

## Identifying Asian American Attitudes Toward Immigration: Testing Theories of Acculturation, Group Consciousness, and Context Effects

Saemyi Park<sup>1</sup>

*University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, USA*

**Abstract:** In this study, I test a model of competing theoretical explanations of Asian American attitudes toward immigration by studying the effects of acculturation, group consciousness and political commonality with other groups, and contextual factors. Using the 2018 Civic Engagement and Political Participation of Asian American Survey, Asian Americans' policy preferences on Syrian refugees, Deferred Action of Childhood Arrivals (DACA), the Muslim travel ban, and a border wall are examined. Multinomial logistic regression analyses reveal that acculturation explains positive attitudes toward immigration among Asian Americans whereas factors such as Asian identity, political commonality with other racial groups, and the perceived racial mix of neighborhoods have limited and mixed influence on Asian American immigration attitudes. As one of very few studies on immigrants' attitudes toward immigration policies, this study contributes to our better understanding of how the fastest-growing immigrant group like Asian Americans determine their attitudes toward policies that target immigrants.

**Keywords:** acculturation, Asian American policy attitudes, group consciousness, immigration policies, political commonality, racial contexts.

Over the past few decades, the United States has been experiencing a significant demographic shift and social change due to primarily immigrants from Latin America and Asia (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). From the beginning of his candidacy, the presidency of Donald Trump places immigration to the center of American political discourse. His attacks on Mexican Americans, unauthorized immigrants, Muslim immigrants, and refugees during the campaign trail became the restrictive immigration policies such as the limits on refugee quota, the construction of border walls, the repeal of Deferred Action of Childhood Arrivals (DACA), and a travel ban targeting Muslims (Hackman, 2020). As more restrictive immigration policies have been implemented, immigration became one of the controversial issues in the United States. Thus, the contemporary political discourse over immigration naturally brings into question how immigrant groups think about policies that target immigrants. Because the overwhelming majority of Asian Americans are immigrants or the children of immigrants (Wong et al., 2011), it is surprising to see that this fastest-growing immigrant group of Asian Americans is largely missing in the immigration debate. How are Asian American immigration attitudes similar or different from the other racial groups' policy preferences on immigration? This study aims at finding the answer for this timely relevant and politically consequential question.

Public opinion scholars have well documented that nativism and anti-immigration sentiments are stronger among conservative Whites with pessimistic views about the national economy (Citrin et al., 1997), political economic threats from immigrants (Mangum, 2019), closer

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<sup>1</sup>Correspondent Author E-Mail: [spark@uwsp.edu](mailto:spark@uwsp.edu)

proximity to Latinos and increasing intergroup contact (Ha, 2010; Tropp et al., 2018), and compositional concerns of immigrant impacts on culture (Burns & Gimpel, 2000; Schildkraut, 2011). Because the contemporary debate about immigration are dominated by a focus on immigrants from Mexico, researchers try to explain how Latinos position themselves in the discussion of anti-Latino immigration laws. The growing body of literature on Latino public opinion discovers that Latino attitudes toward immigration are a function of acculturation (Binder et al., 1997; Branton, 2007; de la Garza et al., 1992; Hood et al., 1997; Knoll, 2012; Pedraza, 2014; Stringer, 2018), group identity (Magnum, 2019; Nelson 1979; Rocha et al., 2011), the perceived commonality with other racial groups (Samson, 2014), racial and ethnic contexts (Hopkins, 2010; Maltby et al., 2020; Newman & Valez, 2014; Rocha et al., 2011; Welch & Sigelman, 2000), and personal or family experiences with discrimination (Tucker, 2020).

Along with Latinos, the Asian American population is a predominantly immigrant group. In fact, Asian Americans are the fastest-growing racial group in the United States and comprise most recent immigrants since 2010 (Pew Research Center, 2013). They are also projected to become America's largest immigrant group in 50 years (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010; Wong et al. 2011). Thus, the scope of existing studies on Asian Americans centers on their impact as a driving force of population change. For instance, researchers of Asian American politics examine topics such as political participation (Chan, 2020; Lien, 1997, 2001; Phillips & Lee, 2018; Ramakrishnan et al., 2012; Wong et al., 2005), partisanship (Kuo et al., 2016; Raychaudhuri, 2018; Zheng, 2019) and racial and ethnic identity (Junn & Masuoka, 2008; Lien et al., 2003; Masuoka, 2006). However, Asian American attitudes toward immigration are extremely understudied, and it is odd given the fact Asian Americans have been subjected to anti-immigration rhetoric as well. Examples include "Trump mocking a Chinese accent, threatening to cut off immigration from the Philippines, and frequently denigrating undocumented immigrants" from Asia (Phoenix & Arora, 2018, p. 357). In addition, historical events such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the Internment of Japanese Americans during World War II (Ling & Austin, 2010) illustrate the painful experiences of Asian Americans as a target of restrictive immigration policies.

