ABSTRACT
Asian Americans are the fastest growing racial group in the United States that consists of over 20 national origin groups with distinctive ethnicity, language, religion, cultural practices, immigration history, and socioeconomic status and mobility patterns. Yet, heterogeneity and subsequent intra-group boundary formation among Asian Americans are seldom explored empirically until recently. This paper uses intermarriage, or marriage across group boundaries, to examine the relationship between intra-Asian ethnic heterogeneity and boundary formation. Intermarriage is studied through patterns in interracial and intra-Asian marriages. Intermarriage is a personal, micro-level social process that forges an intimate link between social groups, drawing a culturally accepted parameter between groups. Using the American Community Survey (ACS) and 2016 National Asian American Survey (NAAS) datasets I find that Asian intermarriage patterns reflect social and symbolic ethnoracial boundaries among Asian ethnic groups and between Asians and non-Asians, but only to a certain extent. These boundary-crossing patterns shown in Asian intermarriage patterns have important implications for their assimilation and racialization patterns as well as the group positioning of Asian Americans as a whole in the U.S. race relations.

KEYWORDS: Asian American, Race/ethnicity, Group boundaries, Pan-ethnicity, Intermarriage

INTRODUCTION

Group boundaries, especially the development of racial group boundaries, are central to understanding social stratification and inequality in the United States. For example, the boundaries of "whiteness" evolved as poorer, rural "ethnic" whites distinguished themselves from black slaves and freedmen in attempts to secure job opportunities, properties, and political power (Roediger 1991), and the socio-legal definition of "blackness" also evolved to protect whites' political and economic power and hinder black Americans from gaining access to various resources and opportunities (Omi and Winant 2014; Pascoe 2009; Davis 1991). Given the depth and pervasiveness of discrimination and violence encountered by those in the black racial group, it is not surprising that much of the research has focused on this aspect. However, more recent scholarship on racial boundaries has significantly improved our understanding of race and racial order in the contemporary American society beyond the black/white binary (Bonilla-Silva 2004; Alba 2009). For instance, ethnoracial tensions among Hispanic/Latino individuals and communities have garnered much scholarly attention in recent years (Telles and Ortiz 2008;

Jimènez 2008; Jimènez, Fields, and Schachter 2015). Yet, much less work has problematized the racial category of "Asian Americans."[1]

Asian Americans as a group consist of over 20 national origin groups[2] with distinctive ethnicity, language, religion, cultural practices, immigration history, and perceptions of life in the United States (Pew Research Center 2013; Okamoto 2007). Despite such diversity, these disparate ethnic groups have come to be identified under the pan-ethnic umbrella of "Asian Americans," driven both internally through Asian grassroots organization and externally via the federal government's racial lumping and allocation of resources. In so doing, Asian American pan-ethnicity, like any other pan-ethnicity, is "characterized by an acknowledgement of subgroup diversity as well as a broader sense of solidarity" (Okamoto and Mora 2014, p. 221). However, the notion of Asian pan-ethnicity may be changing in recent years due to the very diversity it recognizes and celebrates. Recent survey results indicate that only 19% of all Asians and 22% of the US-born Asians in the sample identified as "Asian/Asian American" (Pew Research Center 2013). Moreover, many Muslim Asians share distinctive Muslim pan-ethnic identity and consciousness, instead of identifying with Asian pan-ethnicity, due to shared political and cultural (religious) experiences and discrimination (Okamoto and Mora 2014; Sirin et al. 2008; Pew Research Center 2007). Research also shows growing ethnic heterogeneity within the pan-Asian group in several demographic, socioeconomic, and political measures (Pew Research Center 2013; Lee, Lee, and Khachikian 2016; Ramakrishnan and Ahmad 2014; DeSilver 2014).

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1 Throughout this project, I conceptualize race, ethnicity, and pan-ethnicity as the following: *Race* refers to a socially constructed and imposed master category defined on the basis of perceived physical and/or biological characteristics; *Ethnicity* refers to a self-asserted category and/or collective identity based on a common ancestry or homeland, as well as unique cultural elements (Omi and Winant 2014). *Pan-ethnicity* refers to a shared social category among various ethnic groups (Okamoto and Mora 2014). Lastly, *Asian American*, throughout this paper, will refer to individuals of Asian heritage who currently reside in the United States, regardless of their citizenship status, and will be used interchangeably with *Asian*.

2 Includes, but not limited to the following groups: Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Hmong, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai, Vietnamese, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Burmese, Indonesian, Nepalese, Sri Lankan, Malaysian, Bhutanese, Mongolian, and Okinawan.

These intra-Asian disparities and inequalities may be driving the development of intra-Asian ethnoracial symbolic and social boundaries at the interpersonal, social levels. Lamont and Molnar (2002) argue that social actors distinguish and categorize objects, people, and practices along symbolic boundaries, whereas social boundaries are "objectified forms of social differences" manifested in inequality in access to resources and opportunities (p.168). Further, symbolic boundaries become social boundaries when their meanings are widely agreed upon and shape social interactions (Lamont and Molnar 2002). In the case of Asian Americans, even though "Asian American" may draw necessary social distinction and boundaries to guarantee equal access and opportunities in the larger society for all individuals of Asian heritage, symbolic boundaries among various Asian subgroups rooted in their different ethnicities, languages, cultures, immigration history and experiences in the United States may persist and shape their disparate Asian American identities.

Considering these areas of dissension and/or diversity in Asian pan-ethnic identity and boundaries, I argue that investigating Asian American intermarriage patterns provides an appropriate empirical and theoretical avenue to understand how Asian ethnic heterogeneity may be contributing to Asian American ethnoracial boundary formation and group positioning. Intermarriage, or marriage across group boundaries, is a personal, micro-level social process where "members of different groups accept each other as social equals. Intermarriage can thus be regarded as an intimate link between social groups" (Kalmijn 1998, p.396). Indeed, intermarriages occur within culturally accepted parameters, reflecting individual preferences and opportunities across group boundaries (Kalmijn 1998; Moran 2001; Feliciano 2001). In turn, Individual opportunities and preferences in intermarriage have further important implications for group boundaries and positioning.

Using data from the 2016 National Asian American Survey (NAAS) and the American Community Survey (ACS) pooled from years 2008-2016, I explore ethnic heterogeneity in Asian Americans' intergroup relations and intermarriage patterns. More specifically, I ask: *What do interethnic and interracial marriage patterns tell us about Asian American intra- and inter-group boundaries?* I show Asian Americans exhibit ethnic heterogeneity not only in their socioeconomic characteristics, but also in their intergroup attitudes, suggesting the development of social and symbolic boundaries between themselves and non-Asians, as well as amongst themselves. However, Asian marital boundary crossing patterns do not necessarily align with more relaxed social and/or symbolic ethnoracial boundaries.

ASIAN AMERICANS AS A PANETHNIC GROUP

The concept of group boundaries is central to the investigation of race and ethnic relations, inequalities, and intermarriage (Okamoto 2007; Lieberson and Waters 1988; Pagnini and Morgan 1990; Kalmijn 1993). Alba (2009) argues that three conditions must be met for group boundaries to relax: (i) non-zero-sum mobility characterized by upward socioeconomic mobility that does not threaten or cause downward mobility of the dominant group, (ii) social and spatial proximity to the dominant group, and (iii) the ideological affirmation of a minority group's moral worth by the dominant group.

These processes of boundary relaxation occurred among Asian ethnic groups, leading to the formation of Asian pan-ethnic identity and boundaries. Initially, prior to the influx of highly educated and skilled Asian immigrants that began after the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act, Asian immigrants were mostly low-skilled workers from countries like Japan, China, Korea, and the Philippines (Espiritu 1992; Okamoto 2007, 2014). Members of each Asian group tried to disassociate itself from other Asian groups, often relying on the same discriminatory and racist

rhetoric used by the native white population. For example, during World War 2, non-Japanese Asian groups shared anti-Japan sentiment with the rest of Americans and distinguished themselves using various ethnic markers (Espiritu 1992). Nonetheless, these low-skilled Asian workers were similarly socioeconomically segregated in occupation and residence, and experienced similar racialization and racist attacks in the larger American society (Okamoto 2014; Espiritu 1992). Their similar structural location and experiences of racialization, coupled with Asian-driven pan-ethnic mobilization—from the "Yellow Power" movement to the New Left, Antiwar, and Women's movements—fostered pan-ethnic identity and solidarity among Asian Americans from different ethnic backgrounds (Espiritu 1992; Maeda 2011). In doing so, Asian American organizations and leaders lobbied for a pan-ethnic census designation of "Asian," to secure governmental services, resources, and opportunities (Espiritu 1992; Okamoto 2014). On the federal government's side, the allocation of resources and opportunities are oriented towards independent group, and the pan-ethnic designation aligned with the need for "racial lumping" of the federal government to recognize Asian Americans as an independently standing and marginalized group (Espiritu 1992).

Thus, Asian ethnic groups' occupational segregation in the larger society, coupled with the federal government's racial lumping, led to political allegiances and mobilization across ethnic boundaries under the umbrella racial and pan-ethnic category of "Asian/Asian American" in the latter half of the 20th century (Espiritu 1992; Okamoto 2007). In accordance with Alba's (2009) conceptualization, various Asian ethnic groups experienced similar mobility patterns that do not threaten other Asian groups due to occupational segregation. In fact, it was this non-zero-sum *lack of* mobility that facilitated social proximity among Asian ethnic groups. Furthermore, shared experiences of racialization, injustice, and discrimination likely contributed to the

ideological moral affirmation of non-coethnic Asians, leading to the development of pan-ethnic solidarity identification as Asian American. Yet, recent population growth and diversification in socioeconomic measures among Asians in the United States suggest that intra-Asian boundaries may not be as permeable as once thought.

