout history in which Asian Americans have built coalitions with other racial minorities in the fight for racial justice; for instance, even the act of identifying as a "person of color" has reemerged in recent years as a coalitional identity (Kim et al., 2022). Asian American communities have also engaged continually in activism to fight for racial justice for Black Americans around issues of police brutality and mass incarceration (Aguirre & Lio, 2008; Liu, 2018). During the COVID-19 pandemic, horrifying incidents of anti-Asian violence spurred various Asian American social justice efforts, but many activists cautioned against utilizing these incidents to increase policing and further pursued solidarity and activism with other racial minority groups (Litam & Chan, 2021; Wong & Liu, 2022; Yi & Todd, 2023). In addition, when Asian Americans refuse to internalize the model minority myth, they may also be less likely to hold anti-Black attitudes and more likely to be engaged in solidarity-building across racial lines (Yi & Todd, 2021).

However, efforts of cross-racial solidarity to achieve racial justice may still be an uphill battle when the racial group with the most power has the ability to control societal narratives. By portraying Asian Americans as the apolitical, silent, model minority that does not allow racism to

affect their success, Asian Americans who internalize these beliefs can contribute to systemic racism against other racial minorities, including their own group (Matriano et al., 2021; Sue et al., 2021). In a social system, members of disadvantaged groups typically support system-challenging collective action, aimed at changing the status quo. On the other hand, members of advantaged groups tend to support system-supporting collective action which preserves the status quo (Jost et al., 2017). Therefore, when Asian Americans internalize the model minority myth, particularly that of unrestricted mobility, their belief in the absence of discriminatory barriers in the system may allow them to see themselves as part of the advantaged group and in turn, endorse system-supporting collective action that maintains the racial hierarchy. Research appears to support this theory, as studies have empirically shown that when Asian Americans internalize the model minority myth, they have decreased interest or engagement in activism, decreased support for the Black Lives Matter movement, less engagement in intergroup collective action (Lin, 2020; Matriano et al., 2021; Ouch & Moradi, 2022). In interviews with Asian American undergraduate students who engaged in activism for Asian Americans and other racial minority groups, participants discussed that the model minority myth prevented them from being ideal activists by maintaining distance between Asian Americans and other racial minority groups (Yi & Todd, 2023).

Many studies have also investigated the impact of CBRI as a significant barrier in the movement towards achieving racial justice. Since CBRI can be a legitimizing ideology that denies racial differences in contemporary society, racial inequalities are approached with a victim-blaming perspective at the individual level rather than addressing the role that power and privilege plays in outcomes (Neville et al., 2000; Knowles et al., 2009; Levy et al., 2005). Empirically, endorsement of CBRI, especially the power and privilege evasion dimension, has

been linked towards greater prejudice towards racial minorities, greater meritocratic beliefs, decreased support for policies that promote both resources distribution and the symbolic incorporation of minority culture into the national identity, and more negative views of policies that aim to rectify racial injustice (Awad et al., 2005; Neville et al., 2000; Yogeeswaran et al., 2018). For Asian Americans specifically, denying the existence and impact of race and racism may create intergroup tensions between Asian Americans and other racial minority groups, leading to in-group and out-group dynamics that inhibit cross-racial solidarity (Pettigrew, 1998; Keum et al., 2018). All in all, both endorsement of the model minority myth and CBRI can have significant implications for the support and engagement of racial justice efforts.

Although there are a multitude of strategies that work to move towards racial justice for minority groups, the present study focuses on two policies and programs due to their current mainstream relevance in American sociopolitical dynamics: race-based affirmative action policies in higher education institutions and race-based DEI practices in organizations.

Support for Race-Based Affirmative Action in Higher Education

The discussion around Asian American applicants and affirmative action in higher education is certainly not a new topic but has returned to a height of mainstream attention in the past several years while the future of affirmative action was being decided in the Supreme Court of the United States. In the case, an organization named Students for Fair Admissions, led by White politicians attempting to dismantle race-conscious policies in higher education, represented a group of Asian American plaintiffs that had been rejected from Harvard University and accused Harvard of holding Asian American applicants to a higher standard than applicants from other racial minority backgrounds, such as Black and Latinx Americans (Hsu, 2018, Yi & Todd, 2021). The plaintiffs argued that the university intentionally manipulated aspects of its

admission process in ways that discriminated against Asian Americans (Yi & Todd, 2021). The media painted Asian Americans with a broad stroke of positive model minority stereotypes which furthered the image of this population being victims of an unfair policy (Yi & Todd, 2021). However, just as Asian Americans have been subjected to racial triangulation by the dominant group in order to further the dominant group's interests throughout history (Kim, 1999), the Asian American population has been at times valorized and other times demonized based upon their stereotypes in the conversation around college admissions. For example, while they seem to be valorized in the Supreme Court case, they are actually often excluded from the political process of determining the appropriateness of affirmative action and what the programs would look like, likely due to a few Asian American ethnic groups being adequately or sometimes even overrepresented in higher education (Wang & Wu, 1996). Without representation in the process of developing affirmative action plans, Asian Americans are often excluded without any analysis and are widely not beneficiaries of affirmative action in college admissions despite numerous subgroups within the racial population being underprivileged (Wang & Wu, 1996). In addition, while Asian Americans being portrayed as academically high achieving is being used as a positive stereotype, several higher education institutions in the 1980s changed the standards of admissions to curb the rising rate of Asian American students at top schools, explaining that despite the applicants' impressive record, they were too bookish and not well-rounded enough for their institutions (Wang & Wu, 1996). In reality, investigations into these modified admissions practices revealed that the constraints on Asian American acceptance were created to make room for admitting more legacies, the children of alumni, who were predominantly White (Wang & Wu, 1996). More overtly, officials of the University of California at Berkeley had even stated, "If we keep getting extremely well-prepared Asians, and we are, we

may get to the point when Whites will become an affirmative action group", with officials at the University of California campus at Los Angeles adding on "[We] will endeavor to curb the decline of Caucasian students" (Wang & Wu, 1996). Taken together, whether the dominant group is valorizing or demonizing Asian American students, the admissions criteria in higher education may perhaps constantly be reengineered to protect White American applicants.

During the entirety of the media's coverage of the Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard Supreme Court case, Asian Americans were portrayed as being monolithically opposed to affirmative action (Poon et al., 2016), survey results appear to be mixed. National survey data from 2018 indicated that a majority of Asian Americans consistently support affirmative action (Wong, Lee, & Tran, 2018). In addition, when studying the difference between White Americans, Asian Americans, Black Americans, and Latinx Americans endorsement of affirmative action arguments, results indicated that while Asian Americans endorsed affirmative action at a lower rate than Black and Latinx Americans, their endorsement was still significantly higher than those of White Americans (Oh et al., 2010). The most recent survey data from Pew Research Center in 2023 indicates that 53% of Asian Americans believe that affirmative action is a good thing (as opposed to 19% stating that it is a bad thing). These percentages were fairly consistent across Asian ethnic groups surveyed (Chinese: 45% good, 27% bad; Filipino: 57%/17%; Indian: 60%/13%; Korean: 50%/21%; Vietnamese: 48%/20%; Japanese 56%/24%). Despite the overall 53% of survey respondents believing that affirmative action is a good thing, only 21% of respondents believed that race or ethnicity should be considered in college admission decisions (Pew Research Center, 2023). These nuances may be due to some Asian Americans recognizing the need for such policies to advance opportunities for underprivileged Asian subgroups or just more generally wanting to support affirmative action's goals in creating

a more equitable society (Park & Liu, 2014), but some others seeing these programs as violating a process that should emphasize individual merit, especially if they believe in a fair society.

The model minority myth is often used as an explanation for the over-representation of Asian Americans in higher education, with beliefs that despite being a racial minority, Asian Americans have achieved success through values such as hard work (Lee, 2006; Park, Maramba, & Hernandez, 2014). With such a meritocratic message, efforts seen as going against merit-based processes would seem unfair, as individuals should be seen as at fault for their own outcomes, not due to the supposedly non-existent racial biases that oppress minority groups. In one study using a White American sample, participants that were exposed to information consistent with the model minority myth were less likely to be supportive of affirmative action policies, both those specifically aimed to help Black Americans as well as minorities more broadly (Lett & Outten, 2020). When it comes to Asian Americans support for affirmative action, Inkelas (2003) found that in interviews with Asian American college students, participants who internalized the model minority myth opposed affirmative action, viewed beneficiaries of such policies as less qualified than Asian Americans, and believed that college admissions should be based on merit alone. Another study on Asian American college students by Yi and Todd (2021) found that internalization of the model minority myth (both achievement and unrestricted mobility orientations) indirectly predicted opposition to affirmative action for Black applicants, partially mediated by CBRI power and privilege evasion beliefs. Although these are two examples that have investigated the link between internalization of the model minority myth and support for affirmative action, there is still a scarcity of empirical research on this topic despite its heavy narrative use in media and politics (Yi & Todd, 2021). Yi & Todd (2021) call for more research

to be done regarding the impact of internalizing the model minority myth on consequences beyond mental health outcomes, such as sociopolitical consequences in this case.

Yi and Todd's (2021) finding that highlighted the empirical significance of CBRI in the prediction of support for affirmative action is supported by other studies examining the relationship between these two variables. One such study found that in a multiracial sample, low CBRI power and privilege evasion attitudes were the best predictor of support for favorable affirmative action attitudes, followed by race or ethnicity and beliefs about racism (Oh et al., 2010). Another study by Awad and colleagues (2005) examined the impact of CBRI power and privilege evasion compared with group self-interest and racial prejudice perspectives in understanding race-based affirmative action attitudes among a diverse sample of college students. Results suggested that after controlling for race and gender, power and privilege evasion was significantly associated with increased opposition to affirmative action more so than anti-Black racial attitudes (Awad et al., 2005). However, some authors argue that CBRI is not necessarily the driver for support for affirmative action policies, but is instead often used as a widely and increasingly acceptable justification for pre-existing beliefs such that those who are higher in prejudice would oppose affirmative action whether they were racially colorblind or not (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Mazzocco, Cooper, & Flint, 2012). Regardless, it seems evident that CBRI, whether truly held as a belief or as a justification, plays a significant role in understanding attitudes towards affirmative action. However, the Yi and Todd (2021) study is the only one, to the author's knowledge, that specifically utilizes an Asian American sample, opening the doors for more studies to be conducted on this topic.

Support for Race-Based Workplace DEI Practices

When affirmative action policies in higher education were effectively dismantled following the Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard ruling, there was a large reaction by media and organizations speculating the possible implications of the ruling to race-based DEI strategies in the workplace (Hsu & Riccucci, 2024). This is due to there being some fundamental similarities between affirmative action policies and DEI practices that target racial injustice. First of all, both acknowledge that racial injustice exists within their contexts and that policies or programs need to be implemented in order to address these injustices. In addition, affirmative action in higher education typically addresses admissions criteria and processes, a domain that is often addressed in workplace DEI strategies under the umbrella of recruiting and selection of employees (Iyer, 2022). At their core, both affirmative action policies in higher education and race-based workplace DEI practices can be generalized as race-conscious practices that influence decision making. Seizing on the momentum of anti-DEI rhetoric and a changing administration, a 2025 executive order ordered the termination of "all illegal programs, including illegal DEI and 'diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility' (DEIA) mandates, policies, programs, preferences, and activities in the Federal Government, under whatever name they appear" (Exec. Order No. 14151, 2025). While this executive order is currently still being contested in the judicial system, the implications of this anti-DEI order from the government's executive branch is potentially far-reaching.

Workplace DEI practices span further than the recruitment and selection stages and into all stages of the employee lifecycle. The goals of workplace DEI are generally to monitor existing policies and procedures to identify and eliminate any bias or discrimination that undermines equal opportunities for all groups (Iyer, 2022). In addition, they seek to employ proactive strategies to increase the representation, status, and power of historically disadvantaged

groups, and ensure that all employees feel supported and welcomed by the organization in being their authentic selves (Iyer, 2022). DEI policies can span various initiatives such as but not limited to targeted recruitment programs to increase the number of disadvantaged group members who apply for jobs and promotions, targeted training and mentoring programs to improve opportunities for disadvantaged groups, and diversity training to raise awareness about bias, inequality, and strategies for change (Iyer, 2022). In the pursuit of achieving these goals, DEI policies can appear to "change the rules" of career progression and be seen to shift away from traditional meritocratic principles and violating principles of justice and merit (Iyer, 2022), much like how affirmative action policies in higher education are viewed.

Those who see DEI programs as a threat to meritocracy in organizations base their beliefs on an assumption that workplaces are fair systems under which then merit should be the only criteria for success (Iyer, 2022). However, research indicates that workplaces are still rife with racial discrimination and bias and skew heavily in favor of White Americans (Bialik 2019; Espinosa et al 2019; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2020) and Asian Americans are not exempt from these discriminatory environments. While Asians are the fastest growing racial group in the United States and constitute a notable portion of the American workforce (Lopez et al., 2017; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019), they are at times the least visible of all racial minority groups and have significantly less workplace discrimination research represented on issues such as denied promotion opportunities compared to some other racial minority groups (Yu, 2020). Pervasive stereotypes are attached to Asian American in the workplace; the model minority myth, for one, portrays Asian Americans monolithically as competent, intelligent, and achieving universal occupational success (Lin et al., 2005; Oyserman & Sakamoto, 1997; Rosette et al., 2018; Zou & Cheryan, 2017), and are not truly disadvantaged minorities, contributing in part to

the lesser attention paid to the needs of this population (Harris, 2004; Lai & Babcock, 2013; Museus & Kiang, 2009; Takei, Sakamoto, & Kuo, 2014). Common stereotypes in the workplace also include lacking social skills, being perceived as foreign, and being submissive (Cheryan & Monin, 2005; Gündemir et al., 2019; Kim, 1999; Lin et al., 2005; Shih, 2004; Sy et al., 2010; Zou & Cheryan, 2017). Their disproportionately low representation in leadership positions despite having attained the qualifications required is exacerbated intersectionality for Asian American women (Lu et al., 2020; Yu, 2020).