The purpose of this study is to identify Asian American public opinion about immigration and to ascertain which factors determine their immigration attitudes by testing theoretically relevant independent variables on acculturation, racial identity, and context. Asian Americans are more diverse in terms of national origin and immigration histories, and no Asian ethnic group is predominant in the United States (Le et al., 2020). Therefore, conflicting views can be developed from the existing research on Asian Americans. Despite sizable subgroup differences, some studies show that Asian Americans are distinctive as a whole when compared with all U.S. adults, whom they exceed in the share with a college degree and median household income (Pew Research Center, 2013). Consequently, socioeconomic indicators such as income, education attainment, and geography are often used to show congruence in social and political behaviors between Asian Americans and Whites (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010; López et al., 2017). On the contrary, other studies show that Asian Americans who personally experience discrimination in residential and social contexts perceived more political commonality with Latinos (Lu, 2018) and who perceive the shared fate with other Asian Americans tend to support Black Lives Matter (Merseeth, 2018). Arguably, they suggest the potential for forming similar attitudes between Asian Americans and other non-White groups. In addition, the existing research in Asian American politics provides mixed expectations. It is clear that Asian Americans become more democrat in vote choice (Kuo et al., 2016; Masuoka et al, 2019; Raychaudhuri, 2018), but they are less likely to identify themselves as partisans (Wong et al., 2011). It means that Asian American policy preference is less attached to the stances of Democratic party or Republican party. Thus, it is hard to assume that Asian Americans' vote preference for Democratic candidates over Republicans also translates to

more liberal attitudes toward a variety of policy concerns. Then, what explains Asian Americans' immigration attitudes? Previous studies have identified the effects of acculturation, racial identity, and environment on immigrants' partisanship, racial identity, and vote choice. But, none of these works examine Asian American immigration attitudes as a dependent variable by employing all competing theories in the model.

## **Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses**

Our understanding of Asian American policy preferences is much less developed than that of Latino public opinion when it comes to immigration. This study is built upon the existing literature on immigration attitudes of Whites and Latinos, and its methodological model is replicated from the research by Rouse et al. (2010). My approach here is to develop a model of Asian American attitudes toward immigration by including variables representing three competing theories in the same model to possibly identify those explanations that are successful in explaining variation in Asian American immigration attitudes, as well as those that are less useful (Rouse et al., 2010). Findings from the previous studies can be divided into three broad categories depending on the factors turned out to be determinants of public opinion.

### ***Acculturation Factors***

Many scholars highlight the importance of acculturation for Latino public opinion due to the group's nature of being immigrants and having immigrant roots (Binder et al., 1997; Branton, 2007; de la Garza et al., 1992; Hood et al., 1997). In these studies, acculturation is defined as "the process of newcomers integrating culturally into the receiving or host society" and is measured with "generation status, English language proficiency, and length of stay in the United States" (Pedraza, 2014, p.890). These studies find that foreign-born and less acculturated Latinos are more supportive of pro-immigration policies than are native-born and more acculturated Latinos. In other words, Latino attitudes toward immigration increasingly resemble the conservative attitudes of Whites as Latino acculturation into American society increases (Binder et al., 1997; Hood et al., 1997; Knoll, 2012; Miller et al., 1984). Branton (2007) summarized how acculturation factors form the conservative attitudes among Latinos. Over time, immigrants and their descendants start accepting and practicing American culture over time, which replace their former cultural traits; thus, their affinity for immigrants and support for policies benefiting immigrants declines as later generations of immigrants become acculturated (Branton, 2007, p. 294). However, a few recent studies question on the linear relationship between acculturation and support for restrictive immigration policy among Latinos (Maltby et al., 2020; Stringer, 2018). Pedraza (2014) claimed that Latino acculturation leading to convergence with Whites is moderated by anti-immigrant hostility from the host society. By focusing on Mexican Americans, Vega and Ortiz (2018) also supported the mediating impact of group consciousness and the national ideological context around immigration in the United States. In addition, Maltby et al. (2020) discovered that feelings about ethnic linked fate correlate with increased participation and more pro-immigrant policy stances. These studies find that immigration attitudes among Latinos are not simply a function of varying levels of assimilation but also shaped by broad ideological change where immigration discussion is framed differently.