ASIAN ETHNIC HETEROGENEITY AND GROUP BOUNDARIES

Despite successful forging of pan-ethnic alliances and solidarity, Asian Americans have since diversified to include more ethnic groups from a wide range of socioeconomic status with different immigration history and experiences in the United States. For instance, the median household income and educational attainment levels of the Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, and Indian groups exceed that of other racial minorities or even white Americans—Koreans' median income is at $50,000, lower than the four aforementioned groups and white Americans, but their educational attainment is still comparable to these groups and exceeds that of non-Asian Americans (Pew Research Center 2013). Meanwhile, educational attainment of more recent Asian immigrant groups, particularly of refugee backgrounds such as Hmongs, Cambodians, and Laotians lag behind their East Asian counterparts (Lee, Lee, and Khachikian 2016; Bonilla-Silva 2004). These data suggest that socioeconomic differences, coupled with histories of militarized refugee migration, among Asian subgroups may lead to the development of social boundaries.

Moreover, many South and Southeast Asians have different integration into and racialization experiences in the mainstream American society than East Asians. For example, due to their Spanish colonial history, many Filipinos feel more affiliated with Latinos than Asian Americans in pan-ethnicity, claiming that Filipinos are considered Asian only by a "geographical accident" (Espiritu 1992, p.17). In addition, many early Filipino immigrants spoke fluent English and came to the United States as US "nationals" under the colonial migration policies,

contributing to their lack of shared assimilation history and experiences with other Asian Americans (Ocampo 2014). Their experiences are also distinctive from their other Southeast Asian counterparts. Most Southeast Asian refugees, such as Vietnamese, Cambodians, Hmongs, and Laotians, entered the United States under different contexts of reception than other Asian immigrants (Zhou and Xiong 2005). As refugees, Southeast Asians received generous governmental support and resources for their resettlement in the United States. Nonetheless, most Southeast Asian refugees were funneled into low-skill, minimum-wage labor sectors (Kelly 1986). Their lack of English proficiency, coupled with unfavorable contexts of reception in school settings (such as selective testing, tracking, disadvantaged neighborhood, poverty), further discourage and/or hinder Southeast Asian youths from achieving educational and overall socioeconomic mobility (Zhou and Xiong 2005; Ngo and Lee 2007). Furthermore, as government-certified refugees, Southeast Asian refugees are more geographically dispersed than other Asian immigrant groups, with the exception of those who settled in Southern California (Gordon 1987).

Similarly, South Asians also differ greatly in their experiences in the United States. Whereas many South Asian groups—particularly, those of Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi origins—have similar colonial and racialization histories in the United Kingdom (Kibria 1998), their experiences in the United States diverge. Like the majority of post-1965 Asian immigrants, Indian immigrants were highly selective and entered the United States as highly educated and skilled professionals (Pew Research Center 2013; Portes and Zhou 1993). Whereas Indians' colonial history contributed greatly to their racially marginalization and under-valuation in the United Kingdom as low-skilled, underclass laborers (Visram 1986; Shukla 2001), high English proficiency acquired from their colonial history, coupled with high selectivity of Indian

immigrants in the United States, allowed relatively easy and upwardly mobile settlement of Indians in the United States (Portes and Zhou 1993). On the contrary, Other South Asian immigrants were mostly a part of the large wave of South Asian immigration that occurred in the 1980s and 1990s, and are concentrated in low-skilled, low-wage, but high-risk occupations, such as late-night shop clerkship at gas stations and convenient stores and taxi cab drivers (Kibraia 1996). Further, prevalent anti-Muslim sentiments in the post-9/11 American society also greatly contributed to many South and Southeast Asians' different experiences in the United States, regardless of their actual religious affiliations and identities (Singh 2002). Thus, many Southeast and South Asians often report feeling marginalized from the Asian American society, while East Asian experiences are considered "mainstream" (Ocampo 2014, 2013; Espiritu 1992; Kibria 1996), indicating persisting symbolic ethnic boundaries among Asian subgroups.

Considering these differences in socioeconomic status, perceived and/or felt "Asian-ness," and prevalent cultural and social resistance to Muslims/Muslim-looking Asians, I argue that intra-Asian ethnic boundaries persist despite the shared racial and pan-ethnic designation of "Asian American." Indeed, scholars have observed an informal hierarchy in perceived "Asian American-ness" among Asian subgroups, where East Asians are considered "Asian Americans" undoubtedly, with Southeast Asian groups and South Asians on the periphery by both the general American public and Asian Americans themselves (Lee and Ramakrishnan 2017; Park 2008). This may be indicative of the lack of ideological moral affirmation of some Asian ethnic groups, driven by socioeconomic differences and lack of social proximity, which is necessary for (intra-) group boundaries to be relaxed (Alba 2009). In other words, intra-Asian symbolic boundaries may be strengthened as a result of growing cultural differences and social inequalities among

Asian subgroups. As a result, the intra-Asian diversity that Asian pan-ethnicity acknowledges may lead to divisive opinions of who counts as "us" Asians versus others.

ASIAN AMERICAN INTERMARRIAGE

Boundary formation patterns among Asian ethnic groups have major implications for intermarriage, as they signify which forms of boundary crossing is socially and culturally acceptable. Thus, boundary crossing via intermarriage often aligns with relaxed ethnoracial group boundaries—intermarriage patterns further reflect individual preferences and opportunities across group boundaries, leading to cultural and socioeconomic changes (Kalmijn 1998; Moran 2001; Feliciano 2001).

For instance, some groups previously considered "ethnic," such as Southern and Eastern Europeans as well as Catholics and Jews, became integrated into the dominant, mainstream white society through various forms of social integration, including intermarriage (Liberson and Waters 1988; Waters 1990). Boundaries that differentiated these "ethnic" whites from other whites became relaxed as a result of non-zero-sum mobility characterized by lessened income inequality that does not compromise the dominant group's socioeconomic status (Alba 2009). Such social mobility of "ethnic" whites translated into social proximity to the dominant white Protestant group, and eventually, white Protestants ideologically affirmed their "ethnic" peers as social equals as a result of post-World War II cultural shift as well as the end of mass immigration (Alba 2009). Moreover, with the introduction of new minority groups via changing immigration policies attracting both low- and high-skilled immigrants from Asia and Latin America, as well as the emergence of civil rights era framing of ethnoracial minority status and rights, a new order designating the white majority, including previously "ethnic" whites, and the non-white minorities (Skrentny 2002, 2015). Consequently, ethno-religious boundary crossing

via marriage among white Americans became more common and contributed significantly to creating the white racial group that we know of today.

Similarly, Asian intermarriage patterns provide valuable insight into Asian American ethnoracial boundary formation. In general, Asian American intermarriage data show that Asians have the highest interracial marriage rate among all racial minority groups at 29% and Asian-white interracial marriage is the second most likely pairing of all intermarriages in the United States after Hispanic-white pairing (Pew Research Center 2017). At first glance, such patterns seems to suggest that some Asian Americans have gained access to the mainstream, middle-class white American society despite their non-white status, since Asian-white marriages are socioeconomically homogamous among highly educated, middle-class individuals (Qian et al. 2012; Okamoto 2007; Liang and Ito 1999). Such homogamy of white-Asian intermarriages are often understood as one of the indicators for more relaxed—*blurred*—racial boundaries between Asian Americans and whites in the United States (Wimmer 2008). In fact, Lee and Bean (2010) found that Asian-white (and Latino-white) couples were generally well received by family members and perceived their unions to be inter-*cultural*. On the other hand, Asian-black (and other black-non-black) couples understood their unions as inter-*racial* and faced family resistance in accepting their unions.

However, Asian Americans exhibit ethnic heterogeneity in various socio-demographic measures, as mentioned above. How does such intra-Asian diversity relate to their intermarriage patterns? Are all Asian ethnic groups intermarrying in a uniform fashion? Observing Asian Americans' interethnic marriage—marriage between non-co-ethnic Asians—provides some insight into possible divergence in Asian American intermarriage patterns by ethnicity. Scholars have found that Asian American interethnic marriages are on the rise and occur within clusters of

East Asians and South/Southeast Asians (S. Lee and Fernandez 1998; S. Lee and Boyd 2008), suggesting boundary formation between East and South/Southeast Asians (Min and Kim 2009). Considering that Asian interethnic marriages are often driven by pan-ethnic solidarity developed among college-educated Asians (Kibria 1997; Park 2008), these clustering patterns of interethnic marriage may be indicative of how group boundaries shape Asian American intermarriage patterns. Although existing studies of Asian American subgroups and intermarriage provide valuable insight into Asian American ethnoracial boundary formation, exactly where and how the boundaries are relaxed or strengthened is still poorly understood.

RESEARCH EXPECTATIONS

In this paper, I examine how ethnic heterogeneity among Asian subgroups may be reflected in Asian Americans' intermarriage patterns and intergroup relations. Based on previous research on Asian immigration and racialization in the United States, I expect Asian Americans to exhibit ethnic heterogeneity in their perceptions of groups other than their own ethnic group, drawing symbolic boundaries and distinguishing whom different groups consider "one of us" versus others. Furthermore, I expect Asian ethnic groups to exhibit different compositional and socioeconomic characteristics according to their group-level immigration and mobility characteristics and patterns. These symbolic and social boundaries patterns will likely align with one another, showing where ethnic boundaries are drawn among various Asian ethnic groups in the United States. Lastly, since most intermarriages are socioeconomically homogamous (Qian et al. 2012; Okamoto 2007; Liang and Ito 1999; S.Lee and Fernandez 1998; S.Lee and Boyd 2008), I expect to find Asian American intermarriages—both interracial and interethnic—to occur within the limits of social ethnoracial boundaries, while crossing symbolic boundaries. In so doing, I show that the permeability of these boundaries in marriage also differs by ethnicity.