The existence of both positive and negative stereotypes for Asian Americans in the workplace creates complexities for understanding Asian American experiences in the workplace, and there is much to be learned about how Asian American employees experience the existing racial hierarchy in organizations (Jun et al., 2022). Because there are reasons to believe that Asian Americans simultaneously experience both advantages and disadvantages based on their race, the alignment of their interests to the workplace racial hierarchy can vary from supporting, challenging, or remaining indifferent to the existing system (O'Brien, 2008; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). However, two surveys from the Pew Research Center found that Asian American support for DEI appears to be decreasing, with 57% of respondents seeing DEI as a good thing in 2024 as compared to 72% in 2023 (Pew Research Center, 2024). Since allyship within organizations may be an especially effective means for mitigating racial inequities (Jun et al., 2022), understanding what influences Asian Americans' support for race-based DEI practices is an important component to the overall success of these efforts. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of research that investigates Asian Americans' support for DEI practices as they relate to the constructs of the model minority myth and CBRI. This gap in the literature is likely linked to the

generally small but burgeoning amount of research on Asian Americans in the workplace due to their relative invisibility as a racially minoritized group within the workplace setting.

The Present Study

The present study builds upon Yi and Todd's (2021) study that also investigated the relationships between constructs such as internalization of the model minority myth, CBRI, and support for race-based affirmative action. However, this study differs in several ways in an effort to address aforementioned gaps in the literature. First, as noted by Neville et al. (2013), studies on CBRI usually capture power and privilege evasion or color and bias evasion, but rarely both. These researchers indicated a need for future studies in capture both CBRI dimensions in one study to further understand the potential differences in relationships that the two dimensions may have with other variables as well as understanding CBRI more holistically (Neville et al., 2013). Since color and bias evasion primarily captures individual-level, interpersonal colorblindness (e.g. choosing to minimize the race of someone that one is interacting with) and power and privilege evasion primarily captures the dismissal of racial differences at a systems level (e.g. dismissing differential barriers for racial groups in attaining resources), understanding both dimensions of CBRI in this study may shed light on the multilevel processes impacting Asian Americans' experiences with the model minority myth and the variance in support for practices that address racial inequality. Indeed, the Yi and Todd (2021) study only captured the power and privilege evasion dimension of CBRI. As such, the present study includes two separate measures that capture each dimension respectively.

Second, the present study could add valuable insights into the burgeoning field of research on the Asian American population. While Asian Americans may be subject to racial triangulation in an effort to maintain the racial hierarchy that often primarily only focuses on

White Americans and Black Americans, capturing the Asian American experience as a result of being this "wedge" population is still in need of further research. For example as mentioned previously, Asian Americans have been spotlighted in narratives regarding affirmative action in higher education, but in practice are often left out of being included in the political processes of creating affirmative action plans (Wang & Wu, 1996). They are also seen as an "invisible" population in the workplace and often overlooked in organizational research as well. By having a better understanding of Asian American experiences and the resulting beliefs they hold regarding racial issues in the United States, we may have greater clarity into how internalized racism operates for this population and how their beliefs may harm Asian Americans and other racial minority groups by maintaining the racial hierarchy.

The present study also expands upon the Yi & Todd (2021) study methodologically to explore attitudes within the Asian American population. First, our study includes an outcome measure of support for race-based workplace DEI practices. As mentioned previously, there is a dearth of research that captures Asian Americans support for workplace DEI practices. Although Asian Americans still face racial discrimination in the workplace, they are simultaneously rendered invisible in many organizational settings and often seen as not truly disadvantaged minorities. Their fluctuating visibility and invisibility may influence their support for race-based workplace DEI practices. Thus, this study includes a measure to capture this support. In addition, the Yi and Todd (2021) study, as well as many other studies that have investigated support for affirmative action (e.g. Awad et al., 2015; Inkelas, 2003) all use university student samples. The present study instead uses a broader sample of Asian American adults for two reasons. First, having a wider age range of working Asian American adults will be more informative for the outcome of support for race-based workplace DEI practices, as they may have had more

exposure than university-level students of being in organizations and having knowledge of workplace DEI practices. Second, while it is certainly important to understand university-level students' opinion on affirmative action in higher education as this is their current context, adults beyond university-level age also impact decisions made about affirmative action, such as by being university administrators, voters in elections that may impact legislation, and so on. Therefore, the addition of a broader sample in the present study will add further insight upon the aforementioned previous studies which only used university-level samples.

Lastly, the timing of the present study in following the 2023 Supreme Court ruling on affirmative action and the resulting backlash of DEI in higher education and organizational contexts, including the 2025 executive order, is important. As mentioned previously, there was a significant reaction by media and organizations tying the Supreme Court ruling to possible implications to race-based DEI strategies in the workplace (Hsu & Riccucci, 2024), considering that both are race-based practices aimed to address racial inequalities that exist in their respective contexts. While Asian Americans still face prejudice against their group in the workplace such as the "bamboo ceiling" effect, their stereotypes of being the model minority still generally have positive associations in the workplace by viewing this group as hardworking and resilient. Paired with the high-level statistic that Asian Americans are the highest earning racial group in America, a narrative can intuitively be drawn that Asian Americans have achieved their successes in the workplace due to individual meritocratic efforts. Therefore, just as these narratives were used to fight against affirmative action in higher education, they may easily be used against workplace DEI practices as well. Since these issues have been especially highlighted to American mainstream consciousness following the Supreme Court case and again

with the executive order, this is an important time to understand the most current beliefs regarding affirmative action and DEI.

Overall, the present study has the following aims. At a high level, it seeks to extend previous research into how Asian Americans view their racial status in society and how these beliefs affect their motivations for pursuing collective action against racial injustice for racial minorities. In particular, the study investigates the relationships between internalization of the model minority myth by Asian Americans, CBRI, and support for efforts to combat racial inequality in higher education (race-based affirmative action) and the workplace (race-based DEI practices). In addition, we seek to gain insight into the subdimensions of both the internalization of the model minority myth and the subdimensions of CBRI, and how they relate to one another as well as their separate relationships to support for affirmative action in higher education and race-based DEI practices in the workplace. While we do not predict differential relationships regarding how the subdimensions of internalization of the model minority myth and the subdimensions of CBRI will relate to each other and to the support for the two race-based practices based on previous literature, these are explored as part of the follow-up analyses for each main hypothesis.

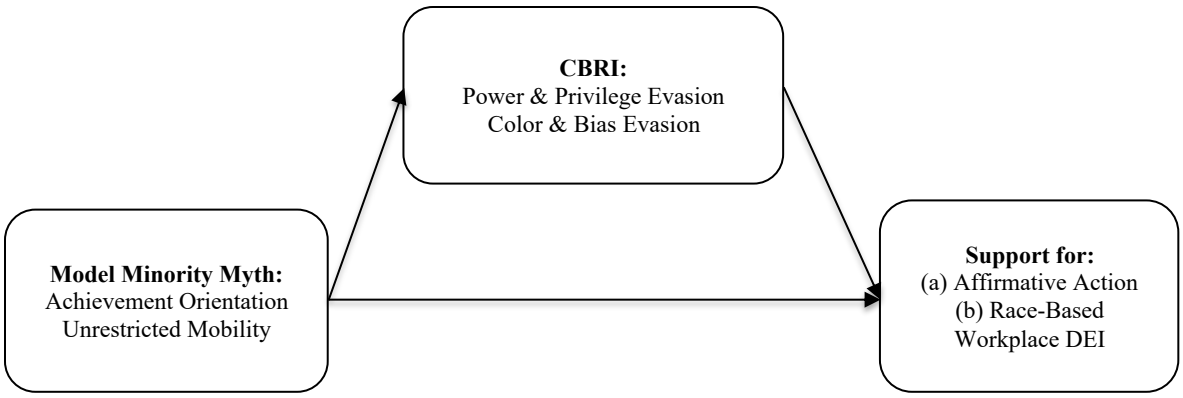

Figure 1. High-level model of the relationships between the two internalization of the model minority myth dimensions, the two CBRI dimensions, and support for race-based affirmative action in higher education and race-based workplace DEI practices.

All in all, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Asian Americans who more strongly internalize the model minority myth will be less likely to support both race-based affirmative action in higher education (H1a) and race-based workplace DEI practices (H1b).

H2: Asian Americans who more strongly internalize the model minority myth will be more likely to endorse CBRI.

H3: Asian Americans who more strongly endorse CBRI will be less likely to support both race-based affirmative action in higher education (H3a) and race-based workplace DEI practices (H3b).

H4: Asian Americans' endorsement of CBRI will partially mediate the relationship between internalization of the model minority myth and the likeliness to support both race-based affirmative action in higher education (H4a) and race-based workplace DEI practices (H4b).

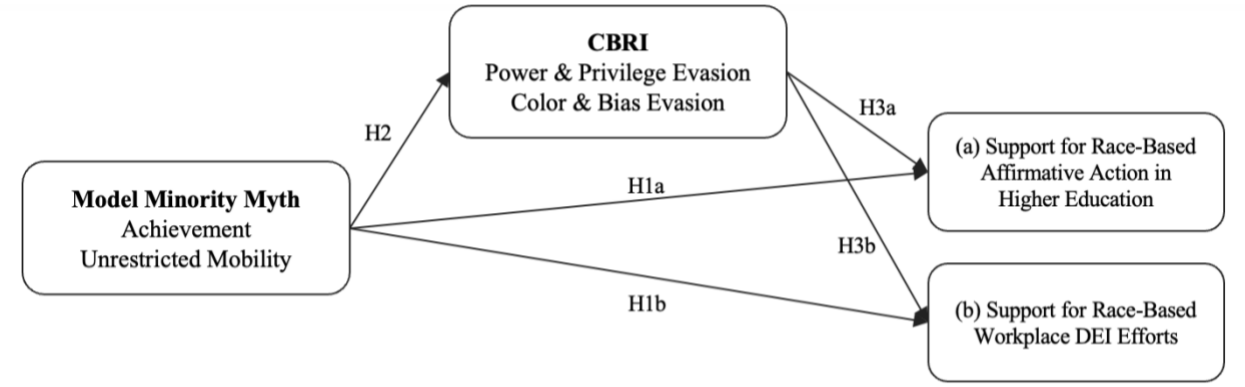

Figure 2. Expanded model of the hypothesized relationships between the two internalization of the model minority myth dimensions, the two CBRI dimensions, and support for race-based affirmative action in higher education and race-based workplace DEI practices.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Participants and Design

A total of 281 participants completed the study through Prolific, an online participant recruitment platform. The survey was hosted on Qualtrics, a survey and data collection platform, which participants access through the Prolific site. To qualify for the study, participants must identify as Asian American and be over 18 years of age. In addition, since one of the outcome variables is related to beliefs within a workplace setting, all participants must have been currently employed at least part-time or actively seeking employment at the time of the study. The participants received monetary compensation for their participation, paid through the Prolific platform.

Participants self-identified as Male (56%), Female (42%), Non-binary or Gender Non-conforming (1.8%), or Other (.01%), with ages ranging from 18 to 67 (M = 33.88, SD = 10.79). Ethnic region groups represented included East Asian (46%), Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (18%), Southeast Asian (14%), South Asian (12%) and other ethnic group or multiple groups (11%). As a note, participants who identified as Hawaiian or Pacific Islander ethnicities self-identified as Asian American, which was a qualification criteria for the study. By generational status, participants self-identified as 1st generation (10%), 1.5 generation (16%), 2nd generation (66%), 3rd generation (5%), or 4th or greater generation (2%). A description of how each generation is defined can be found in Appendix C. Participants also politically identified as Democrat (58%), Republican (13%), Independent (27%), or Other Political Affiliation (2%). The study involved a cross-sectional survey design and was approved by Teachers College, Columbia University's Institutional Review Board prior to data collection.

Procedure

Asian American participants completed an online survey on Qualtrics described as asking for their opinions on common beliefs about people in society as well as beliefs about institutional and organizational practices that involve race. Participants first completed measures capturing their beliefs on both dimensions of the internalization of the model minority myth measure, followed by measures capturing their endorsements of both dimensions of CBRI. Participants then continued onto the measures of their support for race-based affirmative action in higher education and race-based DEI practices in organizations. Next, the participants completed sections on the exploratory variables, including measures regarding identity integration, the perception of practices addressing racial inequality as being helpful to Asian Americans, and close cross-race friendships. The participants concluded the survey with a demographics section, some of which were included as control or exploratory variables such as gender, political orientation, and generational status. Upon completing the survey, participants returned to Prolific to provide a completion code supplied at the end of the Qualtrics survey. Upon verification by the researcher of completion of the study and passing the attention checks embedded within the survey, participants received compensation for their work.

Measures

Internalization of the Model Minority Myth. Consistent with prior research, internalized model minority myth is captured using the Internalization of the Model Minority Myth Measure (Yoo et al., 2010; a = .89), which includes the subdimensions of the achievement orientation (10 items, a = .94) and the unrestricted mobility orientation (5 items, a = .90). All items begin with the stem: "In comparison to other racial minorities (e.g., African American, Hispanics, Native Americans)." The response format for the measure is a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with higher scores representing greater internalization of the model minority myth and lower scores representing lower internalization levels. Example

items from the achievement orientation subscale include “Asian Americans get better grades in school because they study harder” and “Asian Americans make more money because they work harder”. Example items from the unrestricted mobility subscale include “Asian Americans are less likely to encounter racial prejudice and discrimination” and “Asian Americans are less likely to face barriers at work”. A list of all items in this measure is in Appendix A.

CBRI. As previously mentioned, there is no one measure designed to assess both the color and bias evasion and power and privilege dimensions of CBRI (Neville et al., 2013), and more research needs to be conducted that includes both dimensions in one study as an effort to learn more about how the two are linked empirically and to which specific outcomes they may differentially predict (Neville et al., 2013). As such, the study drew from two different measures from prior research to cover both dimensions. For the power and privilege evasion dimension, participants completed the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale’s (CoBRAS) Unawareness of Racial Privilege and Unawareness of Institutional Discrimination factors (Neville et al., 2000). The CoBRAS (14 items, a = .89) is the most established measure on CBRI power and privilege evasion and has solid psychometric properties with college and community samples across a range of racial and ethnic groups (Neville et al., 2013). Items are on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with higher scores reflecting higher degrees of CBRI power and privilege evasion. Example items include “Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not”, “Racism may have been a problem in the past, but it is not an important problem today”, and “Racial problems in the United States are rare, isolated situations”. A list of all items in this measure is in Appendix A.