Asian Americans are also multi-generational immigrants with a long immigration history in the United States, so scholars of Asian American politics consider immigration-related factors

important to explain the group members' different levels of civic engagement and political participation (Chan, 2020; Lien, 2001; Masuoka et al., 2019; Wong et al., 2011). Recently, intergenerational differences in political behaviors receive scholarly attention as a single ethnic group such as Japanese and Chinese Americans is getting a sizeable 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> plus generation population (Ramakrishnan, 2005). Because prior research mostly focuses on the link between acculturation and political behaviors of Asian Americans, we do not yet know if acculturation influences the group's attitudes toward certain policies – immigration in particular. Because findings from empirical tests on acculturation and Latino immigration attitudes are mixed, I prob the following questions to examine the explanatory power of acculturation factors for Asian American immigration attitudes:

- As Asian Americans continue to grow and assimilate, would they become developing more conservative attitudes toward immigration like native Whites? Or, are Asian American immigration attitudes contingent on other factors beyond acculturation?

### ***Group Consciousness and Political Commonality***

The second cluster of variables that was considered influential to Latino immigration attitudes is related to feelings of psychological attachment to in-group (Branton, 2007; Hood et al., 1997; Miller et al., 1984; Nelson, 1979; Sanchez, 2006; Wallace & Zepeda-Millán, 2020). In general, group consciousness is believed to influence opinion formation and change. Many researchers use the definition of group consciousness from McClain et al.'s work (2009), which is defined as “a form of in-group identification that is politicised by a set of ideological beliefs about one's group's social standing, as well a view that collective action is the best means by which the group can improve its status and realize its interests” (McClain et al., 2009, p. 476). Group consciousness is developed when individuals maintain a sense of affinity and group identification with other members of the group, which leads them to recognize their status as being a part of a deprived group (Rouse et al., 2010; Sanchez, 2006). Conceptualized in the influential work on Black group consciousness (Dawson, 1994), researchers of Latino public opinion also explain linked fate among Latinos as one form of group identity. The concept of linked fate is best explained as “a dimension of group identity that develops when a particular racial or ethnic group experiences a shared history of marginalization or discrimination” (Vargas et al., 2017, p. 7; Tucker, 2020). The extant research shows that Latino political behavior and attitudes toward issues like immigration may be influenced by their affinity for and attachment to Latino culture and the Spanish language (Graves & Lee, 2000; Newton, 2000; Rouse et al., 2010, p. 860) and the beliefs that individual life chances will be directly affected by resolving problems faced by their ethnic or racial groups (Sanchez & Masuoka, 2010; Vargas et al., 2017).

Likewise, a handful of researchers focuses on identifying the role of group consciousness and linked fate within pan-ethnic Asian American communities (Junn & Masuoka, 2008; Lien et al., 2004; Masuoka, 2006; Wong et al., 2011). A sense of linked fate refers to the belief that an individual's life chances are tied to the fate of his or her racial or ethnic group (Le et al., 2020). That is, Asian Americans with high levels of linked fate may develop group consciousness, and it may help them overcome internal differences to increase a racial bond (Wong et al., 2011). For example, research reveals that linked fate is relevant within the Asian American population, and it increases their political participation. Although the previous research notes that Asian Americans are more likely to identify with an ethnic group based on one's national origin than pan-ethnic racial identity (group consciousness), the latest research by Fan Lu (2020) discovered that both race and ethnicity can be salient to the same Asian American individual. Strong attachment to