DATA AND METHODS

Data for this study comes from two sources: the 2016 National Asian American Survey's (NAAS) Post-Election Survey[3] and the American Community Survey (ACS), 1% Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) 1-year estimate data pooled from years between 2008 and 2016[4]. I focus on eight Asian ethnic groups in this study—Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Vietnamese, Other Southeast Asians (Hmongs, Cambodians, Laotians, and Thai), Indian, and Other South Asians (Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Malaysian, Indonesian, and Sri Lankan)[5].

First, I rely on semantic differential measures for intergroup perception available in the 2016 NAAS data to measure symbolic boundaries among Asian ethnic groups,. The main variables of interest in this analysis include semantic differential measures for intergroup perception. The original survey questions for these measures ask: "On a scale of 1-7, where 1 is unintelligent /difficult to get along with and 7 is intelligent/easy to get along with, how would you rate the following groups?" The groups available for answer include 1) Chines/Korean/Japanese, 2) Indians/Pakistanis/Bangladeshis, 3) Filipinos/Vietnamese/ Cambodians, 4) Hispanics/Latino, 5) Whites, and 6) Black/African Americans. These attitudinal measures will reflect ideological affirmation of other groups (Alba 2009).

I operationalize Lamont and Molnar's (2002) social boundaries as each ethnic group's structural characteristics. These measures include: immigrant generation status, educational

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3 The 2016 NAAS data (PIs: Karthick Ramakrishnan, Jennifer Lee, Teaku Lee, and Janelle Wong) was fielded from November 2016 through February 2017 and includes approximately 6500 respondents. For the purpose of the survey, Asian Americans are oversampled in this survey.

4 The ACS is the largest ongoing household survey administered by the U.S. Census Bureau, through in-person and telephone interviews as well as mail-in and online surveys. Because the ACS surveys are ongoing and randomly sampled from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, the pooling of data ensures an adequate sample size and relatively up-to-date sample characteristics of smaller and growing Asian ethnic groups.

5 Ethnicity is measured by identifying as Asian, self-reported ancestry, and parental ethnicity. More specifically, if a respondent marked him/herself as Asian, reported that both parents are of Chinese ethnicity, and also report "Chinese" as their ancestry, they are coded as Chinese.

attainment, employment status, and household income. *Immigrant generation status* is coded as 0=Native-born, 1=1.5 generation, and 2=first generation. *Educational attainment* includes four categories, where 0=High school diploma or less, 1=Some college, 2=Bachelor's degree, and 3=post-BA degrees. *Employment status* is a binary variable where 0=not employed, 1=employed. Lastly, *household income* includes seven categories, ranging from under $15,000 (0) to $200,000+ (7). These compositional and socioeconomic factors of Asian ethnic groups influence the extent to which they have access to resources and opportunities. Thus, significant differences observed in these measures among Asian ethnic groups of interest would indicate existing social inequality or lack thereof, which is central to group boundary relaxation according to Alba (2009).

Lastly, boundary crossing in marriage will reflect social proximity and ideological affirmation between groups. For this, I rely on intermarriage status measures, which include: interracial marriage and interethnic marriage. The interracial marriage variable is coded as 0=co-ethnic, 1=white partner, 2=black partner, 3=Hispanic/Latino partner. The interethnic marriage variable is a binary variable where 0=co-ethnic and 1=interethnic marriage. Co-ethnic marriage refers to marriage between Asian partners from same ethnic backgrounds. Interracial marriage includes marriages between Asian and white, black, or Hispanic/Latino partners. Lastly, interethnic marriage refers to marriage between Asian partners of different ethnic backgrounds, such as between Chinese and Korean Americans or Vietnamese and Indian Americans.

[Table 1a and Table 1b about here]

This study proceeds in three stages. For all analyses, I use one-way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) to compare ethnic-group level means of social and symbolic boundary and marital boundary crossing measures. First, I will investigate where symbolic boundaries among Asian

ethnic groups may be drawn, using the 2016 NAAS data. All analyses of the 2016 NAAS dataset are restricted to respondents who have specified one of the following Asian ethnoracial identity and/or backgrounds—Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Vietnamese, Hmong, Cambodian, Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi.

Second, I will identify potential social boundaries rooted in structural differences among Asian ethnic groups. I will descriptively explore variation in socioeconomic characteristics among Asian ethnic groups using the ACS data. Then, I will supplement my findings by replicating my analyses using the 2016 NAAS dataset, investigating the same socioeconomic characteristics among Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Vietnamese, Hmong, Cambodian, Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi.

Lastly, I will explore marital boundary crossing patterns among Asian Americans, data on interracial and interethnic marriage from the pooled ACS dataset. For the purpose of this study, I exclude marriage with bi- or multi-racial partners from my analyses to clearly show which racial boundaries are crossed more frequently than others. All analyses of the pooled ACS data are restricted to individuals who are in adult (between the ages 18 and 64) heterosexual marital relationship, where they got married in the United States.

Together, I aim to identify where symbolic and social boundaries are drawn among Asian ethnic groups in the United States and how they may or may not align with marital boundary crossing (intermarriage) patterns.

FINDINGS

Symbolic Boundaries among Asian Americans

Examining how Asians of various ethnic backgrounds perceive members of other ethnoracial groups, across all groups, Asians exhibit more favorable attitudes towards East Asians than Southeast and South Asians (see Figure 1), and toward whites than black/African Americans and Hispanic/Latinos (see Figure 2). Moreover, East Asians and South Asians are perceived to be more intelligent than they are friendly in general. On the other hand, Southeast Asians are perceived to be slightly friendlier than they are intelligent. Yet, there exists nuanced differences in exactly how each Asian ethnic group perceives members of other groups, and therefore, draw symbolic boundaries between themselves and others.

First, looking at East Asians' (Chinese, Korean, and Japanese) intergroup attitudes, they perceived themselves more favorably than Southeast or South Asians, drawing potential symbolic boundaries between themselves and others. Similarly, they were less favorable in attitudes toward Hispanic/Latino and blacks, which they consider more friendly than intelligent, than toward whites. They perceive whites to be comparably intelligent and friendly as themselves. These more favorable perceptions of themselves and whites relative to others may be indicative of how East Asians ideologically affirm white Americans as their social equals, but not Southeast and South Asians or blacks and Hispanic/Latinos. Moreover, considering that white Americans also exhibit more favorable perceptions of East Asians than other Asian ethnic groups (results not shown; available upon request), these findings suggest that the blurred boundaries between Asian and white Americans (Wimmer 2008) may actually not be applicable to all Asian ethnic groups, but are mutually affirmed only between East Asians and whites.

Although their overall attitudes are similar to one another, statistically significant differences were observed between Japanese and the two other groups in all measures, except in their

attitudes towards whites. Overall, Japanese respondents exhibit more favorable perceptions of all groups than Koreans and Chinese. In fact, Japanese respondents were similar to Filipinos, not their East Asian peers, across all intergroup attitudinal measures. They continuously exhibit more favorable towards all other groups than other Asians and whatever differences in Japanese and Filipinos' attitudes towards others captured in my data were statistically insignificant. Similarly long histories of the two groups in the United States and large native-born population may explain this converging attitudinal measures. Even though the Chinese also have long history in the United States as an ethnic group, their significantly smaller native-born population compared to the Japanese and Filipino groups may be contributing to their differences from the two groups. Furthermore, despite no statistically significant differences between Chinese and Korean respondents' attitudes towards all groups, Koreans consistently reported least favorable attitudes towards all groups. Especially their attitudes toward Southeast Asians were significantly less favorable than all other ethnic groups.

[Figure 1 about here]

While showing similar intergroup attitudes towards others as the Japanese, Filipino respondents significantly differed from their Vietnamese, Hmong, and Cambodians peers. Overall, Filipinos were consistently more favorable of other groups than the three other groups. Interestingly, Filipinos report significantly more positive perception of Southeast Asians' intelligence than the three other groups. This may be indicative of how Filipinos perceive their own ethnic group, rather than considering other groups included in the question with themselves. More specifically, Filipinos, despite the way survey question is formatted, may still distinguishes themselves from other Southeast Asians and such distinction may have affected their attitudinal scores in the survey. Filipinos not only exhibit significantly higher socioeconomic status than

other Southeast Asian groups (more on this later), rooted in high immigrant selectivity among its immigrant population, but also faced different contexts and histories of immigration than other Southeast Asian groups (Zhou 1999; Zhou and Xiong 2005).

On the other hand, Vietnamese, Hmong, and Cambodian respondents report similar attitudes toward other groups, as well as toward themselves. Overall, Vietnamese, Hmongs, and Cambodians exhibit more favorable attitudes toward East and South Asians than toward themselves in perceived intelligence, but perceive themselves to be friendlier than other Asian groups. Such similarities among Vietnamese, Hmong, and Cambodians in their symbolic intra-Asian boundary patterns may be rooted in their shared refugee backgrounds. However, Vietnamese significantly differed from Hmongs and Combodians in their attitudes towards other racial groups: they were significantly more favorable of white Americans, even more so than any other Asian ethnic groups. Moreover, Vietnamese respondents report significantly less favorable attitudes towards blacks and Hispanic/Latinos, especially in their intelligence, indicating that they may be drawing more rigid symbolic boundaries between themselves and these two racial groups than their Cambodian and Hmong peers. Considering that an abundance of research has shown identification affiliations between downwardly mobile Vietnamese youths in the United States and their African American peers (see Zhou and Bankston 1998), this finding was surprising.