CBRI color and bias evasion was measured with the Strategic Colorblindness Scale (11 items, a = .95; Goff et al., 2013). Items are on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly

disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with higher scores on this measure reflecting higher degrees of CBRI color and bias evasion. Example items include "Recognizing racial affiliations prevents the United States from moving towards a more socially just society" and "Seeing people in terms of race strips one of their individuality". A list of all items in this measure is in Appendix A. CBRI, as an overall measure, aggregated across the CoBRAS and Strategic Colorblindness Scales (25 items, a = .91)

Support for Race-Based Affirmative Action in Higher Education. The five-item measure for support for race-based affirmative action in higher education was constructed by building on three previous measures (Chow, Lowery, & Hogan, 2013; Wilkins et al., 2015; Kravitz & Platania, 1993; a = .91). Some of the items were previously single-item measures, and combined together, the items from the three sources are meant to capture a more comprehensive set of affirmative action beliefs. Items are on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with higher scores indicating greater support for race-based affirmative action in higher education. Example items include "Affirmative action programs in higher education are still needed today to address racial inequality" and "The goals of race-based affirmative action policies in higher education are good". A list of all items in this measure is in Appendix A.

Support for Race-Based Workplace DEI Practices. The five-item measure for support for race-based workplace DEI practices (a = .92) follows the same construction as the previous measure on support for affirmative action in higher education. Items are on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with higher scores indicating greater support for race-based affirmative action in higher education. Example items include "I support Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) practices in the workplace that address racial inequality" and "DEI practices to promote diversity in the workplace are no longer necessary to protect

racial minority employees and applicants (reverse-scored)". A list of all items in this measure is in Appendix A.

In addition to the main study measures above, the following exploratory measures were also included in the study.

Identity Integration. The degree to which participants identity as Asian American and as a Person of Color, or the degree to which they see Asian Americans as a racial group as having closeness or distance with the overall group identity of People of Color may impact the degrees of internalization of the model minority myth, endorsement of CBRI, and support for practices that address racial inequality. As an example, different Asian ethnicity groups are differentially stereotyped, with some ethnic groups targeted more heavily by the perpetual foreigner stereotype or the model minority myth (Nadal et al., 2012; Nadimpalli et al., 2016). The differential treatment by society could create differences in Asian Americans' views on their closeness with Asian American identity, which could subsequently impact how much stereotypes could influence their perspectives for different ideologies. As another example, the degree to which Asian Americans see their racial group as being closely tied or distanced from the People of Color racial umbrella category could influence their beliefs about cross-racial solidarity, which in turn could impact beliefs about the model minority myth and support for practices that address racial inequality. For example, a study on in-group identity found that when Asian employees perceived greater group similarity with their Black coworkers, they engaged in greater allyship behaviors towards their Black coworkers (Jun et al., 2022).

In the present study, three single-item measures probed the participants' perception of identity integration between two different identities respectively (adapted from Bergami and Bagozzi, 2000). Participants were shown a series of paired circles that varied in their degree of

overlap. Greater overlap was measured to signal greater identity integration between the two identities. Participants were asked to imagine that one of the circles at the left in each row represented one identity and the other circle at the right represented a second identity, and were asked to indicate which level of overlap best described their perception of the two identities. The three items measured respectively the integration between 1) the self and Asian American identity, 2) the self and Person of Color identity, and 3) Asian American group identity and Person of Color group identity. Visuals of the items are included in Appendix B.

Perception of Practices Addressing Racial Inequality Helping Asian Americans. The Pew research surveys (Pew Research Center, 2023; Pew Research Center, 2024) on beliefs regarding affirmative action in 2022-2023 and DEI in 2024 both measured Asian Americans belief in the harm of these practices. In 2022-2023, 24% of Asian participants believe they had been disadvantaged by affirmative action (as opposed to 57% not believing they had been disadvantaged), and in a separate question, 11% believed that they affirmative action gave them an advantage (as opposed to 72% reporting no advantage). In 2024, a Pew research survey found that most Americans believed that DEI was helpful to Asian employees, although there was a decrease in Asian respondents saying that DEI is a good thing from 2023 (72% to 57%). In addition, DEI was seen to help Asian workers less than Black and Latinx workers, although more than White workers. Overall, the perception of these practices helping or harming Asian Americans could have an impact on support of these practices, either related to or unique from the model minority myth and CBRI's influences.

In the present study, participants were asked to indicate how much they believed race-based affirmative action in higher education and race-based workplace DEI practices were harmful or beneficial for different racial groups (adapted from Lowery et al., 2006). The first

question asked “When it comes to race-based affirmative action in higher education, how would this program affect Asian American applicants’ chances of being accepted?” The question is repeated for how this program would affect Black American applicants, Latinx American applicants, and White American applicants. Items are on a Likert-type scale from 1 (greatly harm) to 7 (greatly benefit). Only the item about Asian American applicants was used for the analysis to measure the perception of the practice helping Asian Americans. In addition, a second set of questions followed the same format but were instead focused on race-based workplace DEI practices, such as by asking “When it comes to race-based workplace Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion programs, how would these practices affect Asian Americans in the workplace?” Again, only the item about Asian Americans was used for the analysis. A list of all items in this measure is included in Appendix B.

Close Cross-Race Friendships. The existence of close cross-race friendships for individuals has been found in previous diversity training research to improve perspective-taking abilities (Ragins & Ehrhardt, 2020). In the context of support for practices that address racial inequality, having close friendships with people of another race from oneself could impact empathy for other racial groups, many of which are seen to be differentially impacted by affirmative action and DEI (e.g. Pew Research Center, 2024). To measure close cross-race friendships, an item first asks if the participant has friends of a different race than the participant. If the participant selects no, the item is coded as no close cross-race friendship. If yes, three addition items probe the closeness of the friendship, such as “How likely are you to share personal challenges or problems with these friends?”. Items are on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (unlikely) to 4 (likely). The responses are coded as having close cross-race friendships only if all

three items received a response of 3 (somewhat likely) or 4 (likely). A list of all items in this measure in included in Appendix B.

Participant Demographics. In addition to a standard participant demographics section, the survey also collected further information on Asian American identity. For example, an item on Asian American generational status may provide further insight into generational differences, since previous studies have shown an inverse correlation between generational status and internalization of the model minority myth (Gupta et al., 2011). The collection of generational status and ethnic identity is also in line with the Yi & Todd (2021) study which follows a similar framework to the present study. Participant gender and educational attainment are captured in the standard demographics portion but will also be considered as potential variables in the context of the study. Previous research has shown that Asian American women may be particularly burdened by the model minority myth, with the unrealistically high expectations of achievement causing them severe psychological distress including suicidal ideations and attempts (Noh, 2018). In addition, whereas both educationally high- and low-achieving Asian Americans reported experiencing anxiety because of the model minority myth, low-achieving students also felt more depressed and embarrassed, which prevented them from getting the help that they needed (Lee, 1994). Participants also reported their political orientation, as the Pew research survey on affirmative action (2022) indicated significant differences in Asian American support for affirmative action based on political beliefs, with those who identify as more Democrat believing affirmative action is a good thing at a higher rate than those who identify as more Republican (64% to 32% respectively). A list of all items in the demographics survey section is included in Appendix C.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Data Cleaning Procedure

Participants were removed from the study if they failed at least one of the three attention checks embedded within the survey or if they were identified as a "speeder", completing the survey in less than five minutes. This resulted in the removal of twenty-three participants, accounting for 7.6% of the original sample. The final sample size was 281 participants.

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

The means, standard deviations, Cronbach's alphas, skewness, and kurtosis statistics for all measures in the study are displayed in Table 1. A correlation matrix for all measures in the study is displayed in Table 2. All measures achieved the general standards for good to excellent internal reliability and acceptable ranges of normal distribution (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2022). Of note, internalization of the model minority myth's achievement orientation (M = 5.29, SD = 1.08) appears to be higher than the unrestricted mobility orientation (M = 3.07, SD = 1.22). Support for race-based workplace DEI practices (M = 5.13, SD = 1.52) and race-based affirmative action in higher education (M = 4.36, SD = 1.50) both appear to lean positive (above the scale midpoint of 4) but not significantly when accounting for standard deviations. The perception that race-based workplace DEI practices help Asian Americans (M = 4.74, SD = 1.32) is also somewhat higher than the perception of race-based affirmative action helping Asian Americans (M = 3.78, SD = 1.69). In addition, means and standard deviations for the main study variables by participant ethnicities are included in Appendix C.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Main Study Measures

Measure	Items	α	Mean	SD	Skew	Kurtosis
Internalization of the Model Minority Myth	15	.89	4.55	.86	-.74	1.48
Model Minority Myth: Achievement Orientation	10	.94	5.29	1.08	-.90	1.43
Model Minority Myth: Unrestricted Mobility	5	.90	3.07	1.22	.45	-.23
Colorblind Racial Ideology	25	.91	3.73	.91	-.12	.26
CBRI: Power & Privilege Evasion	14	.89	3.30	1.02	.66	.87
CBRI: Color & Bias Evasion	11	.95	4.27	1.29	-.27	-.27
Support for Race-Based Affirmative Action in Higher Education	5	.91	4.36	1.50	-.53	-.27
Support for Race-Based Workplace DEI Practices	5	.92	5.13	1.52	-1.05	.69

Table 2

Correlation Matrix of All Study Variables

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	XV	XVI
I. Model Minority Myth (Aggregate)																
II. MMM: Achievement Orientation	.88**															
III. MMM: Unrestricted Mobility	.55**	0.09														
IV. CBRI (Aggregate)	.45**	.44**	.18**													
V. CBRI: Power & Privilege Evasion	.43**	.40**	.21**	.80**												
VI. CBRI: Color & Bias Evasion	.30**	.31**	0.08	.80**	.28**											
VII. Support for Affirmative Action	-.39**	-.41**	-0.08	-.53**	-.71**	-.14*										
VIII. Support for DEI	-.34**	-.32**	-.14*	-.51**	-.69**	-.14*	.78**									
IX. ID Integration: Self & Asian American*	0.03	0.10	-.12*	-.13*	-.14*	-0.07	0.03	0.11								
X. ID Integration: Self & POC	-0.08	-0.01	-.15*	-.22**	-.25**	-0.11	.20**	.28**	.48**							
XI. ID Integration: Asian American & POC	-.21**	-.18**	-.12*	-.32**	-.34**	-.17**	.22**	.30**	.36**	.68**						
XII. Affirmative Action Help Asians	-.16**	-.19**	0.01	-.20**	-.36**	0.04	.53**	.42**	0	.13*	0.1					
XIII. DEI Help Asians	-.15*	-.17**	-0.02	-.29**	-.44**	-0.01	.50**	.61**	0.05	.17**	0.11	.61**				
XIV. Cross-Race Friendships (0, 1)	-0.01	-0.07	0.1	-0.02	0.05	-0.08	0	-0.01	0.05	0.05	0.08	0.04	0.03			
XV. Political Orientation (Lib - Con)	.36**	.38**	0.09	.54**	.58**	.29**	-.42**	-.45**	0.03	-.12*	-.20**	-.20**	-.24**	-0.01		
XVI. Generational Status (1 - 4)	-.13*	-.16**	0.02	-.13*	-0.05	-.17**	-0.01	0	-0.08	-.17**	-0.01	-0.02	-0.05	0.11	-0.04	
XVII. Gender (1 Male, 2 Female)	-.15*	-.13*	-0.08	-.18**	-.20**	-.17**	.26**	.25**	0.06	.13*	.17**	.16**	.19**	0.09	-0.02	-.12*

*Low scores indicate low integration between identity categories, high scores indicate high integration

Hypothesis Tests

All hypothesis testing was carried out using SPSS. Hypothesis 1 predicted that Asian Americans who more strongly internalize the model minority myth will be less likely to support both race-based affirmative action in higher education (H1a) and race-based workplace DEI practices (H1b). Linear regression analyses were conducted controlling for both gender and political orientation, with the internalization of the model minority myth measure (aggregated across the achievement orientation and unrestricted mobility items) as the predictor. For all regression analyses, the results for gender and political orientation are listed in the respective tables. The regression analysis revealed that internalization of the model minority myth significantly predicted less support for race-based affirmative action in higher education (H1a), $t(273) = -4.39$, $p < .001$. Thus, Hypothesis 1a was supported. The next regression analysis revealed that internalization of the model minority myth also significantly predicted less support for race-based workplace DEI practices (H1b), $t(273) = -3.37$, $p < .001$. Thus, Hypothesis 1b was supported.

Follow-up analyses for Hypothesis 1 were conducted to investigate the specific relationships between variables based on the subdimensions of internalization of the model minority myth measure. For these analyses, both dimensions of internalization of the model minority myth were inputted simultaneously as predictors for each outcome in the linear regression analyses, controlling again for both gender and political orientation. Findings revealed that internalization of the model minority myth's achievement orientation significantly predicted less support for race-based affirmative action in higher education, $t(273) = -5.15$, $p < .001$. However, the unrestricted mobility dimension did not predict support for race-based affirmative action in higher education, $t(273) = -.03$, $p = .98$. Next, the achievement orientation significantly

predicted less support for race-based workplace DEI practices, $t(273) = -2.92$, $p < .01$. However, the unrestricted mobility dimension did not predict support for race-based workplace DEI practices, $t(273) = -1.51$, $p = .13$. A table of the regression results for Hypothesis 1 and the associated follow up tests is in Table 3. A visual model of Hypothesis 1 with standardized coefficients is in Figure 3.

Table 3
Regression Results for Hypothesis 1

	Support for Affirmative Action				*Support for DEI*			
Regression Input	***B***	***SE***	***t***	***p***	***B***	***SE***	***t***	***p***
Step 1								
Gender[1]	.68	.16	4.22	< .001	.82	.16	5.12	< .001
Political Orientation	-.40	.05	-7.59	< .001	-.45	.05	-8.63	< .001
Step 2								
Gender	.60	.16	3.83	< .001	.75	.16	4.79	< .001
Political Orientation	-.32	.05	-5.81	< .001	-.38	.05	-7.06	< .001
Internalization of the Model Minority Myth (Aggregate)	-.43	.10	-4.39	< .001	-.33	.10	-3.37	< .001
Follow-up: Step 1								
Gender	.68	.16	4.22	< .001	.82	.16	5.12	< .001
Political Orientation	-.40	.05	-7.59	< .001	-.45	.05	-8.63	< .001
Follow-up: Step 2								
Gender	.60	.16	3.81	< .001	.75	.16	4.78	< .001
Political Orientation	-.30	.05	-5.48	< .001	-.38	.06	-6.95	< .001
MMM: Achievement Orientation	-.41	.08	-5.15	< .001	-.23	.08	-2.92	< .01
MMM: Unrestricted Mobility	.00	.06	-.03	.98	-.10	.06	-1.51	.13

Note: For gender, 0 = Male, 1 = Female. For Political Orientation, 1 = Strongly Liberal, 7 = Strongly Conservative.