Asian Americans is manifested by their shared experiences of marginalization and discrimination (Lien, 1997, 2001; Merseeth, 2018; Wong et al., 2011). With a cautionary interpretation, Masuoka (2006) argued that Asian Americans' group consciousness is developed through social interaction or life experiences whereas Latino pan-ethnic identities appear to be more a result of psychological attachments. In addition, Asian Americans' racial attachment is not stable as Blacks but malleable depending on the contexts (Junn & Masuoka, 2008). Beyond the individual-level group consciousness, a few recent studies about public opinion of non-White racial groups have shift attention toward the individual perception of political commonality with other groups. Expanded from his previous work on Latino immigrants' political partisanship, Samson (2015) argued that Asian Americans place their own group in relation to the perceived socioeconomic and political opportunities shared in common with other groups, which are associated with a person's race-related attitudes. When it comes to immigration, Asian Americans' support for pro-immigration policy increases as their perceived commonality with Latinos increases. However, it is important to note that Asian Americans' perceived political commonality with Latinos is conditional to the contexts of shared experiences of racial discrimination (Lu, 2018). Except for the study by Samson (2015), the link between group consciousness/political commonality and Asian American policy attitudes is largely understudied. Because the existing literature offers the theoretical relevance of these variables to public opinion of Asian Americans, I posit the following question to understand Asian American immigration attitudes:

- Are Asian Americans with strong group consciousness more likely to support pro-immigrant policies? Are Asian Americans with political commonality with Latinos more favorable of policies that benefit immigrants?

### **Context and Contact**

Individual attitudes toward immigration have long been considered to a product of individual-level socioeconomic and psychological factors. Recent studies have increasingly shifted attention toward environmental determinants on racial attitudes (Burn & Gimpel, 2000; Dixon & Rosenbaum, 2004; Frasure-Yokley & Wilcox-Archuleta, 2019; Ha, 2010; Hawley, 2011; Huo et al., 2018; Khairuddin et al., 2020; Newman & Valez, 2014; Rocha & Espino, 2009; Rocha et al., 2011; Stein et al., 2000; Tropp et al., 2018). Overall, scholars recognize that public policy preferences are substantially shaped by the residential environment in which individuals find themselves. However, there are conflicting empirical results to confirm if environmental factors measured by minority population density (context) and interaction with other racial groups (contact) have a positive or negative impact on immigration attitudes. Adopted from Key's (1949) "racial threat" theory that explains the link between Whites' racial attitudes and the social threat posed by Blacks in southern states, some scholars offer similar findings regarding White attitudes toward immigrants – mostly Latinos. It is believed that racial and ethnic heterogeneity heightens racial tension and hostility among native Whites, which led them to possess negative racial and ethnic stereotypes (Burn & Gimpel, 2000; Dixon & Rosenbaum, 2004; Rocha & Espino, 2009) and more restrictive policy preferences on immigration (Frasure-Yokley & Wilcox-Archuleta, 2019; Ha, 2010; Hawley, 2011; Huo et al., 2018; Newman & Valez, 2014; Rocha et al., 2011). To put it simply, "as the size of the racial minority group in an individual's area increases, individuals may feel threatened and respond by engaging in punishing behavior as manifested in lowering or withdrawing support for pro-minority public policies" (Rocha et al., 2011, p.3). Conversely, other

researchers argue that a sizable minority population may increase interaction and contact between the majority White and other racial minority groups, which mediate racial stereotypes and hostility among Whites. This so-called “contact theory” suggests that increasing social contact between groups helps to distort stereotypical images of those out-groups, which in turn contributes to develop affinity toward immigration among Whites (Dixon & Rosenbaum, 2004; Ha 2010; Stein et al., 2000; Tropp et al., 2018).

While there is a plethora of research about the role of environmental factors on White attitudes toward minority groups, only a few studies seek to explain how context and contact influence public attitudes toward immigration among Latinos and Asian Americans. Although it is not directly examining minority population density or social contact between groups, Huo et al. (2018) found that the level of immigration reception at the state-level has varying effects on immigration attitudes. For instance, local welcoming policies elicit more positive attitudes toward immigration from Whites whereas the same policies do not have an impact on Asian American attitudes toward immigrants. Latinos’ positive reactions to immigration are activated by the local unwelcoming policies (Huo et al., 2018). Related work also indicates that contextual factors have different impacts on immigration attitudes between Latinos and Asian Americans (Frasure-Yokley & Wilcox-Archuleta, 2019). This study discovered that attitudes toward undocumented immigrants across racial groups are conditioned by factors related to a respondent’s geographic type such as urban, suburban, and rural. But, the finding also suggested that Blacks and Latinos are significantly more likely to have favorable attitudes toward undocumented immigrants compared with Whites and Asian Americans (Frasure-Yokley & Wilcox-Archuleta, 2019, p. 952). Grounded in previous research on White attitudes toward immigration as a product of residential contexts, I examine the significance of contextual factors to Asian American immigration attitudes:

- Would residential contexts like the size of Latinos be linked to Asian American attitudes toward immigration? If so, would it be positive or negative immigration attitudes?