[Figure 2 about here]

South Asians (Indians, Pakistani, Bangladeshi) also exhibited similar attitudes towards other groups in general. They exhibit the most favorable attitudes towards East Asians, followed by South Asians and Southeast Asians. Even though they all report similarly favorable attitudes toward East Asians, statistically significant differences are observed. Bangladeshis exhibit the

most favorable attitudes toward East Asians, followed by Indians and Pakistanis. Similarly, they report being the most favorable of white Americans than other racial groups, but their attitudes towards blacks and Hispanic/Latinos were overall more favorable than that of other groups, except for the Japanese and Filipinos. Nonetheless, clear symbolic boundaries seem to distinguish South Asians especially from their more disadvantaged peers, like Southeast Asians, blacks, and Hispanic/Latinos. Interestingly, Pakistani respondents report significantly less favorable perception of white American's intelligence than Indians and Bangladeshis. Considering that Islam is the most popular religion among Pakistani Americans and Pakistan is the largest sending country among Muslim-dominant nations (Moore 2011), their less favorable attitudes toward white Americans may be a reaction to anti-Muslim sentiments and discrimination they had to endure since 9/11. Yet, it is puzzling that Bangladeshi respondents exhibit the most favorable perception towards white Americans, since Islam is also the most dominant religion in Bangladesh (Ahmad 2011), and therefore, their perceived religious affiliation in the United States may subject Bangladeshi Americans to the same kinds of anti-Muslim discrimination as Pakistanis.

In sum, my findings show that Asian Americans exhibit heterogeneity in their intergroup attitudes, drawing ethnically distinctive boundaries between themselves and other Asians as well as non-Asians. With slight variation by ethnicity, I find that all respondents seem to show the most relaxed symbolic boundaries between themselves and East Asians as well as whites, suggesting their ideological affirmation of these two groups. Interestingly, groups with more advantageous socioeconomic status are considered to be more intelligent than friendly, whereas more disadvantaged groups like Southeast Asians, blacks, and Hispanic/Latinos are perceived to be more friendly than intelligent. Moreover, I find that previous subgroup designation of Asian

Americans based on the geographic location of their home countries, such as East, Southeast, and South Asian, may not be reflective of actual group boundaries, as shown in the Filipino case. Filipinos, who are often considered to be one of the Southeast Asian groups, exhibit significantly different attitudes from other Southeast Asian groups, who share refugee backgrounds that Filipinos do not have. Similarly, Koreans and Chinese exhibit statistically significant differences from their Japanese peers, and Indians from their Pakistani and Bangladeshi counterparts.

Socioeconomic Heterogeneity among Asian Americans

Lamont and Molnar (2002) argue that once the meanings of symbolic boundaries are widely agreed upon and shape social interactions, they become social boundaries. Further, social boundaries are rooted in objectified social differences, which are the most apparent in structural characteristics (Lamont and Molnar 2002), and lessened inequality in these characteristics is a prerequisite for group boundary relaxation (Alba 2009). My findings show that all Asian ethnic groups in this study significantly differ from one another in their socio-demographic characteristics, suggesting that intra-Asian social boundaries exist (see Figure 3).

First, looking at compositional characteristics—immigrant generational status within each ethnic group—the Japanese ethnic group has the most native-born members, followed by Other Southeast Asians and Filipinos. Such composition may explain previously found more favorable attitudes towards other Asian ethnicities found among Japanese and Filipino respondents—native-born Asian Americans are more likely to have developed pan-ethnic consciousness through shared experiences of racialization and more frequent exposure to pan-ethnic settings, especially at higher educational institutions (Espiritu 1992; Okamoto 2014; Lowe 1991). Thus, Japanese and Filipino attitudes may be rooted in their members' more pronounced pan-ethnic consciousness and solidarity due to the relatively larger native-born population in

these groups. Even though other Southeast Asians also have similar compositional characteristics with regards to its members' immigrant generations status, they are significantly less privileged in socioeconomic characteristics—they are the least educated and report the lowest average household income among all ethnic groups of interest in this study. Thus, their socioeconomic precariousness may have hindered them from developing more heightened pan-ethnic consciousness like their Japanese and Filipino counterparts, even among their native-born population.

As expected, the ethnic groups who are often characterized as the "model minorities" such as Indians, Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans exhibit significantly higher educational attainment and household income levels than Vietnamese and Other Southeast Asians, whose socioeconomic disadvantages and downward mobility are well documented (Kelly 1986; Zhou and Xiong 2005). Interestingly, the employment rate among the Vietnamese was comparable to that of Japanese, and other Southeast Asians exhibited significantly higher employment rate than Koreans and other South Asians. These findings, coupled with these groups significantly lower educational attainment and household income levels, provide evidence in support of Kelly (1986)'s earlier findings that Southeast refugees were often funneled into low-income, menial labor sectors and therefore, continue to experience economic hardships despite their relatively high employment rates and various government assistance programs.

[Figure 3 about here]

Moreover, my findings show that socioeconomic differences among various Asian ethnic groups seem less rooted in the conventional East/Southeast/South subdivision than expected, much like the symbolic boundary patterns found above. First, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean groups are statistically significantly different from one another in all socio-demographic

measures. The Japanese report significantly larger native-born population, higher employment rate, educational attainment, and household income levels than the Chinese and Korean. Such differences may be due to continuing influx of immigrants from China and Korea, whereas immigration of Japan slowed down significantly since the passage of the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act (Pew Research Center 2013). As a result, individuals of Japanese heritage in the United States are likely to have already achieved intergenerational mobility and they may also be less likely to experience socioeconomic vulnerabilities related to immigrant status.

Similarly, Filipinos are significantly different from the Vietnamese and other Southeast Asian groups in all socio-demographic measures. They exhibit significantly higher rates of employment, educational attainment levels, and household income. Higher socioeconomic characters of Filipinos relative to other Southeast Asians reflect their different immigration history and contexts. Historically, many Filipinos immigrated to the United States as U.S. nationals, due to their colonized status, and many of these migrants were already proficient in English at the time of their arrival, minimizing potential language, cultural, and legal barriers (Ocampo 2014; Pew Research Center 2013; Zhou and Xiong 2005). Moreover, many post-1965 Filipino immigrants were highly skilled professionals, such as nurses, and migrated with substantial human capital, leading to the achievement of middle class status among both the immigrant generation and their children (Zhou 1999; Zhou and Xiong 2005). On the other hand, Vietnamese and other Southeast Asians, most of whom arrived in the United States as refugees, lacked English proficiency as well as socioeconomic and ethnic capitals, were often isolated from other Asian populations due to government-facilitated refugee settlements, and experienced downward mobility (Kelly 1986; Zhou and Xiong 2005; Ngo and Lee 2007).

Lastly, Indians also reported statistically significantly higher levels of employment rate, educational attainment levels, and household income levels than other South Asians. Much like Filipino immigrants, Indian immigrants have different immigration history and contexts from their other South Asian counterparts. Most post-1965 Indian immigrants in the United States were highly selective, entering the United States as highly educated and skilled professionals with English proficiency, which assisted their rapid socioeconomic integration in the American middle-class (Pew Research Center 2013; Portes and Zhou 1993). Their South Asian peers, most of whom arrived in the United States during the 1980s and 1990s as a part of large wave of South Asian immigration, were not as selective as Indians and experienced downward mobility as they were often funneled into low-skill, low-wage, high-risk job sectors (Kibria 1996).

[Figure 4 about here]

Descriptive analyses of the 2016 NAAS respondents further confirm these findings (see Figure 4). As in the ACS dataset, differences among the three East Asian groups' socioeconomic characteristics are statistically significant. Indians report significantly higher levels of educational attainment and household income than Pakistani and Bangladeshi respondents among South Asian groups. Among Southeast Asian ethnic groups, Filipinos' socioeconomic characteristics were more similar to that of Japanese and Koreans than to Vietnamese, Hmongs, and Cambodians. Although statistically significant differences are observed between Vietnamese and two other refugee-heavy Southeast ethnic groups (Hmongs and Cambodians), these three groups exhibit the lowest levels of educational attainment and household income compared to any other ethnic groups included in the analyses.

Together, these findings show lessened socioeconomic inequality among the Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, and Indian groups. Meanwhile, more pronounced social structural

differences are observed between Filipinos and other Southeast Asian groups with refugee backgrounds, between Indians and other South Asian groups, as well as between Southeast Asians with refugee backgrounds and all other Asian ethnic groups. These findings may be indicative of how Asian social ethnic boundaries in the United States may not be solely based on the geographic location of their home countries, but rather, rooted in their socioeconomic mobility patterns and experiences in the United States.

More specifically, the most prominent intra-Asian social boundaries seem to distinguish ethnic groups with refugee backgrounds from their non-refugee counterparts. Studies have shown that refugees encounter uniquely disadvantaged contexts of reception upon arrival in the host country, and often their structural disadvantages persist despite government assistance in resettlements (Zhou and Xiong 2005). Moreover, many Southeast Asian refugees were widely dispersed across the United States, with the exception of those who settled in Southern California (Gordon 1987). Considering the importance of social proximity in relaxing group boundaries (Alba 2009), this may contribute to both symbolic and social boundary formation between refugee- and non-refugee Asian Americans. In addition, statistically significant differences between Indians and Other South Asians in both symbolic and social boundary measures may be reflective of the contentious history among the three nationalities' home countries (Bose and Jalal 2002), different histories of migration to the United States as well as other destinations (most notably, the United Kingdom), and their diverging contextualized experiences of racialization. Now, I turn to Asian intermarriage findings to examine how these social and symbolic boundaries are reflected in their marital boundary crossing patterns.

Asian Intermarriage and Boundary Crossing

Intermarriage signifies crossing of group boundaries via marriage. Asian Americans' intermarriage patterns show which type of boundary is more permeable or acceptable to cross, between symbolic and social boundaries. Overall, despite their shared relative socioeconomic advantages, Japanese and Filipinos have higher rates of interracial marriage than other groups on one hand, and Indians have the lowest intermarriage rates on the other (see Figure 5). When disaggregated by respondents' spousal race (see Figure 6), my findings show that intermarriage with whites is more common among Japanese, Korean, and Filipinos and least common among Indians and Vietnamese. As shown above, Japanese, Koreans, and Filipinos are among the most advantaged Asian ethnic groups in socioeconomic measures, and Vietnamese, one of the most disadvantaged. Considering that the most intermarried and the least intermarried groups all share similarly favorable attitudes toward white Americans, these intermarriage patterns show that social racial boundaries rooted in structural differences may be harder to cross for disadvantaged groups like the Vietnamese.