1. For all hypothesis tests involving regressions, the significance of results for each predictor-outcome relationship is the same when not controlling for gender and political orientation with one exception: Internalization of the Model Minority Myth: Unrestricted Mobility dimension significantly predicted Support for DEI when not controlling for gender and political orientation ($B = -.14$, $SE = 0.07$, $t = -2.03$, $p < .05$)

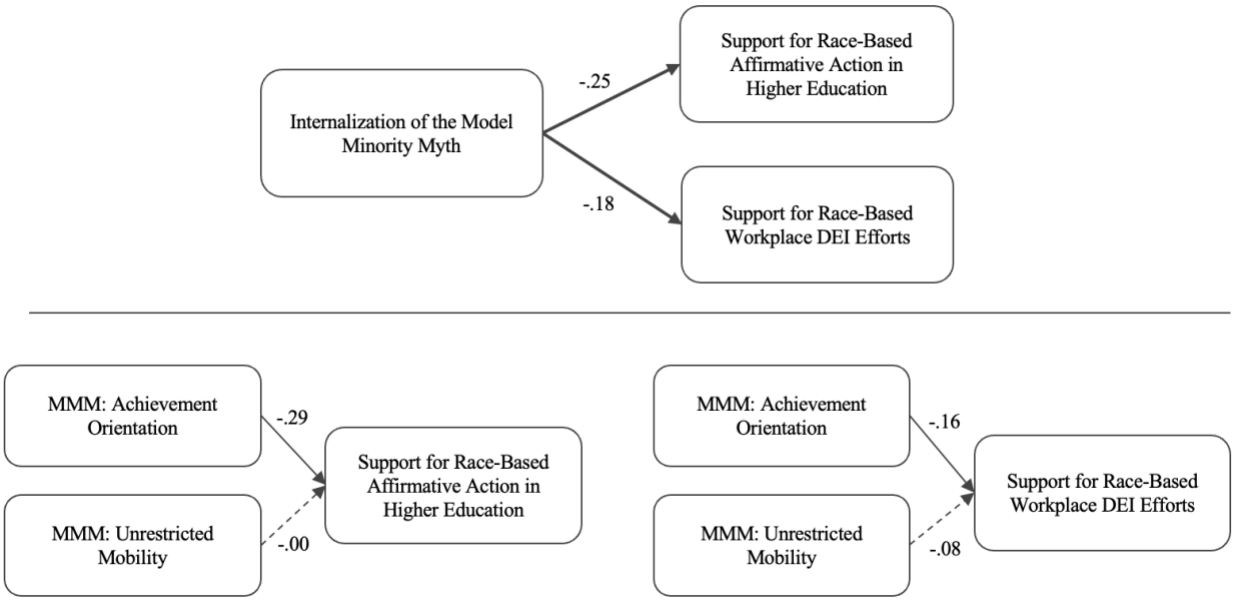

Figure 3. The relationships between variables tested by Hypothesis 1 (above) and the follow-up analyses for Hypothesis 1 (below). Statistics shown are standardized coefficients. Solid arrow indicates a significant relationship; dashed arrow indicates an insignificant relationship.

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Hypothesis 2 predicted that Asian Americans who more strongly internalize the model minority myth will be more likely to endorse CBRI. A linear regression analysis was conducted controlling for both gender and political orientation, with the internalization of the model minority myth measure (aggregated across the two dimensions) as the predictor and CBRI (aggregated across the power and privilege evasion and color and bias evasion dimensions) as the outcome variable. The regression analysis revealed that internalization of the model minority myth significantly predicted greater CBRI, $t(273) = 4.96$, $p < .001$. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

Follow-up analyses for Hypothesis 2 were conducted to investigate the specific relationships between variables based on the subdimensions of internalization of the model minority myth measure and subdimension of CBRI. For these analyses, both dimensions of internalization of the model minority myth were inputted simultaneously as predictors for each

CBRI dimension outcome in the linear regression analyses, controlling again for both gender and political orientation. Internalization of the model minority myth's achievement orientation significantly predicted CBRI power and privilege evasion, $t(273) = 3.20$, $p < .01$. In addition, internalization of the model minority myth's unrestricted mobility dimension significantly predicted CBRI power and privilege evasion, $t(273) = 2.87$, $p < .01$. Next, the achievement orientation significantly predicted CBRI color and bias evasion, $t(273) = 3.23$, $p < .01$. However, the unrestricted mobility dimension did not predict CBRI color and bias evasion, $t(273) = .48$, $p = .63$. A table of all regression results for Hypothesis 2 and the follow up analyses are in Table 4. A visual model of Hypothesis 2 with standardized coefficients is in Figure 4.

Table 4

Regression Results for Hypothesis 2

	CBRI (Aggregate)				*CBRI Power & Privilege Evasion*				*CBRI Color & Bias Evasion*			
Regression Input	***B***	***SE***	***t***	***p***	***B***	***SE***	***t***	***p***	***B***	***SE***	***t***	***p***
Step 1												
Gender	-.30	.09	-3.28	< .01								
Political Orientation	.31	.03	10.51	< .001								
Step 2												
Gender	-.25	.09	-2.82	< .01								
Political Orientation	.26	.03	8.53	< .001								
Model Minority Myth (Aggregate)	.27	.06	4.96	< .001								
Follow-up: Step 1												
Gender					-.35	.10	-3.47	< .001	-.24	.15	-1.59	.11
Political Orientation					.38	.03	11.53	< .001	.23	.05	4.75	< .001
Follow-up: Step 2												
Gender					-.30	.10	-3.07	< .01	-.18	.15	-1.23	.22
Political Orientation					.33	.03	9.63	< .001	.17	.05	3.26	< .01
MMM: Achievement Orientation					.16	.05	3.20	< .01	.24	.07	3.23	< .01
MMM: Unrestricted Mobility					.11	.04	2.87	< .01	.03	.06	.48	.63

Note: For gender, 0 = Male, 1 = Female. For Political Orientation, 1 = Strongly Liberal, 7 = Strongly Conservative

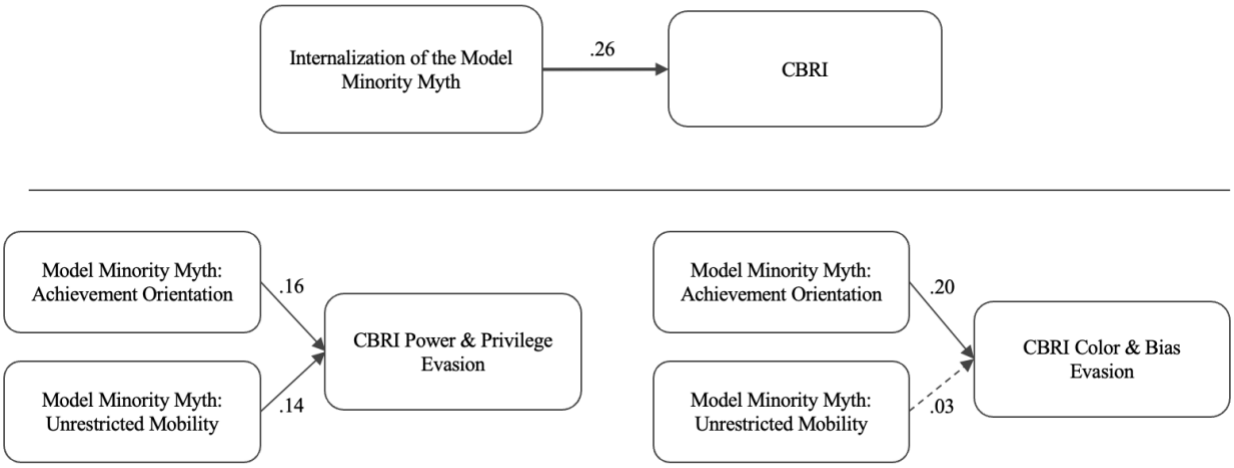

Figure 4. The relationships between variables tested by Hypothesis 2 (above) and follow-up tests for Hypothesis 2 (below). Statistics shown are standardized coefficients. Solid arrow indicates a significant relationship; dashed arrow indicates an insignificant relationship.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that Asian Americans who more strongly endorse CBRI will be less likely to support both race-based affirmative action in higher education (H3a) and race-based workplace DEI practices (H3b). A linear regression analysis was conducted controlling for both gender and political orientation, with CBRI (aggregated across the power and privilege evasion and color and bias evasion dimensions) as the predictor. The first regression analysis revealed that CBRI significantly predicted less support for race-based affirmative action in higher education, $t(273) = -6.51$, $p < .001$. Thus, Hypothesis 3a was supported. The next regression analysis revealed that CBRI also significantly predicted less support for race-based workplace DEI practices, $t(273) = -5.87$, $p < .001$. Thus, Hypothesis 3b was supported.

Follow-up analyses for Hypothesis 3 were conducted to investigate the specific relationships between variables based on the subdimensions of CBRI. For these analyses, both dimensions of CBRI were inputted simultaneously as predictors for each outcome in the linear regression analyses, controlling again for both gender and political orientation. CBRI power and

privilege evasion significantly predicted less support for race-based affirmative action in higher education, $t(273) = -12.44$, $p < .001$. However, the color and bias evasion dimension did not predict support for race-based affirmative action in higher education, $t(273) = 1.54$, $p = .13$. Next, the power and privilege evasion dimension significantly predicted less support for race-based workplace DEI practices, $t(273) = -11.39$, $p < .001$. However, the color and bias evasion dimension did not predict support for race-based workplace DEI practices, $t(273) = 1.70$, $p = .09$. A table of the regression results for Hypothesis 3 and the follow up analyses is in Table 5. A visual model of Hypothesis 3 with standardized coefficients is in Figure 5.

Table 5
Regression Results for Hypothesis 3

	Support for Affirmative Action				Support for DEI			
Regression Input	***B***	***SE***	***t***	***p***	***B***	***SE***	***t***	***p***
Step 1								
Gender	.68	.16	4.22	< .001	.82	.16	5.12	< .001
Political Orientation	-.40	.05	-7.59	< .001	-.45	.05	-8.63	< .001
Step 2								
Gender	.49	.15	3.17	< .01	.64	.15	4.18	< .001
Political Orientation	-.20	.06	-3.36	< .001	-.26	.06	-4.55	< .001
CBRI (Aggregate)	-.65	.10	-6.51	< .001	-.59	.10	-5.87	< .001
Follow-up: Step 1								
Gender	.68	.16	4.22	< .001	.82	.16	5.12	< .001
Political Orientation	-.40	.05	-7.59	< .001	-.45	.05	-8.63	< .001
Follow-up: Step 2								
Gender	.36	.13	2.72	< .01	.52	.13	3.86	< .001
Political Orientation	-.05	.05	-.94	.35	-.13	.05	-2.36	.01
CBRI Power & Privilege Evasion	-.98	.08	-12.44	< .001	-.91	.08	-11.39	< .001
CBRI Color & Bias Evasion	.08	.05	1.54	.13	.09	.05	1.70	.09

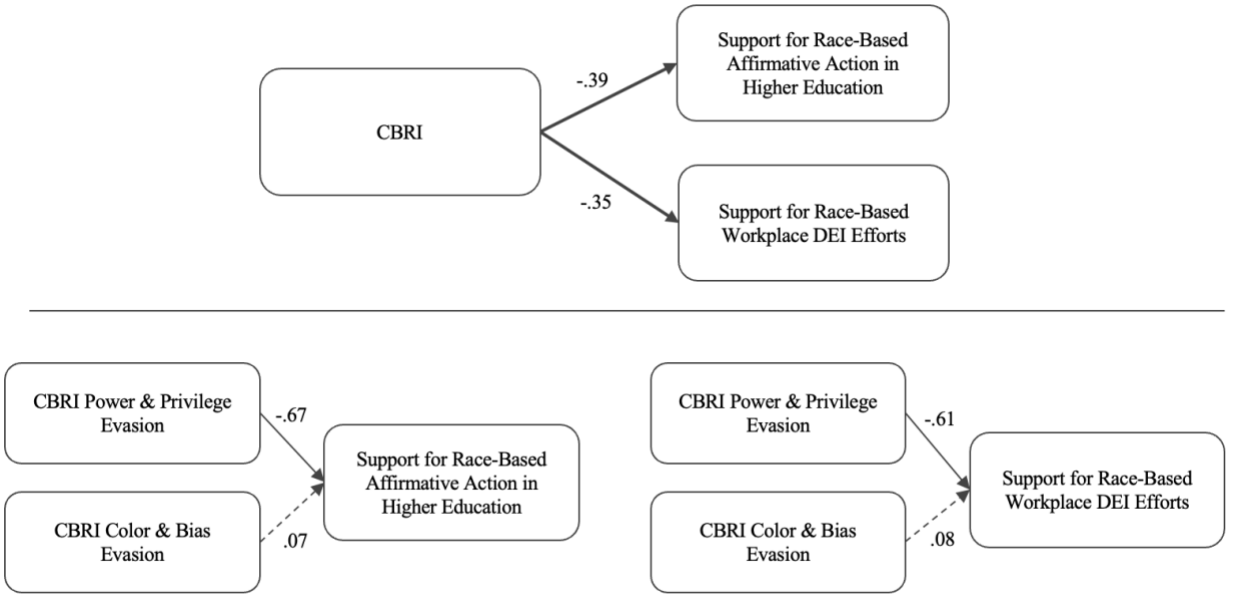

Figure 5. The relationships between variables tested by Hypothesis 3 (above) and follow-up tests of Hypothesis 3 (below). Statistics shown are standardized coefficients. Solid arrow indicates a significant relationship; dashed arrow indicates an insignificant relationship.

Lastly, Hypothesis 4 predicted that Asian Americans' endorsement of CBRI will partially mediate the relationship between internalization of the model minority myth and the likelihood to support both race-based affirmative action in higher education (H4a) and race-based workplace DEI practices (H4b). PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2012) was used for the mediation analysis (Model 4), with internalization of the model minority myth as the predictor (X), CBRI as the mediator (M), and support for race-based affirmative action in higher education (H4a) or support for race-based workplace DEI practices (H4b) as the outcome (Y). Gender and political orientation were controlled for as covariates in each analysis. The first mediation analysis (Figure 6) revealed that internalization of the model minority myth significantly predicted CBRI, $B = .27$, $SE = .06$, $t = 4.95$, $p < .001$. Next, CBRI significantly predicted less support for race-based affirmative action, $B = -.57$, $SE = .10$, $t = -5.50$, $p < .001$. A significant negative direct effect was revealed for the predictor of the internalization of the model minority

myth on the outcome of support for race-based affirmative action in higher education, B = -.28, SE = .10, t = -2.83, p < .01. Lastly, a significant indirect effect through the mediator of CBRI was found, B = -.16, SE = .05, CI [-.25, -.07]. Thus, Hypothesis 4a was supported.

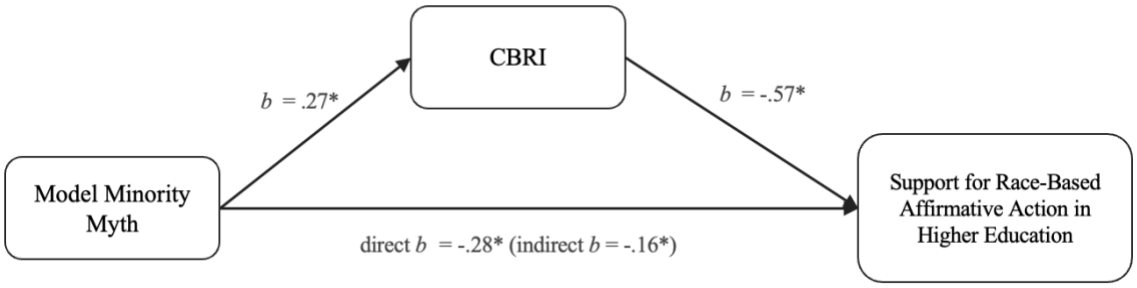

Figure 6. Mediation analysis result for Hypothesis 4a. * = p < .05. The conjunction of the significant direct effect of the internalization of the model minority myth on support for race-based affirmative action in higher education and the significant indirect effect through the mediator of CBRI indicates a partial mediation.

The next mediation analysis revealed that internalization of the model minority myth significantly predicted CBRI, B = .27, SE = .06, t = 4.95, p < .001. Next, CBRI significantly predicted less support for race-based workplace DEI practices, B = -.53, SE = .10, t = -5.10, p < .001. The direct effect for the predictor of the internalization of the model minority myth on the outcome of support for race-based workplace DEI practices was not significant, B = -.19, SE = .10, t = -1.90, p = .06. Lastly, a significant indirect effect through the mediator of CBRI was found, B = -.14, SE = .05, CI [-.24, -.06]. The significant indirect effect in conjunction with the insignificant direct effect indicates the CBRI fully mediated the relationship between internalization of the model minority myth and support for race-based workplace DEI practices. Thus, Hypothesis 4b was partially supported.

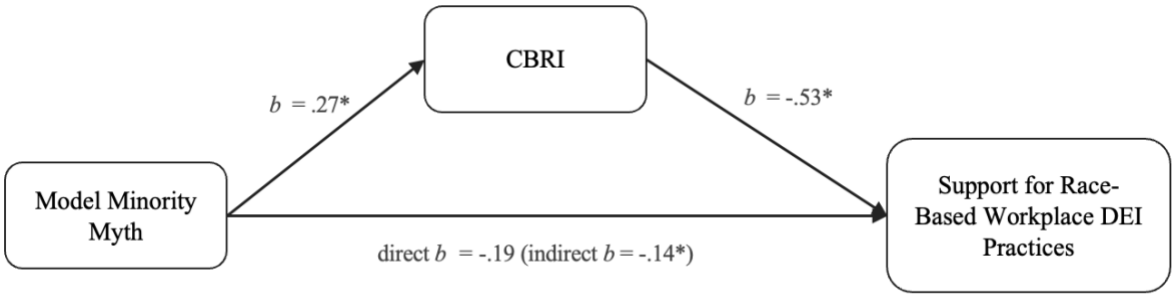

Figure 7. Mediation analysis result for Hypothesis 4b. * = $p < .05$. The conjunction of the insignificant direct effect of the internalization of the model minority myth on support for race-based workplace DEI practices and the significant indirect effect through the mediator of CBRI indicates a full mediation.

Follow-up analyses were conducted for Hypothesis 4 to investigate the specific mediation relationships for the different dimensions of internalization of the model minority myth and CBRI on the two outcomes of practices addressing racial inequality. For Hypothesis 4a, the dimensions of internalization of the model minority myth's achievement orientation and CBRI power and privilege evasion were chosen as the predictor and mediator variable respectively due to their significant regression relationships with each other and the outcome variable of support for race-based affirmative action in higher education. Gender and political orientation were controlled for in the analysis. In addition, the internalization of the model minority myth's unrestricted mobility orientation and CBRI color and bias evasion were both added as control variables. The mediation analysis revealed that internalization of the model minority myth's achievement orientation significantly predicted CBRI power and privilege evasion, $B = .16$, $SE = .05$, $t = 3.20$, $p < .01$. Next, CBRI power and privilege evasion significantly predicted less support for race-based affirmative action, $B = -.95$, $SE = .08$, $t = -12.09$, $p < .001$. A significant negative direct effect was revealed for the predictor of the internalization of the model minority myth's achievement orientation on the outcome of support for race-based affirmative action in

higher education, B = -.28, SE = .07, t = -4.33, p < .001. Lastly, a significant indirect effect through the mediator of CBRI power and privilege evasion was found, B = -.15, SE = .05, CI [-.24, -.06]. Thus, CBRI power and privilege partially mediated the relationship between internalization of the model minority myth's achievement orientation and support for race-based affirmative action in higher education.

For Hypothesis 4b, the dimensions of internalization of the model minority myth's achievement orientation and CBRI power and privilege evasion were chosen as the predictor and mediator variable respectively due to their significant regression relationships with each other and the outcome variable of support for race-based workplace DEI practices. Gender and political orientation were controlled for in the analysis. In addition, the internalization of the model minority myth's unrestricted mobility orientation and CBRI color and bias evasion were both added as control variables. Internalization of the model minority myth's achievement orientation significantly predicted CBRI power and privilege evasion, B = .16, SE = .05, t = 3.20, p < .01. Next, CBRI power and privilege evasion significantly predicted less support for race-based workplace DEI practices, B = -.88, SE = .08, t = -10.76, p < .001. The direct effect for the predictor of the internalization of the model minority myth's achievement orientation on the outcome of support for race-based workplace DEI practices was not significant, B = -.12, SE = .07, t = -1.72, p = .09. Lastly, a significant indirect effect through the mediator of CBRI power and privilege evasion was found, B = -.14, SE = .04, CI [-.23, -.06]. The significant indirect effect in conjunction with the insignificant direct effect indicates the CBRI power and privilege evasion fully mediated the relationship between internalization of the model minority myth's achievement orientation and support for race-based workplace DEI practices.

Of note, Step 1 in Table 9 displays all dimensions of the Internalization of the Model Minority Myth (Achievement Orientation, Unrestricted Mobility) and CBRI (Power and Privilege Evasion, Color and Bias Evasion) together in the regression analysis to predict both support for race-based affirmative action in higher education and support for race-based workplace DEI practices. When controlling for gender and political orientation, as well as accounting for the effects of the other CBRI or model minority myth dimensions, achievement orientation ($t(273) = -4.33$, $p < .001$), unrestricted mobility ($t(273) = 1.99$, $p = .05$), power and privilege evasion ($t(273) = -12.09$, $p < .001$), and color and bias evasion ($t(273) = 2.29$, $p = .02$) all significantly predicted support for affirmative action. When predicting support for DEI, both power and privilege evasion ($t(273) = -10.76$, $p < .001$) and color and bias evasion ($t(273) = 1.97$, $p = .05$) were significant, while neither model minority myth dimensions were significant predictors. Therefore, when all dimensions are considered in tandem, results suggest that both the model minority myth and CBRI significantly predicts support for affirmative action, whereas only CBRI predicts support for DEI. This finding is likely theoretically similar to the full mediation result for the mediation of CBRI on the relationship between internalization of the model minority myth and support for DEI.

Exploratory Analyses

Exploratory variables in the study included three identity integration measures: integration (between the 1) self and Asian American identity, 2) self and Person of Color identity, 3) Asian American group identity and Person of Color group identity), perception of race-based affirmative action in higher education helping Asian Americans, perception of race-based workplace DEI helping Asian Americans, close cross-race friendships, and generational status. The means and standard deviations for all exploratory measures in the study are displayed

in Table 6. Close cross-race friendships was not carried forward in further analyses due to the variable not being significantly correlated with any other variable in the study.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics and Correlational Relationships of Hypothesized Measures and Exploratory Measures

Measure	Mean	SD	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
I. MMM: Achievement Orientation	5.29	1.08									
II. MMM: Unrestricted Mobility	3.07	1.22	.09								
III. CBRI: Power & Privilege Evasion	3.30	1.02	.40*	.80*							
IV. CBRI: Color & Bias Evasion	4.27	1.29	.31*	.08	.28*						
V. Identity Integration: Self & Asian American*	5.62	1.26	.10	-.12*	-.14*	-.07					
VI. Identity Integration: Self & Person of Color	4.81	1.81	-.01	-.15*	-.25*	-.11	.48*				
VII. Identity Integration: Asian American & Person of Color	5.06	1.66	-.18*	-.12*	-.34*	-.17*	.35*	.68*			
VIII. Perception that Race-Based Affirmative Action Helps Asian Americans	3.78	1.69	-.19*	.01	-.36*	.04	.00	.13*	.10		
IX. Perception that Race-Based Workplace DEI Helps Asian Americans	4.74	1.32	-.17*	-.02	-.44*	-.01	.05	.17*	.11	.61*	
X. Generational Status	2.72	.79	-.16*	.02	-.05	-.17*	-.08	-.17*	-.01	-.02	-.05

* Low scores indicate low integration between identity categories, high scores indicate high integration between identity categories

Exploratory variables as Predictors of Main Study Variables. Multiple regression analyses were conducted to investigate if the exploratory variables were significant predictors of any main study variables, above and beyond the impact of the main study variable predictors. Gender and political orientation were entered as control variables in each analysis. First, multiple regression analyses were used to predict the two outcomes of support for practices that address racial inequality. For these analyses, the two dimensions of internalization of the model minority myth as well as the two dimensions of CBRI were also entered as control variables. Results suggest that the perception of race-based affirmative action in higher education helping Asian Americans significantly predicted greater support for race-based affirmative action in higher education, $t(273) = 6.72$, $p < .001$, above and beyond the internalization of the model minority myth and CBRI dimensions. In addition, the perception of race-based workplace DEI practices helping Asian Americans significantly predicted greater support for race-based workplace DEI practices, $t(273) = 8.01$, $p < .001$, above and beyond the internalization of the model minority myth and CBRI dimensions. Results for these analyses are in Table 7.

Table 7

Regression Results for Exploratory Variables in Predicting Support for Affirmative Action and DEI

	Support for Affirmative Action				Support for DEI			
Regression Input	***B***	***SE***	***t***	***p***	***B***	***SE***	***t***	***p***
Step 1								
Gender	.33	.13	2.59	.01	.51	.13	3.77	< .001
Political Orientation	-.01	.05	-.12	.90	-.11	.05	-2.02	.05
MMM Achievement Orientation*	-.28	.07	-4.33	< .001	-.12	.07	-1.72	.09
MMM Unrestricted Mobility	.10	.05	1.99	.05	.00	.05	.03	.98
CBRI Power & Privilege Evasion	-.95	.08	-12.09	< .001	-.88	.08	-10.76	< .001
CBRI Color & Bias Evasion	.12	.05	2.29	.02	.11	.06	1.97	.05
Step 2								
Gender	.19	.12	1.60	.11	.29	.12	2.29	.02
Political Orientation	.01	.05	.14	.89	-.10	.05	-2.11	.04
MMM Achievement Orientation	-.26	.06	-4.12	< .001	-.11	.06	-1.72	.09
MMM Unrestricted Mobility	.08	.05	1.63	.11	-.02	.05	-.44	.66
CBRI Power & Privilege Evasion	-.81	.08	-10.32	< .001	-.61	.08	-7.38	< .001
CBRI Color & Bias Evasion	.05	.05	1.03	.31	.06	.05	1.28	.20
ID Integration: Self & Asian American	-.05	.05	-.97	.34	-.02	.05	-.34	.73
ID Integration: Self & POC	.08	.05	1.77	.08	.06	.05	1.25	.21
ID Integration: Asian American & POC	-.07	.05	-1.32	.19	.04	.05	.84	.40
(Affirmative Action/ DEI)** Helping Asian Americans)	.25	.04	6.72	< .001	.41	.05	8.00	< .001
Generational Status	-.08	.08	-1.06	.29	.03	.08	.32	.75

* Model Minority Myth and CBRI dimensions were inputted as control variables to help determine the predictions of the exploratory variables above and beyond the main study variables.

** Perception of Affirmative Action Helping Asian Americans was inputted as a predictor for the outcome of support for affirmative action, while Perception of DEI Helping Asian Americans was inputted as a predictor for the outcome of support for DEI.

Next, multiple regression analyses were used to investigate predictors leading to endorsement of the two CBRI dimensions. In addition to gender and political orientation,

internalization of the model minority myth achievement orientation and unrestricted mobility dimensions were also included as control variables. Results suggest that identity integration between Asian American group identity and Person of Color group identity significantly predicted lower power and privilege evasion, $t(273) = -2.33$, $p < .05$, above and beyond the two internalization of the model minority myth dimensions. In addition, generational status significantly predicted lower color and bias evasion, $t(273) = -2.75$, $p < .01$, such that participants who were higher in generational status were less likely to endorse CBRI color and bias evasion. Results for these analyses are in Table 8.