[Figures 5 and 6 about here]

Asian intermarriage with a black partner is not common across all groups and yet, my findings show interesting patterns. Filipinos report the most frequent intermarriage with a black partner, followed by other Southeast Asians, Japanese, and Other South Asians. On the other hand, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Indians report the lowest rate of intermarriage with blacks. Chinese and Vietnamese reported the least favorable perception and Filipino and Japanese more favorable perceptions of blacks in the 2016 NAAS data, suggesting the significance of symbolic boundaries in shaping black-Asian intermarriage outcomes. Indeed, scholars have found how Asian Americans as well as other non-blacks, regardless of their nativity status, consider marrying a black partner as a downward mobility path and outside of their culturally acceptable

parameters of out-group partner selection (Lee and Bean 2010). Moreover, structural disadvantages of many black Americans, coupled with the rigidity of symbolic boundaries between Asian Americans draw between themselves and black Americans found in this study, may further contribute to the extremely low rates of intermarriage between Asian Americans and blacks in general. High rates of intermarriage between Other Southeast Asians—the most structurally disadvantaged group in my sample—and black Americans further support the role of disadvantaged socioeconomic status plays in black-Asian intermarriage.

Intermarriage with Hispanic partners was the most common among Filipinos, followed by Japanese and Other Southeast Asians. Again, Filipinos and Japanese exhibited the most favorable attitudes toward Hispanic/Latinos among all Asian groups. Moreover, high rates of intermarriage between Filipinos and Hispanic/Latinos may be explained by their similar Spanish and American colonial histories, language, sir names, and religious and other cultural customs (Ocampo 2014). Surprisingly, interracial marriage with a Hispanic/Latino partner was more common than intermarriage with a white partner for all groups, except for the Japanese and Koreans. Considering that Asian American interracial marriages are often socioeconomically homogamous, facilitated by shared educational and/or occupational status and domains (Qian et al. 2012; Okamoto 2007), these findings are suggestive of two possibilities. First, Asian Americans and Hispanic/Latinos may share structural similarities and immigrant-related experiences that facilitate loosening of symbolic boundaries and intermarriage between two groups, regardless of individual attitudes toward other racial groups. Second, Latino/Hispanic partner selection may be understood as crossing cultural boundaries rather than structural ones. Previously, Lee and Bean (2010) found that most Asians and Hispanic/Latinos who married

white partners perceive their unions to be inter*cultural* rather than interracial, and Asian-Hispanic/Latino unions may be understood similarly.

When looking at interethnic marriage patterns, interesting patterns emerge. First, the Japanese exhibit significantly higher rates of interethnic marriage than any other Asian ethnic groups in this study. This may be explained by their smaller group size, where the availability of a potential co-ethnic partner is limited. Furthermore, as shown above, all other groups perceive the Japanese favorably as East Asians, and they exhibit the most favorable perception of all other groups among the eight ethnic groups of interest in this study. Thus, crossing symbolic ethnic boundaries in marriage may be easier for many Japanese Americans than other Asian Americans who do not have as favorable attitudes towards others and/or are perceived as favorably by others. On the other hand, Indians once again exhibit the lowest rates of intermarriage with other Asians. This may be due to their larger group size, indicating an abundance of available potential co-ethnic partners, coupled with culturally specific marriage practices. Transnational arranged marriage with partners in home country (India) is a common practice among Indians, and so are high involvement of parents and other family members in arranging both domestic and transnational co-ethnic marriages (Leonard 2011).

On the other hand, the remaining Asian ethnic groups show subtle, but still statistically significantly different rates of interethnic marriage. Koreans, Vietnamese, and other South Asians all exhibit similar rates of interethnic marriage despite their different immigration histories and socioeconomic characteristics. As shown above, Koreans and Vietnamese respondents both exhibit the lowest levels of ideological affirmation other Asian groups, drawing more rigid symbolic boundaries between themselves and other Asians. This may have contributed to their relative lower interethnic marriage rates. Likewise, Chinese, Filipinos, and other Southeast

Asians exhibit similar rates, despite their differing group-level characteristics. Considering that the Chinese and Filipinos are two of the largest Asian ethnic groups in the United States, and other Southeast Asians the smallest (Pew Research Center 2013), their group size and within-group heterogeneity may be able to explain their similar interethnic marriage rates. Members of smaller ethnic groups like Other Southeast Asians have limited availability of potential co-ethnic partners, but may find a potential partner in a larger ethnic group, like the Chinese and Filipinos, who shares certain social or symbolic similarities with them, due to their larger group size and internal diversity.

In fact, across all groups, when Asian Americans marry an Asian partner of different ethnicity, they most often marry a Chinese partner (results not shown; available upon request). And yet, the Chinese as a group exhibit relative lower interethnic marriage rates, perhaps due to their large ethnic group size, coupled with within-group heterogeneity in factors like socioeconomic status, immigrant generation status, and geographic location, among of the Chinese in the United State. Moreover, other groups favorably perceive the Chinese as East Asians, and therefore, they might be more attractive non-co-ethnic partner option for many non-Chinese Asians. The group's internal heterogeneity may also allow many Chinese Americans to find a co-ethnic partner more easily and conveniently than a different-ethnic Asian partner when they look for an Asian partner in general, contributing to their relatively lower rates of intermarriage compared to other Asian ethnic groups with similar characteristics and intergroup attitudes.

Taken together, my findings show that symbolic, social, and marital boundaries among Asian Americans do not necessarily overlap with one another. On one hand, more rigid symbolic and social boundaries between Southeast Asians (except Filipinos) and other Asians were

observed. Yet, these Southeast Asian groups still intermarry at higher rates than others, especially with Hispanic/Latino and different-ethnic Asian partners. On the other hand, Indians, despite their relatively privileged socioeconomic status and more favorable perceptions by others, seem to be isolated from the intermarriage market—they are least likely to intermarry across all types of marriages. Their relatively larger size, coupled with ethno-religious traditions in marriage, may explain such isolation. Overall, smaller Asian ethnic groups intermarry more than larger ethnic groups, regardless of their socioeconomic characteristics or intergroup perceptions. This suggests that symbolic and social ethnoracial group boundaries may be important in shaping group-level intermarriage patterns, but limited potential co-ethnic partner pool may still drive some to cross even the most rigid boundaries, as shown among Other Southeast Asians.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As mentioned earlier in this paper, various Asian ethnic groups have come together as a pan-ethnic "Asian American" group as a result of shared political and economic needs as well as experiences of segregation, marginalization, and racialization. Yet, my findings show that while Alba's (2009) boundary relaxation mechanisms—social mobility, proximity, and ideological affirmation—may have brought various Asian ethnic groups together when such alliance was politically and socially necessary, recent diversification of Asian Americans may be drawing new intra-Asian symbolic and social boundaries. More specifically, I find that 1) intra-Asian boundary patterns are not based on the geographic location of their countries of origin, but by their current structural characteristics, 2) intermarriage, or marital boundary crossing, is facilitated and bound by each ethnic group's socio-demographic characteristics, and 3) ethnically specific culture may be contributing to diverging patterns of boundary formation and crossing.

First, each ethnic group's current positionalities and characteristics in the United States seem to draw intra-Asian symbolic and social boundaries. Asian ethnic groups are often understood in subgroups of East/Southeast/South Asians, grouped based on the geographic locations of their home countries. However, my findings show that subtle, but statistically significant differences in their intergroup attitudes and socio-demographic characteristics exist within these subgroups. For example, the three East Asian groups significantly differed from one another in almost all measures used in this study. Overall, the Japanese exhibit more similarities with the Filipinos rather than their East Asian peers. Likewise, statistically significant differences were observed among South Asian groups in both structural and attitudinal measures. Bangladeshis exhibit the most favorable attitudes toward East Asians, followed by Indians and Pakistanis. While Indians' shared "model minority" status with East Asian groups explain their favorable perspectives, that of Bangladeshi and Pakistani individuals require more in-depth empirical analyses that is outside the scope of this paper. Perhaps, their favorable perceptions of East Asians are rooted in the same "model minority" perception of these groups and as relatively new ethnic groups in the United States, they may aspire to be like the other model minorities.

The most apparent development of symbolic and social boundaries within Asian subgroups was observed among Southeast Asians (Filipino, Vietnamese, Hmong, Cambodian, and other Southeast Asians). Even though Filipinos are considered Southeast Asian mainly due to the geographic location of their country of origin, they exhibit significantly more advantaged socioeconomic characteristics and more favorable perceptions of all groups than other Southeast Asian groups. These differences could be explained by their different immigration histories and contexts, which also has influenced the ways in which each ethnic group and its members integrate into the mainstream American society. For instance, Southeast Asian groups whose

members immigrated to the United States mostly as refugees, such as the Vietnamese, Hmong, and Cambodian, lag behind their non-refugee Asian counterparts, including Filipinos, in various socioeconomic measures and seem to exhibit distinctive patterns of boundary formation and crossing.