Table 8

Regression Results for Exploratory Variables in Predicting CBRI Dimensions

	CBRI Power & Privilege Evasion				CBRI Color & Bias Evasion			
Regression Input	***B***	***SE***	***t***	***p***	***B***	***SE***	***t***	***p***
Step 1								
Gender	-.30	.10	-3.07	< .01	-.18	.15	-1.23	.22
Political Orientation	.33	.03	9.63	< .001	.17	.05	3.26	< .01
MMM Achievement Orientation*	.16	.05	3.20	< .01	.24	.07	3.23	< .01
MMM Unrestricted Mobility	.11	.04	2.87	< .01	.03	.06	.48	.63
Step 2								
Gender	-.21	.10	-2.18	.03	-.15	.15	-1.03	.31
Political Orientation	.31	.03	9.24	< .001	.16	.05	3.16	< .01
MMM Achievement Orientation	.16	.05	3.13	< .01	.21	.08	2.78	< .01
MMM Unrestricted Mobility	.09	.04	2.26	.03	.01	.06	.20	.84
ID Integration: Self & Asian American	-.07	.04	-1.58	.12	-.07	.07	-1.13	.26
ID Integration: Self & POC	-.02	.04	-.52	.60	-.02	.06	-.40	.69
ID Integration: Asian American & POC	-.09	.04	-2.33	.02	-.04	.06	-.65	.52
Generational Status	-.06	.06	-.89	.37	-.26	.09	-2.75	< .01

* Model Minority Myth dimensions were inputted as control variables to help determine the predictions of the exploratory variables above and beyond the main study variables.

Lastly, multiple regression analyses were used to investigate predictors leading to the degree of internalization of the model minority myth's two dimensions. Gender and political orientation were included as control variables. Results suggest that generational status significantly negatively predicted the achievement orientation, such that participants higher in generational status were less likely to internalize the achievement orientation myth, $t(273) = -2.91$, $p < .01$. In addition, identity integration between Asian American group identity and Person of Color group identity also significantly predicted lower internalization of the achievement orientation myth, $t(273) = -2.30$, $p < .05$. Results for these regression analyses are in Table 9.

Table 9

Regression Results for Exploratory Variables in Predicting Model Minority Myth Dimensions

	MMM: Achievement Orientation				MMM: Unrestricted Mobility			
Regression Input	***B***	***SE***	***t***	***p***	***B***	***SE***	***t***	***p***
Step 1								
Gender	-.22	.12	-1.81	.07	-.12	.15	-.80	.42
Political Orientation	.25	.04	6.46	< .001	.08	.05	1.55	.12
Step 2								
Gender	-.24	.12	-1.97	.05	-.04	.15	-.26	.79
Political Orientation	.23	.04	5.94	< .001	.06	.05	1.30	.20
ID Integration: Self & Asian American	.09	.05	1.65	.10	-.08	.07	-1.13	.26
ID Integration: Self & POC	.06	.05	1.29	.20	-.07	.06	-1.14	.26
ID Integration: Asian American & POC	-.11	.05	-2.30	.02	-.02	.06	-.24	.81
Generational Status	-.22	.08	-2.91	< .01	-.02	.10	-.21	.84

Exploratory Variables as Moderators. Some exploratory variables were selected as potential moderator variables for the relationships between the main study variables, based on significant predictive relationships and theoretical rationale for inclusion. Two significant exploratory moderators emerged from the analyses. First, the perception of race-based

affirmative action in higher education helping Asian Americans significantly moderated the relationship between internalization of the model minority myth's achievement orientation and support for race-based affirmative action in higher education, $F(1, 267) = 3.74$, $p = .05$. Based on a visual inspection of the relationships between the three variables (Figure 4; achievement orientation and perception of race-based affirmative action in higher education helping Asian Americans were re-coded into high and low levels using tertiary splits), it appears that for those low in achievement orientation, support for race-based affirmative action in higher education is approximately the same between those who see these practices as helpful or harmful; however, for participants that are high in achievement orientation, the perception that these practices are harmful leads to significantly decreased support for these practices, whereas those who view these practices as helpful to Asian Americans do not significantly decrease their support to the same level.

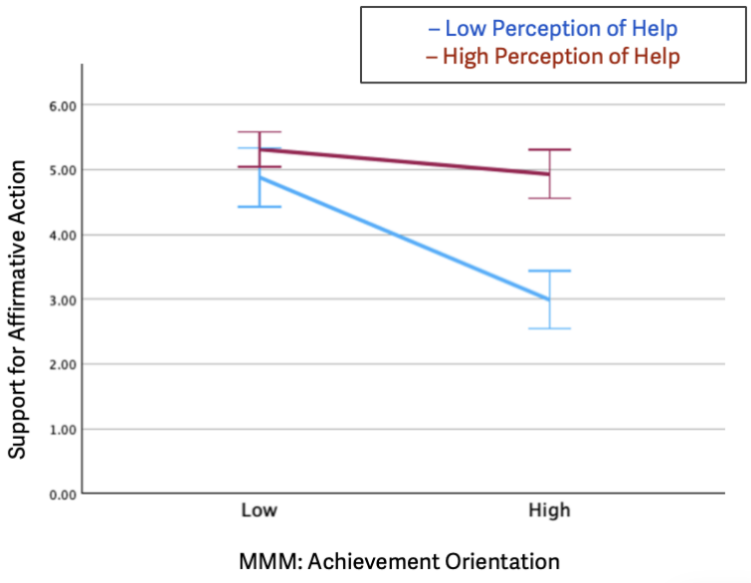

Figure 8. Visual of perception of race-based affirmative action in higher education helping Asian Americans as a moderating variable for the relationship between model minority myth achievement orientation and support for race-based affirmative action in higher education.

Second, the perception of race-based workplace DEI practices helping Asian Americans significantly moderated the relationship between CBRI power and privilege evasion and support for race-based workplace DEI practices, F (1, 267) = 5.36, $p < .05$. Based on a visual inspection of the relationships between the three variables (Figure 5), it appears that participants high in power and privilege evasion were less likely to support race-based workplace DEI practices, but this decrease in support was even more significant for those who also saw these practices as being harmful to Asian Americans.

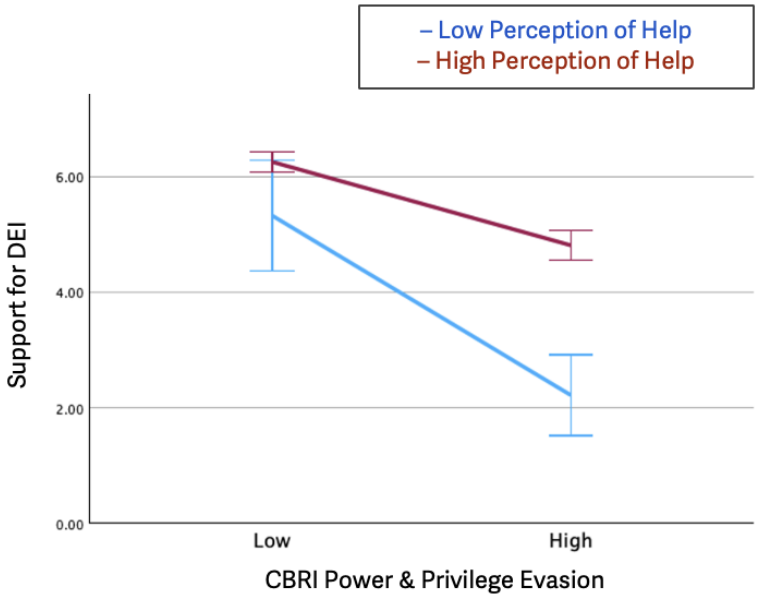

Figure 9. Visual of perception of workplace DEI practices helping Asian Americans as a moderating variable for the relationship between model minority myth achievement orientation and support for race-based workplace DEI efforts.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The present study sheds light on the experiences and beliefs that drive Asian Americans to have differing opinions regarding affirmative action in higher education and workplace DEI practices. In particular, we investigated the level to which Asian Americans internalized the model minority myth which included two dimensions: the achievement orientation dimension, which measures internalization of the belief that Asian Americans have achieved greater success in society than other racial minority groups, driven by working harder and being more persistent, and the unrestricted mobility dimension, which measures internalization of the belief that Asian Americans face fewer barriers to societal advancement compared to other racial minority groups. In addition, we also measured the levels to which Asian Americans endorse colorblind racial ideology which also included two dimensions: power and privilege evasion, which measures beliefs about the existence of racial privilege and institutional discrimination based on race, and color and bias evasion which measures the belief that society should emphasize universal sameness over race and racial categorization. The present study sought to understand how the nuances of internalization of the model minority myth and colorblind racial ideology were related to each other and to attitudes towards race-based affirmative action and DEI practices.

First, the present study suggests that as expected, the degree to which Asian Americans internalize the model minority myth, a powerful meritocratic stereotype that makes generalizations about Asian Americans' greater societal success compared to other racial groups, the more likely Asian Americans are to endorse beliefs about colorblindness in society. This finding is generally in line with the results from Yi & Todd (2021) using an Asian American college students sample as well as for White Americans when studying their endorsement of the model minority myth and the positive relationship with their colorblind beliefs (Parks & Yoo,

2016). There may be two different explanations for why the relationship between these two constructs exists. The first is that Asian Americans may use colorblind beliefs as a self-protective mechanism against the pressures of high expectations embodied by the model minority myth for economic, occupational, and academic success (Gupta et al., 2011). These pressures of living up to the model minority stereotype are often associated with greater psychological distress, depression, and anxiety (e.g. Wei et al., 2020). In what is likely a self-protective mechanism called "avoidant coping" in which Asian Americans avoid thinking about and dealing with the source of their stress, Asian Americans' greater endorsement of colorblind beliefs was been associated with lower racial stress, anger, and anxiety (Lee, 2017; Chen et al., 2006). The second potential explanation of the relationship between internalization of the model minority myth and colorblind beliefs is more focused on their shared foundation of individual merit. Higher endorsement on both constructs indicate a greater belief that success in society is based on how hard one works towards achieving this success and greater denial of systemic barriers based on race. This explanation thus places colorblindness less as a response to the model minority stereotype, but more as a mutually reinforcing factor.

What separates the present study from the research by Yi and Todd (2021) and Parks and Yoo (2016) is that their racial colorblindness measures only included the power and privilege evasion dimension. To answer the call by Neville et al. (2013) to also incorporate the color and bias evasion dimension into measures of CBRI, the present study does so to investigate the specific relationships between the two dimensions of the internalization of the model minority (achievement orientation and unrestricted mobility beliefs) and the two dimensions of CBRI. Consistent with the results from the Yi & Todd (2021) study, both dimensions of model minority myth internalization were positively associated with the denial of racial privilege and

institutional discrimination in society (power and privilege evasion dimension of CBRI). However, when the present study added the color and bias evasion dimension of CBRI, results suggested that while beliefs about Asian Americans' hard work and greater persistence (the achievement orientation of the model minority myth) were related to color and bias evasion, beliefs about Asian Americans' relative lack of systemic barriers to advancing in society (the unrestricted mobility dimension of the model minority myth) were not associated with color and bias evasion. This suggests that in research moving forward, the two dimensions of CBRI should continue to be studied separately, or if a study is only explicitly measuring one dimension or the other, this dimension should be named instead of generalizing the construct as measuring CBRI.

It is possible that this lack of association between the model minority myth's unrestricted mobility dimension and CBRI's color and bias evasion dimension involves a nuance of the unrestricted mobility measure. Asian Americans may respond to the measure of model minority myth's unrestricted mobility dimension through different motivations that could both lead to high scores. Matriano et al. (2021) have previously addressed this issue, stating that "one might agree with the [unrestricted mobility] statement because they do not believe there is racism against Asian Americans. Contrarily, another person might agree with this statement because they are aware of how systemic racism functions in allowing Asian Americans to be perceived more favorably by Whites in comparison to other racial minorities, thus allotting more perceived privileges than to other minoritized groups in the racial hierarchy." With this logic, Asian Americans who internalize the belief that Asian Americans have fewer systemic barriers compared to other racial minorities may be acknowledging power dynamics between races in society, which is a very color-conscious, not colorblind perspective. All in all, it is important for future research to continue being specific about investigating the different dimensions of the

model minority separately as well as being specific as to which CBRI dimension is being studied, as most previous cross-sectional studies have only involved the power and privilege evasion dimension.

In addition, the study also added to our understanding of how Asian Americans' belief in the model minority myth as well as their beliefs about colorblindness in society relate to their support of practices that address racial inequality. Race-based workplace DEI practices and race-based affirmative action in higher education conceptually overlap such that they are both practices that consider race as a factor in making decisions with the goal of addressing historical and existing racism in their respective systems. In line with this conceptual overlap, results from the present study suggest that the predictive relationships between support for affirmative action and DEI were similar, although not completely the same. More specifically, Asian Americans were more likely to be against race-based workplace DEI practices when they believed that Asian Americans have achieved greater success than other minority groups due to individual merit, such as working harder and being more persistent (model minority myth's achievement orientation dimension), and also when they were less likely to believe that racial privilege and institutional discrimination exists today (CBRI power and privilege evasion dimension). Taken together with the finding that colorblind beliefs regarding privilege and discrimination fully mediated the relationship between model minority beliefs and support for race-based workplace DEI, it appears that Asian Americans who are more likely to be against race-based workplace DEI are those who perceive a level playing field across races and thus, access to resources should be based on individual merit. In addition, an exploratory analysis indicated if Asian Americans believed that DEI did not help their own racial group, they were also more likely to be opposed to these practices, and this exacerbates the lowered support when Asian Americans

were already likely to deny the existence of racial privilege and institutional discrimination based on race in society.

For the outcome of affirmative action support, results suggested that Asian Americans were more likely to be against race-based affirmative action when they believed that Asian Americans have achieved greater success than other minority groups due to meritocratic values such as hard work and persistence (model minority myth's achievement orientation dimension) and also when they were less likely to believe that racial privilege and institutional discrimination exists today (CBRI power and privilege evasion dimension). However, as opposed to the full mediation relationship identified previously regarding internalization of the model minority myth, colorblind racial ideology, and support for DEI, colorblind beliefs about racial privilege and institutional discrimination (the power and privilege evasion dimension of CBRI) only partially explained the relationship between model minority beliefs and support for affirmative action. This suggests that when it comes to the scope of university admissions, internalization of the model minority myth has unique explanatory power beyond its connection to higher racially colorblind beliefs. As one example, previous literature such as Yi & Todd (2021) found that anti-Black attitudes among Asian Americans was related to both Asian Americans' beliefs about the model minority myth and opposition to affirmative action for Black Americans specifically. Therefore, it is possible that in the present study's context that investigates support for affirmative action more generally (not for a specific race), beliefs about Asian Americans' greater merit compared to other racial minority groups is not solely about positive Asian American attributes but also driven by negative views of other racial minority groups. In addition, exploratory analyses also showed that when Asian Americans were more likely to believe that affirmative action helped Asian Americans, they were more likely to

support affirmative action regardless of their internalization of Asian Americans' greater success in society compared to other racial minorities and its merit-based driving factors. As such, it is important to understand whether Asian Americans view affirmative action and helping or harming their own racial group.

Two additional exploratory variables also further added to our understanding of how Asian Americans' beliefs about racial dynamics come to be and shape their attitudes towards practices that address racial inequality. First of all, a longer family history in the United States, measured as greater generational status, was associated with lower internalization of the model minority stereotype that captures the generalization of greater Asian American success and the driving merit-based forces behind that success. When Asian Americans have longer family history in the United States, they are also less likely to deny the existence of racial privilege and institutional discrimination based on race in the United States. One explanation for the influence of generational status may be explained through a form of acculturation, such that greater generational status and higher acculturation are so often linked that they are even used as proxies for one another in many previous studies (e.g., Liu & Suyemoto, 2016). Asian Americans who are more acculturated may be more aware of the history of racial dynamics in the United States, whereas less acculturated individuals may be less aware of the history and fallacy behind Asian American stereotypes, and may also endorse the model minority myth to maintain racial and cultural pride as well as a sense of hope and control in the face of their newer environment shift (Yoon et al., 2021). In addition, the more Asian Americans perceive the racial group of Asian Americans as being closely integrated with the overall racial minority group of People of Color also relates to both lowered generalized beliefs about Asian American success based on individual merit compared to other racial minority groups and less denial of racial privilege and

institutional discrimination based on race. This is likely explained through a cross-racial solidarity perspective, such that some Asian Americans are more likely to identify the shared oppression that racial minority groups face in the overall racial system of the United States.

Overall, the study aimed to build upon existing research to contribute further understanding of how Asian Americans internalize racial dynamics and how these beliefs may influence their attitudes towards practices that address racial inequality in the United States. A main contribution of the present study is understanding the reasons underlying the perception of Asian Americans' support for two practices that have attracted a large amount of attention in the past several years: affirmative action in higher education and workplace DEI practices. To the researchers' knowledge, this was the first empirical study that has specifically investigated Asian Americans' support for race-based workplace DEI practices. While organizational research has increasingly studied the Asian American population in the workplace, DEI-related literature on this topic have primarily focused on bias and discrimination against this population, such as the aforementioned "bamboo ceiling" that Asian Americans face in attaining leadership positions (Lu et al., 2020), the vacillating visibility and invisibility that Asian Americans face in the workplace (e.g., Nguyen, Block, Kim, & Yu, 2024), or the identification and perception of harmful microaggressions against Asian Americans in organizations (Kim, Block, & Yu, 2021; Kim, Block, & Nguyen, 2019). Although not studying DEI specifically, a study by Jun et al. (2023) investigated Asian Americans' attitudes towards pro-Black allyship in the workplace, which is more closely related to the present study's measure of support for DEI conceptually, as both involve cross-racial solidarity. The most information that exists on Asian Americans' attitudes toward workplace DEI come from the Pew Research surveys (Pew Research Center, 2024).

Another contribution of the present study was the knowledge that all of the relationships identified between the model minority myth, colorblindness, and support for practices that address racial inequality were significant above and beyond the impact of political orientation and gender. Analyses in this study suggest that in line with the national political narratives around these particular practices that address racial inequality, Asian Americans who are more politically conservative were more likely to oppose race-based affirmative action and DEI and those who are more liberal tend to be more supportive of these practices. Considering how both affirmative action and DEI have been heavily politicized issues, especially following the 2023 Supreme Court case and 2025 executive order, it is a critical insight that Asian Americans' beliefs about their own racial group within the context of greater racial dynamics in the United States can contribute additional insight uniquely from their political beliefs. In addition, the present study found that Asian American men, who may have more power than Asian American women in society due to the overall gender hierarchy, were also less likely to support practices that address racial inequality as well as be more likely to hold more colorblind beliefs. It is possible that Asian American men engage in a type of intersectional identity management (e.g., Atewologun & Vinnicombe, 2015); in order to hold on to more power in the social hierarchy, they emphasize their more privileged status as men and minimize their less privileged status as Asian American, leading them to be more colorblind and subsequently less likely to engage with practices that specifically address racial inequality.

Overall, the study sheds light on the various factors that can influence the wide variety of opinions Asian Americans have on the highly-debated topics of affirmative action and DEI. In sum, it is a complex combination of demographics and beliefs that lend to a wide variety of stances on these issues. In particular, the importance of gauging Asian American's beliefs about

power and privilege evasion in society as well as the achievement orientation beliefs of the model minority myth surfaced as two of the strongest predictors of support for practices addressing racial inequality, so future studies as well as applied work should continue to draw upon these two dimensions to have a stronger grasp on how we can leverage these understandings to build critical mass support in creating, strengthening, or rescuing affirmative action and DEI efforts.

Practical Implications

First of all, there are implications for Asian American employees in the workplace. Previous research that investigated many of the same constructs in this study primarily used university samples. The inclusion of a wider range of adults, particularly with the qualification criteria that they must have current or recent work experience in this study makes the findings of the study more generalizable to the Asian American employee population. Asian American employees may find themselves pulled in different directions when they consider their support or opposition to race-based DEI in their workplace. Perhaps some aspects of their background may cause them to be more supportive of DEI while other beliefs that they hold make an opposing case. In addition, some Asian Americans may be staunchly opposed to DEI in their workplace and are surprised when some of their Asian American colleagues are vocal advocates for DEI. The findings of this study suggest that for Asian Americans, there are several factors that contribute uniquely to their views of DEI. Consideration of the complex blend of these factors can help Asian Americans be more open-minded to learning what drives the views of those who do not agree with them instead of mistakenly jumping to a singular conclusion of why they are disagreeing, such as differences in political beliefs. This call for more open-mindedness and consideration of other people's complex experiences is also applicable for those who fall in

differing sides of the affirmative action argument. Even though the media has often portrayed Asian Americans as being monolithically opposed to affirmative action, Asian Americans should challenge this sweeping overgeneralization and continue to hold nuanced conversations about how different factors may contribute to their support for these practices.

Organizations that are considering the continuation of their race-based DEI practices as well as higher education institutions which are considering how to move forward following the 2023 Supreme Court decision should also seek to understand what drives the beliefs of these practices' advocates and opposers. In organizations, it is critical not to render invisible the opinions of Asian American employees. Human Resources and DEI practitioners who are trying to gain support for DEI practices should consider the potential impact of the model minority myth and colorblind beliefs in their organizations, and how they can amplify the set of experiences and beliefs that lend to greater support for DEI and seek ways to address generalizations and other fallible stereotypes employees of all races may hold that could harm support. In higher education institutions, practitioners involved with crafting admissions strategies should also consider how stereotypes and other beliefs about racial dynamics in the United States could impact admission decisions, and seek to drive changes to the strategies that make them more fair across racial groups without being under the direction of affirmative action. In both organizational and educational settings, it is not only important to address the potential harm of the model minority myth as it relates to garnering support for practices that address racial inequality.

These organizational systems need to also consider how the model minority stereotype can be directly harmful to Asian Americans in their daily experiences. For example, in a study involving participants' positive attitudes towards Asian Americans associated with the model

minority label, results suggested that when participants held stronger positive associations of Asian Americans based on these stereotypes thought to benefit the target, they were less likely to identify certain microaggressions such as microinvalidations (behaviors and comments that negate the racial reality faced by people of color) as being harmful (Kim, Block, & Yu., 2021). They also were less likely to identify overvalidations as harmful (type of microaggression that is unique to Asian Americans and is comprised of workplace behaviors that are based on positive stereotypes that portray Asian Americans as being diligent workers or technically savvy; Kim et al., 2015), which in practice often leads to Asian Americans being assigned more work or work based on Asian American stereotypes that are not necessarily within the scope of the employee's job description and type of work that they prefer to do (Nguyen, Block, Kim, & Yu, 2024). In these scenarios, Asian Americans may experience the salience of the model minority stereotype, which may be associated with increased endorsement of racially colorblind beliefs. Therefore, being keenly aware of the impact that model minority stereotypes and associated microaggressions may be critical in not only addressing wider organizational practices such as DEI efforts, but also protecting the individual experiences of Asian Americans in the workplace.

Limitations

There are a few limitations associated with the present study. First, the cross-sectional study design means that we cannot draw conclusions about direction and causality regarding the relationships between variables. It is plausible that the theoretical directionality that underpins our hypotheses can occur in the opposite direction; for example, while the internalization of the model minority myth can give rise to greater endorsement of CBRI due to the activation of the self-protective response, it is possible that higher levels of CBRI could influence stronger internalization of the model minority myth.

Second, we previously acknowledged some potential measurement concerns regarding both the unrestricted mobility dimension and the color and bias dimension. Echoing the concerns of Matriano et al. (2021), it is possible that there are two completely different motivations for a high score on the unrestricted mobility dimension, with some endorsing the belief because they believe that there is little to no racism against Asian Americans while others are focused on the comparative approach and believe that while there is shared oppression among People of Color, some other racial minority groups could experience even more barriers than Asian Americans. The former explanation would be more related to a colorblind belief and thus less motivation towards cross-racial solidarity, whereas the latter explanation acknowledges racism and may lead to greater cross-racial solidarity. As for the color and bias evasion measure, there were two measurement concerns. First, there was a lack of balance among the items, such that there were no reverse-scored items. In addition, almost all items being framed in terms of negative outcomes (e.g., "Seeing people in terms of race breeds interracial mistrust and prejudice"). These factors may influence how the construct of color and bias evasion is accurately captured regarding the aspiration to emphasize universal sameness and commonalities.

In addition, we specifically recruited participants who identified as "Asian American", which could have excluded participants of various immigration or generational statuses who do not identify as American. However, Asian students and employees who do not identify specifically as Asian Americans are still impacted by practices that address racial inequality. The sample also had a disproportionate percentage of second-generation Asian Americans compared to other generational status groups. In addition, participants who identified as being an East Asian ethnicity also constituted approximately half of all participants, even though there were more than four ethnic group options. Therefore, the results should be interpreted with caution

when generalizing to Asian Americans as an overall population, particularly because one of the issues with the model minority stereotype is the obscuring of different realities among Asian Americans of different backgrounds.

Future Research

A variety of future directions could bolster our understanding of Asian Americans experiences and beliefs regarding the model minority myth, CBRI, and support for practices that address racial inequality. First, race-based workplace DEI practices encompasses a wide array of programs and policies that have touchpoints in many aspects of the employee lifecycle. Future research can separate out the different kinds of practices within DEI and investigate if there are different predictors in support for each of these practices. For example, what might predict attitudes towards hiring practices could differ from those that predict support for employee resource groups.

Next, experimental or interview data could lend more insight into the causality and directionality of the relationships in the study. For example, conducting studies manipulating experimental conditions of color and bias evasion, such as those from the Apfelbaum et al. (2010) study, could provide more insight into whether colorblind attitudes are a driver of opposition to practices that address racial inequality for Asian American samples. Qualitative data could particularly help us achieve a greater understanding of what underlying beliefs drive the differential relationships between the two dimensions of the model minority myth, CBRI, and support for practices that address racial inequality. For example, while we treat CBRI as a mediator due to its theoretical role as a self-protective mechanism in response to the pressures activated by internalizing the model minority myth, Asian Americans could hold CBRI beliefs independent of these pressures, such as endorsing CBRI as a belief akin to modern racism, in line

with the explanations of why White Americans may endorse CBRI. Qualitative data could also help us understand how Asian Americans' beliefs about unrestricted mobility, as there are potential measurement concerns with how the items are interpreted.

Future research could also help identify a color and bias evasion measure that is comprehensive and well-balanced as the CoBRAS measure (power and privilege evasion). Newer measures such as the Multidimensional Assessment of Racial Colorblindness (MARC; Whitley Jr., Luttrell, & Schultz, 2023) are indicative of some recent explorations into creating measures that capture color and bias evasion specifically in researching relationships to intergroup prejudice, although the color and bias evasion items on the MARC share the same measurement concerns as the Strategic Colorblindness Scale used in the present study.

Lastly, future research could also examine additional variables such as zero-sum beliefs and internalization of negative Asian American stereotypes as predictors of support for DEI policies. For example, our exploratory measures that captured the perceptions of practices addressing racial inequality as being helpful or harmful to Asian Americans could be closely tied with zero-sum beliefs. It would make sense that if Asian Americans believe that advantages given to another racial minority group come at the cost of Asian Americans college admissions or access to resources in the workplace, they would be more likely to view these practices as harmful to Asian Americans and therefore less likely to support these practices. In addition, while this research focused on the most positive stereotypes of Asian Americans associated with the model minority myth, understanding the internalization of the less positive stereotypes, such as those associated with the "Yellow Peril" legacy that drove heightened discrimination during the COVID-19 pandemic or lacking leadership qualities leading to the "bamboo ceiling" effect, could prove to be an interesting antecedent or moderator for some of the hypothesized

relationships. For example, stronger awareness of negative stereotypes about Asian Americans could lead to lower internalization of the model minority myth and CBRI. However, it could also serve as a moderator for internalization of the model minority myth's impact on certain outcomes, as Asian Americans could certainly simultaneously hold both positive and negative stereotypes about their own group.

Conclusion

Asian Americans are an important population that needs to receive more attention to understand their support for race-based practices in higher education and the workplace. The Asian American population is an extremely complex group that is stereotyped as the model minority, based on a variety of historical factors that were often engineered to maintain a racial hierarchy in the United States. The present study sought to understand how Asian Americans internalized these model minority stereotypes that valorized Asian Americans over other racial minority groups, and how these beliefs relate to colorblind racial attitudes and support for practices that address racial inequality, specifically race-based affirmative action in higher education and race-based workplace DEI practices. Narratives about the model minority have been especially in the mainstream consciousness as Asian Americans were represented as part of the group of plaintiffs that won the Supreme Court ruling which effectively ended race-based affirmative action in higher education. While support for workplace DEI became more tenuous following the Supreme Court ruling, and outright in danger following the 2025 executive order that terminated DEI practices in the federal government, Asian Americans' beliefs about these practices have rarely been investigated. In this study, results suggested that above and beyond the impact of gender and political orientation, the model minority myth's achievement orientation and CBRI power and privilege evasion both negatively predicted support for race-based

affirmative action and DEI practices. Exploratory results also suggested that the perception of practices addressing racial inequality as being helpful or harmful to Asian Americans can also play a moderating role in influencing the outcome of support for these practices. All in all, the results suggests that Asian Americans may hold a unique set of beliefs that are associated with how they internalize stereotypes that have been imposed on them by society, and these beliefs can influence how they see interracial power relationships in society and thus, the degree to which they support practices that are designed to address racial inequality or oppose them due to thinking that they violate principles of individual merit and the existence of a level playing field.