In fact, the most apparent and rigid social and symbolic boundaries seem to distinguish Asian ethnic groups with refugee backgrounds from their non-refugee counterparts. South Asian refugee groups—namely, Vietnamese, Hmongs, Cambodians, Laotians—exhibit different immigration histories, socioeconomic characteristics and mobility, and geographic dispersion patterns as refugees (Zhou and Xiong 2005; Kelly 1986; Ngo and Lee 2007; Gordon 1987). Such refugee status and physical distance from other Asians, coupled with distinctive preference for their national-origin identities over hyphenated and Asian American identities (Zhou and Xiong 2005), may have contributed to more pronounced symbolic boundaries between Southeast Asians and others. Interestingly, Southeast Asians themselves may be aware of their differently situated positions from other Asians, as they exhibit more favorable attitudes towards other Asian ethnic groups than themselves in intelligence and more favorable attitudes towards themselves than other Asian ethnic groups in friendliness. These results may reflect how Southeast Asians—as well as other Asians—make sense of these groups' apparent socioeconomic disadvantages, but without considering the implications of refugee status on them. In other words, they may interpret the reason for Southeast Asians' socioeconomic disadvantages as lack of intelligence, while maintaining "warm" or empathetic attitudes toward these groups, as shown in their perceived friendliness, due to their refugee status.

These findings suggest that the development or reinforcement of symbolic and social boundaries may be a cyclical process. As Lamont and Molnar (2002) stated, symbolic boundaries

become social boundaries when its meanings are widely agreed upon and shape social interactions. Furthermore, structural differences often translate into more pronounced social boundaries among groups. Southeast Asian group refugees' socioeconomic disadvantages is rooted in and compounded by their refugee status and histories. Thus, their unique circumstances, coupled with national-origin differences among various Asian ethnic groups, may have initially established symbolic boundaries between themselves and other Asians. These symbolic boundaries may have solidified social boundaries through different meaning-making and interaction processes as well as through differences in structural characteristics. Such structural dissimilarity, in turn, may have re-negotiated and further strengthened previously existing symbolic boundaries among Asian Americans.

However, more pronounced or rigid group boundaries do not necessarily lead to less frequent boundary crossing, and more relaxed group boundaries also do not guarantee more frequent crossing of these boundaries in marriage. In fact, my findings suggest that ethnoracial boundary crossing via marriage is both facilitated and limited by each ethnic group's compositional and structural characteristics. For example, despite similar experiences of racialization, socioeconomic characteristics, and reception by other ethnoracial groups, marital boundary crossing patterns of the Japanese differ from their Chinese and Korean counterparts significantly, suggesting that even when social and symbolic group boundaries may align, they do not guarantee similar permeability or boundary crossing patterns. More importantly, the Japanese group is much smaller in size and intermarries at a significantly higher rate than most other single ethnic groups in this study. Similarly, Other Southeast and Other South Asians exhibit comparable rates of interracial and interethnic marriages than their larger and socioeconomically more advantaged counterparts. These findings suggest that group size of an

ethnic group, and consequently, the (limited) availability of potential co-ethnic partner, seems to facilitate intermarriage for smaller ethnic groups, regardless of their structural characteristics.

In addition to group size, my findings indicate that shared structural characteristics between two groups may lead to more frequent *symbolic* boundary crossing in marriage. For example, despite their relatively unfavorable attitudes, and therefore, more pronounced symbolic boundaries they draw between themselves and Hispanic/Latinos, and significantly lower rates of overall intermarriage, the Vietnamese interracial marriage rates with Hispanic/Latino populations were comparable to groups with higher overall interracial marriage rates, such as Japanese and other South Asians. The similar socioeconomic locations between Vietnamese as well as Other Southeast Asians and Hispanic/Latino populations—relaxed social boundaries—may allow marital boundary crossing between the two groups, even though more disadvantaged position of Southeast Asian groups does not necessarily lead to warmer perceptions of, or more relaxed symbolic boundaries between themselves and other disadvantaged groups, namely, blacks and Hispanic/Latino. These findings suggest that social boundaries may be more rigid, and harder to cross in marriage than symbolic boundaries. Moreover, I find that Asian-Hispanic/Latino intermarriage is the most common type of intermarriage for Asian Americans in general. This may be due to the large group size of Hispanic/Latino population, coupled with their internal heterogeneity with regards to individual's immigrant generation status, socioeconomic characteristics, and cultural and social dispositions. Thus, Asian Americans, when crossing ethnoracial boundaries in marriage, may find a partner with comparable experiences of immigrant households and socioeconomic characteristics more easily and conveniently among Hispanic/Latino population than in other racial groups.

Some of the diverging patterns of boundary formation and crossing may be explained by ethnically specific cultural practices and characteristics. Koreans and Indians each present a unique case of boundary development and/or crossing rooted in ethnically specific culture. Koreans exhibit the least favorable attitudes toward all other groups in my study, drawing more rigid symbolic boundaries between themselves and other Asians, blacks, Hispanic/Latinos. Koreans have been found to report higher levels of ethnic attachment than other ethnic groups (Min and Kim 2009) and exhibit high social ethnic attachment where their immediate social networks (friends and significant others) consist mostly of other Koreans (Hong and Min 1999). Perhaps, high levels of ethnic attachment found among Koreans in the United States may explain their more stringent attitudes toward others. On the other hand, Indians, despite their favorable perceptions of others and significantly more advantageous socioeconomic characteristics, exhibit the lowest rates of intermarriage of all Asian ethnic groups in this study. Indians' extremely low rates of intermarriage—both interracial and interethnic—show that their relaxed social and symbolic boundaries do not necessarily lead to boundary crossing in marriage, and that other cultural factors—such as the importance of family, especially parental, influence in choosing marital partners and the prevalence of (transnational) arranged marriages (Leonard 2011)—may hinder even the most relaxed boundaries from being crossed.

In summary, this paper has examined intra-Asian social and symbolic boundary formation and intermarriage patterns. I find that Asian Americans' symbolic and social ethnoracial boundaries are largely consistent. However, the subgroup designation among Asian Americans based on the geographic location of their countries of origin—East/Southeast/South Asia—may not capture these intra-Asian boundaries adequately, as the most prominent intra-Asian social and symbolic boundaries seem to be drawn between refugee and non-refugee ethnic

groups. Furthermore, I find that marital boundary crossing patterns do not necessarily align with the "relaxed" social and symbolic boundaries. Even the most rigid symbolic boundaries may be crossed when two groups exhibit structural similarities as shown in high Asian-Hispanic marriage rates across all groups. Even though Asians, regardless of their ethnicity, exhibit more favorable attitudes towards whites than Hispanic/Latinos, this does not necessarily translate into higher rates of Asian-white intermarriage for most groups. Meanwhile, even the most relaxed social and symbolic boundaries may not be crossed due to factors other than structural characteristics, such as cultural traditions, within-ethnic group heterogeneity, and group size. Especially, consistently more frequent interracial and interethnic marriages among smaller ethnic groups with different socioeconomic characteristics, such as the Japanese, other Southeast Asians, and other South Asians, point to the importance of group size and the potential partner availability pool each group's size entails. These findings have several implications for Asian American pan-ethnicity, intermarriage, and racial group positioning.

First, nearly four decades removed from Asian refugee groups' first arrivals in the United States, they are still lagging behind their non-refugee peers in various socioeconomic measures. Asian American pan-ethnicity was developed as a sociopolitical instrument for individuals of Asian heritage, granting access to resources and opportunities to all Asians as marginalized ethnoracial minorities. Its political function—in enumerating and representing Asian American population, allocating resources and opportunities, developing personal and political ethnoracial identities and solidarities—still benefits all Asian Americans. However, non-dominant Asian ethnic groups' relative class disadvantages were not remedied by pan-ethnic representation and solidarity and therefore, caused ethnic tensions among various Asian groups (Espiritu and Ong 1991). More pronounced disadvantages of many Southeast Asians in the United States, coupled

with more defined social and symbolic boundaries drawn between them and other Asians found in this study, suggest that Asian pan-ethnicity may encounter more serious intra-Asian ethnoracial tensions in the near future if these discrepancies and boundaries persist.

Second, high rates of intermarriage with Hispanic/Latinos across almost all Asian ethnic groups, coupled with the steady rise in interethnic marriage rates (Shinagawa and Pang 1996; S. Lee and Fernandez 1998; Qiat et al. 2001), suggest that Asian-white unions may not be the most dominant form of Asian intermarriage in the near future. This has important implications not only for Asian Americans' race relations with other racial groups, but also how race relations may transform in the United States. Even though many scholars have argued for Asian Americans' "honorary white" status (Bonilla-Silva 2004) and blurred group boundaries with Asians and whites in the United States (Wimmer 2008; Lee and Bean 2010), the actual patterns of social cohesion among different ethnoracial groups via intermarriage may be positioning many Asian Americans closer to similarly positioned non-whites than whites. Yet, the persisting anti-blackness among Asians observed in this study simultaneously questions the plausibility and the parameters of the "pan-minority" identity and solidarity (Neckermann et al. 1999). As various types of Asian-non-white unions are on the rise (Shinagawa and Pang 1996; S.Lee and Fernandez 1998; Qiant et al. 2001; Okamoto 2007), driven by ethnically heterogeneous socioeconomic and cultural characteristics, this type of unions may not only provide different paths of marital integration for both Asians and other non-whites (namely, Hispanic/Latinos), but also may transform existing intra-Asian and inter-Asian ethnoracial boundaries accordingly.

While the findings of this study reveal ethnic heterogeneity among various Asian groups and its implications on their boundary formation and crossing patterns, they also point to areas that require further empirical attention. First and foremost, this study is descriptive in its nature

and therefore, does not tell *how* ethnic heterogeneity and boundary formation and crossing patterns may be correlated. In order to better understand this relationship, future study should utilize necessary statistical methods in exploring the strongest predictors of boundary formation as well as intermarriage at both ethnic group and individual levels. Second, extremely small group size of several Southeast and South Asian groups limited the extent of disaggregation in this study. Yet, the oversampling of smaller groups such as Hmongs, Cambodians, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis in the 2016 NAAS dataset allowed for a meaningful comparison across these groups. Future surveys of Asian Americans should take similar approaches.