While future research can address some measurement concerns in the present study and also explore additional variables that have a theoretical foundation for influencing the relationships in this study, practitioners that are trying to create or sustain support for affirmative action and DEI during this critical juncture in American history can add the implications of these results to their toolbelt of how to specifically address Asian American support for these practices as well as the general importance of breaking down model minority and CBRI beliefs for all employees regardless of race. Equipped with more insight into how and why Asian Americans have been shaped by stereotypes about their own place in the racial hierarchy and the reasons for it, people can be more open-minded about other people's experiences and beliefs, creating more constructive dialogue and hopefully greater movement in cross-racial solidarity towards creating a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive society.

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APPENDIX A: DESCRIPTION OF MAIN STUDY MEASURES

Internalization of the Model Minority Myth (IM-4; Yoo et al., 2010)

Achievement Orientation

- Asian Americans have stronger work ethics.
- Asian Americans are harder workers.
- Despite experiences with racism, Asian Americans are more likely to achieve academic and economic success.
- Asian Americans are more motivated to be successful.
- Asian Americans generally have higher grade point averages in school because academic success is more important.
- Asian Americans get better grades in school because they study harder.
- Asian Americans generally perform better on standardized exams (i.e., SAT) because of their values in academic achievement.
- Asian Americans make more money because they work harder.
- Asian Americans are more likely to be good at math and science.
- Asian Americans are more likely to persist through tough situations.

Unrestricted Mobility Orientation

- Asian Americans are less likely to face barriers at work.
- Asian Americans are less likely to encounter racial prejudice and discrimination.
- Asian Americans are less likely to experience racism in the United States.
- Asian Americans are more likely to be treated as equals to European Americans.
- It is easier for Asian Americans to climb the corporate ladder.

Strategic Colorblindness Scale (Goff et al., 2013; used for CBRI color and bias evasion)

- Seeing people in terms of race contributes to racial tension for everyone.
- Seeing people in terms of race breeds interracial mistrust and prejudice.
- Seeing people in terms of race creates inequality among racial groups.
- Categorizing people by race is in and of itself racist.
- Seeing people in terms of race strips one of their individuality.
- Seeing people in terms of race is an injustice.
- Ending racial categorization would create a more just society.
- Seeing people in terms of race leads to stereotyping.
- Racism and prejudice are products of racial categorization.
- Recognizing racial affiliations prevents the United States from moving towards a more socially just society.
- Seeing people in terms of race is a significant hindrance to racial harmony.

ColorBlind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS; Neville et al., 2000; used for CBRI power and privilege evasion)

Factor 1: Unawareness of Racial Privilege

- Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich.
- Race plays a major role in the type of social services (such as type of health care of day care) that people receive in the United States.
- Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not.
- Racial and ethnic minorities do not have the same opportunities as White people in the United States.
- White people in the United States have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.
- White people are more to blame for racial discrimination in the United states than racial and ethnic minorities.
- Race plays an important role in who gets sent to prison.

Factor 2: Unawareness of Institutional Discrimination

- It is important that people begin to think of themselves as American and not African American, Mexican American, or Italian American.
- Due to racial discrimination, programs such as affirmative action are necessary to help create equality.
- White people in the United States are discriminated against because of the color of their skin.
- Immigrants should try to fit into the culture and adopt the values of the United States.
- English should be the only official language in the United States.
- Social policies, such as affirmative action, discriminate unfairly against White people.
- Racial and ethnic minorities in the United States have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.

Support for Race-Based Affirmative Action Policies in Higher Education

Self-written, modified/combined from various measures including Chow et al. (2013), Wilkins et al. (2015), Kravitz & Platania (1993)

- I support race-based affirmative action policies in higher education.
- The goals of race-based affirmative action policies in higher education are good.

- Affirmative action programs in higher education are still needed today to address racial inequality.
- Affirmative action programs to promote diversity in higher education are no longer necessary to protect racial minority applicants (R).
- If I were a student, I would not like to attend a higher education institution with an affirmative action policy (R).

Support for Race-Based Workplace Race-Based DEI Practices

Self-written, modified/combined from various measures including Chow et al. (2013), Wilkins et al. (2015), Kravitz & Platania (1993).

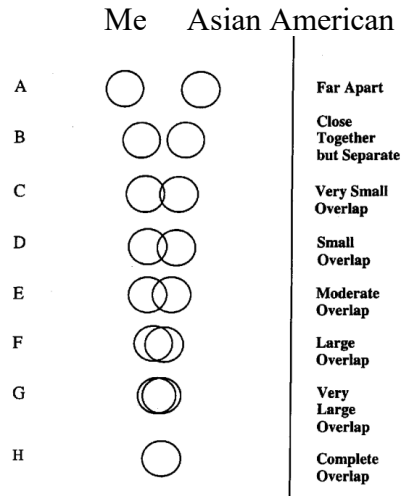
- I support Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) practices in the workplace that address racial inequality.
- The goals of DEI practices in the workplace that address racial inequality are good.
- DEI practices in the workplace are still needed today to address racial inequality.
- DEI practices to promote diversity in the workplace are no longer necessary to protect racial minority employees and applicants (R).
- I would not like to work at an organization with DEI practices that address racial inequality (R).

APPENDIX B: DESCRIPTION OF EXPLORATORY MEASURES

Identity Integration

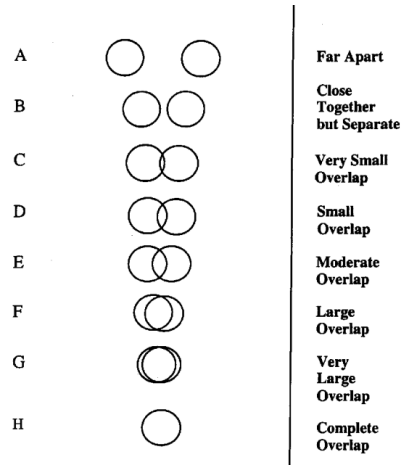
Imagine that one of the circles at the left in each row represents your own self-definition or identity and the other circle at the right represents **Asian American identity**. Please indicate which case (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, or H) best describes the level of overlap between your own identity and **Asian American identity**

.



Imagine that one of the circles at the left in each row represents your own self-definition or identity and the other circle at the right represents **Person of Color identity**. Please indicate which case (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, or H) best describes the level of overlap between your own identity and **Person of Color identity**

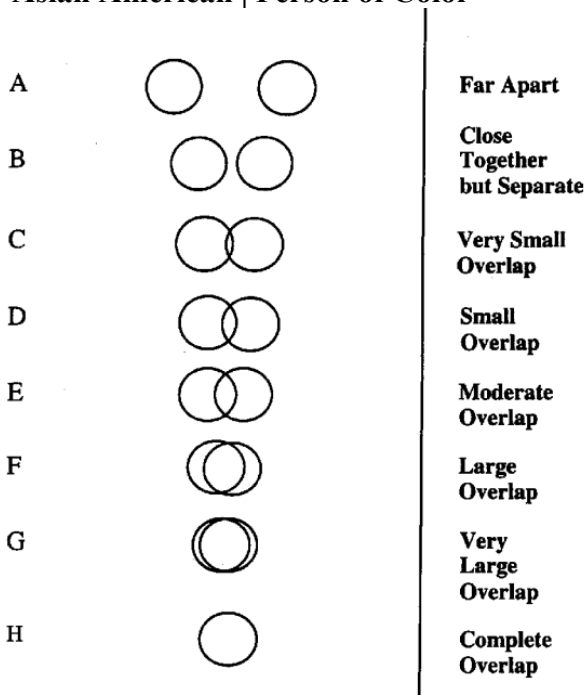
.



Imagine that one of the circles at the left in each row represents **Asian American group identity** and the other circle at the right represents **Person of Color group identity**. Please indicate

which case (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, or H) best describes the level of overlap between **Asian American group identity** and **Person of Color group identity**.

Asian American | Person of Color



Perception of Affirmative Action & DEI Helping Different Groups
(adapted from Lowery et al., 2006)

When it comes to race-based affirmative action in higher education…
(1 = greatly harm, 7 = greatly benefit)

- How would this program affect **Asian American applicants**' chances of being accepted?
- How would this program affect **Black American applicants**' chances of being accepted?
- How would this program affect **Latinx American applicants**' chances of being accepted?
- How would this program affect **White American applicants**' chances of being accepted?

When it comes to race-based workplace Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion programs…
(1 = greatly harm, 7 = greatly improve)

- How would these practices affect **Asian Americans** in the workplace?
- How would these practices affect **Black Americans** in the workplace?
- How would these practices affect **Latinx Americans** in the workplace?
- How would these practices affect **White Americans** in the workplace?

Close Cross-Race Friendships
Do you have friends who are of a different race than you?

- Yes
- No

If Yes…

The following questions ask about your friendships with those of a different race than you.

1. How likely are you to share personal challenges or problems with these friends?
   (1 unlikely, 2 somewhat unlikely, 3 somewhat likely, 4 likely)
2. How likely are they to share a personal challenge or problem with you?
   (1 unlikely, 2 somewhat unlikely, 3 somewhat likely, 4 likely)
3. Overall, how close do you feel to these friends that are of another race?
   (1 not close at all, 2 somewhat close, 3 very close, 4 extremely close)

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONNAIRE

Gender
Please indicate your gender.

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary/Gender Non-Conforming
- Not Listed _____
- Non-Disclosed

Ethnicity
Please indicate your ethnicity.

- Cambodian
- Chinese
- Filipino
- Hawaiian
- Indian
- Indonesian
- Iranian
- Iraqi
- Israeli
- Japanese
- Jordanian
- Korea
- Kuwaiti
- Laotian
- Lebanese
- Malaysian
- Mongolian
- Saudi
- Singaporean
- Syrian
- Taiwanese
- Thai
- Vietnamese
- Other (please specify) _____

Asian American Generational Status
Please indicate your generation status

- 1st generation (Born outside of U.S.) came to the U.S. as an adult (18 years or older)
- 1.5 generation (Born outside of U.S.) came to the U.S. as a child (17 or younger)
- 2nd generation (Born in U.S., parents not born in U.S.)
- 3rd generation (Born in U.S., parents born in U.S.)
- 4th generation or great (Born in U.S. grandparents/great grandparents etc. born in U.S.)

If you are 1st or 1.5 generation (born outside of U.S.), please specify years spend in the U.S. Please round to the nearest whole number.

Political Beliefs
What is your political party affiliation in the United States?

- Republican
- Democrat
- Independent
- Other

Political Orientation
How would you describe your political orientation in the United States?

- Strongly Liberal
- Liberal
- Somewhat Liberal
- Neither Liberal nor Conservative
- Somewhat Conservative
- Conservative
- Strongly Conservative

Education
What is your highest level of education?

- Some high school (9^{th}-11^{th})
- Grade 12 or GED (High school graduate)
- College 1 year to 3 years (Some college)
- College 4 years or more (College graduate)
- Masters or other professional degree
- Doctorate degree (MD, JD, PhD)

Income
What is your combined annual household income?

- Less than $25,000
- $25,000 to $34,999
- $35,000 to $49,999
- $50,000 to $74,999
- $75,000 to $99,999
- $100,000 to $149,000
- $150,000 or more

Class
How would you best characterize your social class?

- Upper class
- Upper-middle class

- Middle class
- Working class
- Living in poverty

Career Category

Which of the career categories best describes your most recent job?

- Agriculture, Food, and National Resources
- Architecture and Construction
- Arts, Audio/Visual Technology, and Communications
- Business, Management, and Administration
- Education and Training
- Finance
- Government and Public Administration
- Health Science
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Human Services
- Information Technology
- Law, Public Safety, Corrections, and Security
- Manufacturing
- Marketing, Sales, and Service
- Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
- Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics

APPENDIX D: ADDITIONAL DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Table 10

Means and Standard Deviations for Main Study Variables by Participant Ethnicity

Ethnicity (*N*)	Support for Affirmative Action	Support for DEI	Model Minority Myth (All)	MMM: Achievement	MMM: Unrestricted Mobility	CBRI (All)	CBRI: Power & Privilege Evasion	CBRI: Color & Bias Evasion
Cambodian (1)	6.20	7.00	3.67	4.00	3.00	3.28	2.71	4.00
Chinese (79)	4.39 (1.35)	5.21 (1.49)	4.47 (0.80)	5.29 (1.03)	2.84 (1.27)	3.65 (0.96)	3.26 (0.96)	4.15 (1.32)
Filipino (50)	4.12 (1.79)	4.88 (1.76)	4.79 (1.00)	5.57 (1.24)	3.21 (1.31)	4.05 (0.98)	3.55 (1.25)	4.68 (1.27)
Indian (35)	4.23 (1.55)	5.07 (1.54)	4.72 (0.62)	5.51 (0.77)	3.15 (1.20)	3.69 (0.84)	3.23 (0.98)	4.29 (1.24)
Indonesian (2)	5.10 (1.27)	4.80 (0.57)	4.93 (0.75)	5.75 (1.20)	3.30 (0.14)	4.24 (0.62)	3.64 (0.30)	5.00 (1.03)
Japanese (16)	4.25 (1.61)	4.80 (1.77)	4.94 (0.79)	5.40 (1.10)	4.03 (1.13)	3.86 (0.96)	3.54 (1.31)	4.28 (1.09)
Korean (28)	4.26 (1.77)	4.84 (1.55)	4.51 (0.84)	5.33 (1.17)	2.86 (1.18)	3.64 (0.77)	3.13 (0.78)	4.29 (1.36)
Laotian (3)	5.00 (0.72)	6.00 (1.56)	4.27 (1.54)	4.53 (1.53)	3.73 (1.70)	3.43 (1.04)	3.02 (0.57)	3.94 (1.68)
Taiwanese (5)	4.24 (1.37)	4.92 (1.43)	4.55 (0.47)	5.24 (0.64)	3.16 (0.62)	3.57 (0.66)	3.19 (0.68)	4.05 (0.64)
Thai (4)	5.15 (0.89)	5.45 (0.96)	3.93 (0.54)	4.60 (0.95)	2.60 (1.06)	3.21 (0.89)	2.91 (0.99)	3.59 (0.83)
Vietnamese (28)	4.43 (1.39)	5.29 (1.53)	4.36 (0.85)	5.08 (1.04)	2.91 (1.13)	3.60 (1.06)	3.30 (1.21)	3.98 (1.46)