Lastly, this study is limited by survey design. Particularly, the semantic differential measures of intergroup attitudes available 2016 NAAS posed some challenges in adequately capturing Asian Americans' intergroup attitudes in two ways. First, in grouping several Asian ethnic groups into subcategories of East Asians, Southeast Asians, and South Asians, the survey lumps Asian ethnic groups that share similar geographic location of their country of origin without considering the context in which they migrated to the United States, contentious home country politics and histories, and ethno-religious diversity and tensions. Thus, the grouping of ethnicities used in the 2016 NAAS conflates and masks heterogeneity among them and its implications for out-group perceptions of these ethnic groups. Second, the way these semantic differential measures of intergroup attitudes were asked does not allow for indexing of the measures or cross-racial group comparisons. Whereas Asian respondents were overwhelmingly asked about perceived friendliness and intelligence of various ethnoracial groups, non-Asian responses are mostly on their perceived levels of work ethics and peacefulness. Because these questions do not have the same number of observations, they do not allow for meaningful indexing, which would allow researchers to be able to investigate all four categories of

intergroup perceptions at once and compare across not just Asian ethnic groups, but across racial groups.

This study has found that not only are Asian Americans as a group rapidly growing in size and diversifying in its composition, but also that such diversity, especially ethnic heterogeneity, may be contributing to the development of intra-Asian symbolic and social boundaries. While the rigidity of these boundaries and marital boundary crossing patterns of Asian Americans do not necessarily align with one another, my study offers a springboard for future research to consider and account for these intra-Asian boundary formation and crossing in theorizing and investigating Asian American pan-ethnicity and racial group positioning. Simply lumping various Asian ethnic groups in scholarly consideration would not only mask internal heterogeneity among Asian Americans, but also render more disadvantaged Asian Americans and their social, economic, and political vulnerabilities and needs invisible. This, in return, may affect scholarly and popular understandings of Asian Americans and available paths and mechanisms for their integration into the mainstream society.

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TABLES

Table 1a. Means/Proportions, Standard Deviations, and Ranges of Measures from the Pooled ACS data (years 2008-16)

	Means									**SD**	**Range**
	Overall	Chinese	Japanese	Korean	Filipino	Vietnamese	Other SE	Indian	Other S		
Socio-Demographic Characteristics											
Gender	0.54	0.54	0.57	0.57	0.57	0.53	0.55	0.48	0.49	0.49	0/1
Immigrant Status	1.42	1.43	0.81	1.40	1.34	1.46	1.19	1.68	1.61	0.82	0-2
Employment Status	0.70	0.69	0.70	0.64	0.77	0.70	0.66	0.72	0.63	0.46	0/1
Education	1.50	1.55	1.60	1.51	1.36	0.92	0.80	2.05	1.45	1.08	0-3
Household Income**	3.93	3.82	4.14	3.52	4.21	3.39	3.21	4.55	3.46	2.02	0-7
Marriage Type											
Co-ethnic	0.57	0.59	0.30	0.54	0.47	0.65	0.52	0.73	0.61	0.50	0/1
Interracial	0.36	0.33	0.62	0.40	0.47	0.28	0.41	0.21	0.31	0.36	0/1
White	0.15	0.13	0.29	0.20	0.19	0.08	0.15	0.09	0.11	0.36	0/1
Black	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.08	0/1
Hispanic/ Latino	0.17	0.15	0.21	0.15	0.22	0.17	0.21	0.10	0.16	0.37	0/1
Interethnic	0.14	0.15	0.36	0.13	0.15	0.12	0.16	0.08	0.14	0.35	0/1
N	712,747	181,689	40,818	73,761	137,242	77,505	37,678	136,605	27,449		

Table 1b. Means/Proportions, Standard Deviations, and Ranges of Measures from the 2016 NAAS data

	Means											SD	Range
	Overall	Chinese	Japanese	Korean	Filipino	Vietnamese	Hmong	Cambodian	Indian	Pakistani	Bangla		
Socio-Demographic Characteristics													
Gender	0.50	0.54	0.47	0.53	0.52	0.40	0.58	0.58	0.36	0.36	0.37	0.50	0/1
Married	0.62	0.74	0.55	0.66	0.55	0.74	0.66	0.62	0.68	0.71	0.57	0.49	0/1
Nativity	0.20	0.15	0.79	0.18	0.38	0.10	0.17	0.09	0.22	0.17	0.23	0.48	0/1
Education	1.47	1.40	2.13	1.80	1.74	0.40	0.42	0.34	2.82	2.20	1.94	1.43	0-4
	0.49	0.40	0.40	0.43	0.43	1.47	0.38	0.31	0.63	0.49	0.49	0.49	0/1
Employment													
Household Income**	2.04	1.78	2.79	2.22	2.45	0.83	1.14	0.82	3.75	2.73	2.28	1.82	0-6
Intergroup perception													
East Asians													
Intelligence	4.62	4.56	4.92	4.28	4.76	4.28	4.51	4.39	4.97	4.29	5.00	1.30	0-6
Friendliness	4.00	4.05	4.38	3.86	4.11	3.69	3.65	3.64	4.05	4.33	4.11	1.60	0-6
SE Asians													
Intelligence	3.89	3.45	4.26	3.26	4.35	3.65	3.72	3.85	4.14	4.10	4.13	1.41	0-6
Friendliness	4.01	3.65	4.27	3.51	4.25	4.10	3.73	3.90	4.15	4.29	4.07	1.49	0-6
South Asians													
Intelligence	4.12	3.88	4.38	3.58	4.25	3.87	4.03	3.99	4.38	4.18	4.47	1.50	0-6
Friendliness	3.78	3.47	3.96	3.08	3.78	3.04	3.49	3.49	4.32	4.48	4.41	1.64	0-6
Whites													
Intelligence	4.60	4.31	4.59	4.40	4.63	5.00	4.86	4.75	4.53	4.12	4.68	1.23	0-6
Friendliness	4.37	4.18	4.41	4.06	4.50	4.32	4.26	4.22	4.61	4.53	4.56	1.34	0-6
Blacks													
Intelligence	3.61	3.06	3.98	3.09	3.97	3.03	3.88	3.50	3.73	3.99	3.99	1.49	0-6
Friendliness	3.85	3.34	4.08	3.37	4.14	3.42	3.62	3.53	4.24	4.39	4.35	1.53	0-6
Hispanic/ Latino													
Intelligence	3.63	3.23	4.02	3.11	4.05	2.95	3.76	3.56	3.76	3.89	3.98	1.40	0-6
Friendliness	4.11	3.89	4.29	3.64	4.37	3.86	3.93[j]	3.71	4.33	4.52	4.39	1.41	0-6
N	**6448**	489	521	500	512	502	351	401	511	320	320		

FIGURES

Figure 1. Perceived Intelligence and Friendliness of Asian Groups

**Note: One-way ANOVA was used for testing statistically significant mean differences ($p<.05$). Superscripts show relationships statistically NOT significantly different from a=Chinese; b=Japanese; c=Korean; d=Filipino; e=Vietnamese; f=Hmong; g=Cambodian; h=Indian; i=Pakistani; j=Bangladeshi.*

Figure 2. Perceived Intelligence and Friendliness of Whites, Blacks, and Hispanic/Latinos

**Note:* One-way ANOVA was used for testing statistically significant mean differences ($p<.05$). Superscripts show relationships statistically NOT significantly different from a=Chinese; b=Japanese; c=Korean; d=Filipino; e=Vietnamese; f=Hmong; g=Cambodian; h=Indian; i=Pakistani; j=Bangladeshi.*

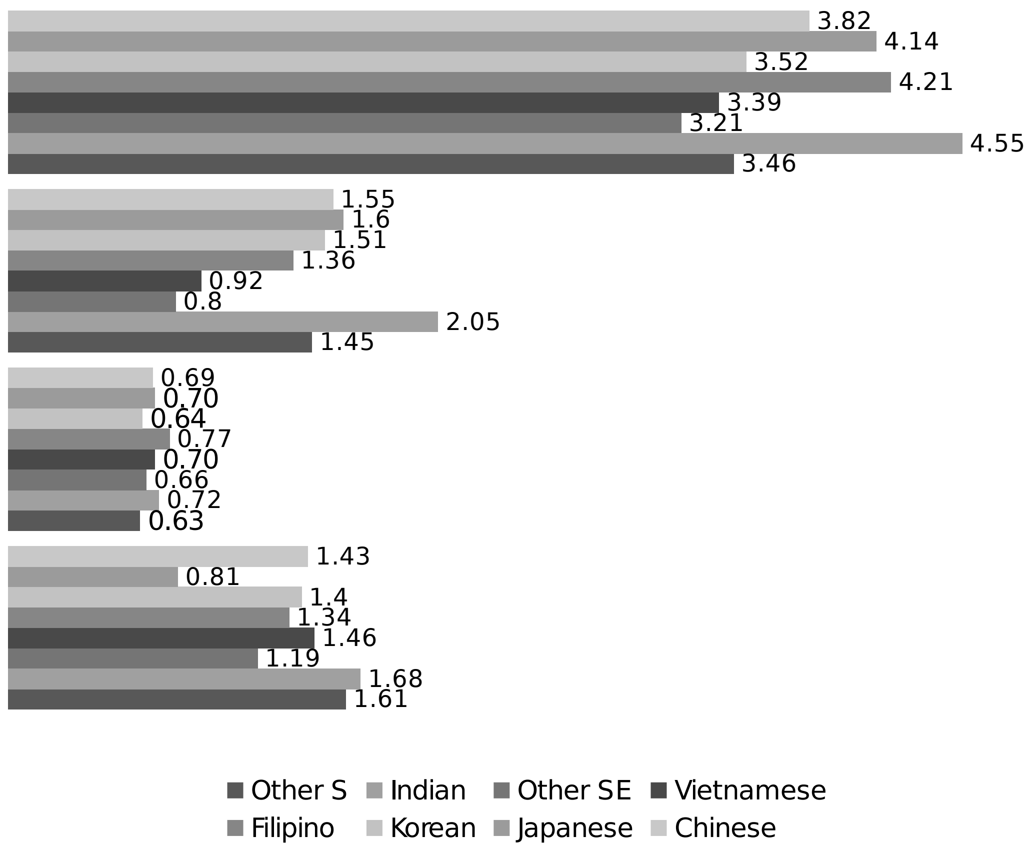

Figure 3. Comparsion of Means of Socio-demographic Measures in the Pooled ACS Data (years 2008-2016)

**Note: One-way ANOVA was used for testing statistically significant mean differences (p<.05). Superscripts show relationships statistically NOT significantly different from a=Chinese; b=Japanese; c=Korean; d=Filipino; e=Vietnamese; f=Other SE; g=Indian; h=Other South*

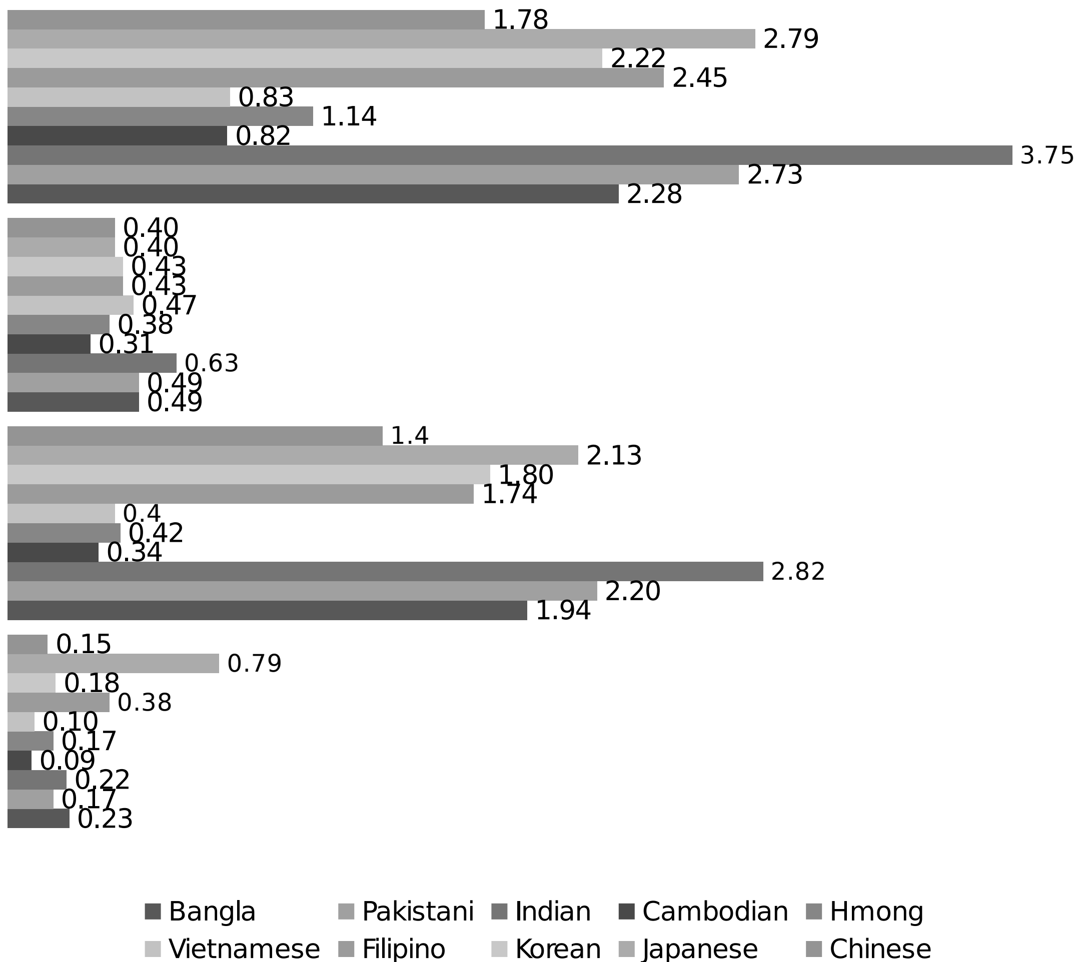

Figure 4. Comparsion of Means of Socio-demographic Measures in the 2016 NAAS data

**Note: One-way ANOVA was used for testing statistically significant mean differences (p<.05). Superscripts show relationships statistically NOT significantly different from a=Chinese; b=Japanese; c=Korean; d=Filipino; e=Vietnamese; f=Hmong; g=Cambodian; h=Indian; i=Pakistani; j=Bangladeshi.*

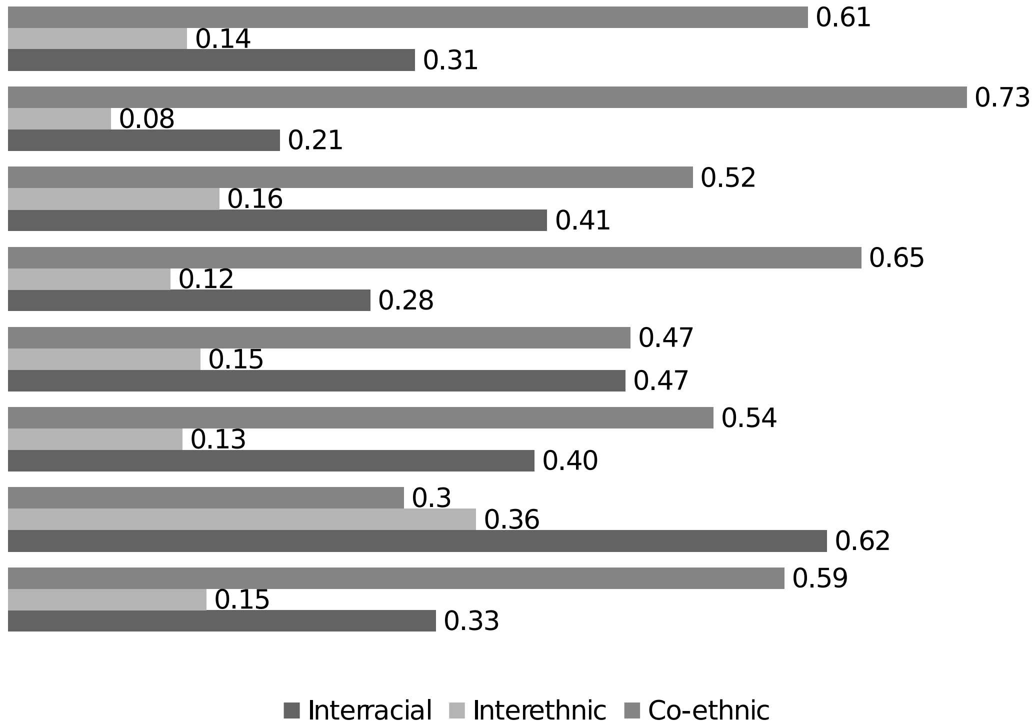

Figure 5. Marriage Type by ethnicity

**Note: One-way ANOVA was used for testing statistically significant mean differences ($p<.05$). Superscripts show relationships statistically NOT significant among a=Chinese; b=Japanese; c=Korean; d=Filipino; e=Vietnamese; f=Other SE; g=Indian; h=Other South.*

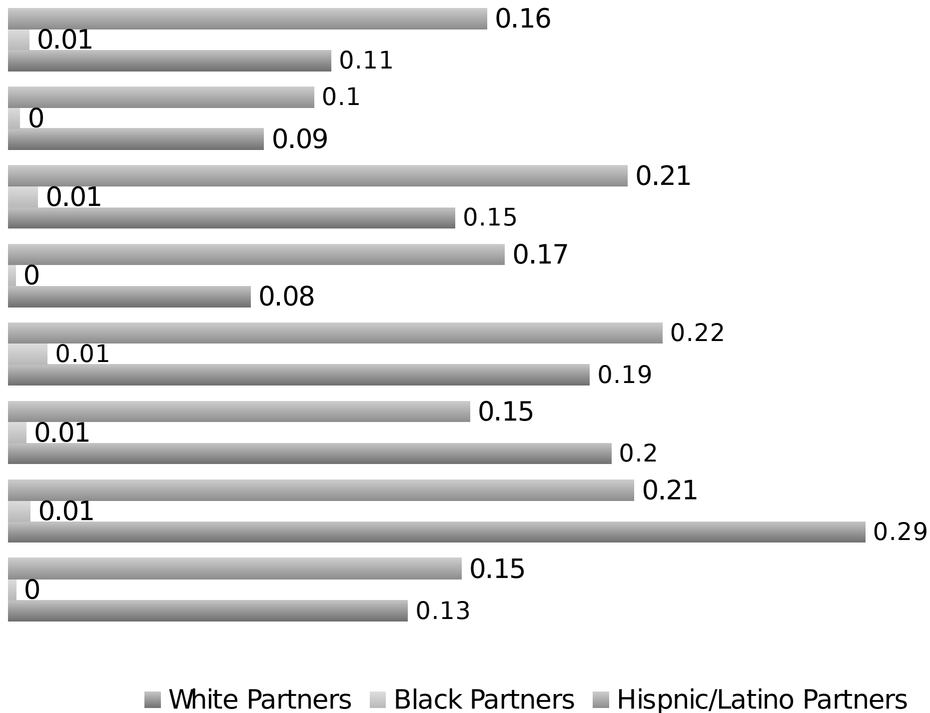

Figure 6. Interracial Marriage (Partner's Race) Types by Ethnicity

**Note: One-way ANOVA was used for testing statistically significant mean differences (p<.05). Superscripts show relationships statistically NOT significant among a=Chinese; b=Japanese; c=Korean; d=Filipino; e=Vietnamese; f=Other SE; g=Indian; h=Other South.*

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