While including three sets of factors in the model provides a unique opportunity to identify the most useful explanation on Asian American immigration attitudes, the question may arise about possible interaction effects among these competing theories. Interaction effects exist when the effect of one independent variable is contingent on the level of another independent variable (Mize, 2019). For instance, contextual factors may interact with group consciousness factors when greater contact with other races may increase Asian American identity and their perceived political commonality with others as implied in Samson’s study (2015). In addition, group consciousness may be correlated with assimilation level as more acculturated Asian Americans may be more likely to identify themselves with racial identity. However, it is important to note that scholars found that group consciousness explains Latino immigration attitudes, controlling for assimilation (Sanchez, 2006; Vega & Ortiz, 2018). While it would be interesting to further explore possible interaction effects among three sets of factors, this paper will focus on developing the model to explain variations in Asian American policy attitudes toward immigration.

## Data and Methods

To examine immigration attitudes of Asian Americans, this study employs the Civic Engagement and Political Participation of Asian Americans Survey (CEPPAAS).<sup>2</sup> It is a unique online survey targeting Asian Americans conducted via the survey software tool *Qualtrics*, from

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<sup>2</sup> The principal investigator of CEPPAAS is the author of this study.

March 12, 2018 to April 2, 2018. A total 735 respondents completed answering a variety of questions about political orientation, political behaviors, civic participation, policy preferences, use of media, and group identity.

**Table 1**  
*Sample Characteristics (N=735)*

Characteristics		Percentage of Respondents		
<b>Immigration Attitudes</b>		Oppose	Support	No Opinion
Accepting Syrian Refugees to the U.S.		30.34	38.35	31.16
Giving Legal Status to DREAMers		17.01	56.87	26.12
Banning People from Muslim Countries to enter the U.S.		42.86	30.88	26.26
Constructing a Border Wall b/w the U.S. and Mexico		51.43	27.07	21.5
<b>Acculturation</b>		<b>Asian American Identity</b>		
American-Born Citizen	53.06	Not Important		6.94
Foreign-Born Citizen	26.80	Somewhat Important		18.64
Non-Citizen; Lived in the U.S. less than 5yrs	9.39	Very Important		36.87
Non-Citizen; Lived in the U.S. 5 to 10 yrs	5.71	Extremely Important		37.55
Non-Citizen; Lived in the U.S. more than 10 yrs	5.03			
<b>Commonality</b>		<b>with White</b>	<b>with Black</b>	<b>with Latino</b>
Not Close At All		3.67	12.11	13.88
Not Too Close		17.28	38.64	34.01
Fairly Close		56.46	40.14	41.50
Very Close		22.59	9.12	10.61
<b>Perceived Racial Mix of Neighborhood</b>		<b>Gender</b>		
Mostly White	39.18	Male		48.16
Mostly Black	1.4	Female		51.84
Mostly Latino	5.3	<b>Generation</b>		
Mostly Asian	16.6	Generation Z (18-22)		8.72
Mostly Multiracial	37.55	Millennials (23-38)		30.65
<b>National Origin</b>		Generation X (39-54)		26.02
Chinese	26.53	Boomer (55-73)		31.20
Asian Indian	17.69	Silent (74-91)		3.41
Filipino	17.14	<b>Education</b>		
Japanese	12.65	H.S. Degree or Lower		11.16
Korean	8.44	Some College		17.55
Vietnamese	7.48	College Degree		43.54
Other	10.07	Advanced Degree		27.76
<b>Family Income</b>		<b>Employment</b>		
Up to \$19,999	9.12	Not Working		43.81
\$20,000 to \$49,999	20.68	Working Part-Time		11.56
\$50,000 to \$74,999	17.82	Working Full-Time		37.82
\$75,000 to \$ 99,999	15.92	Self-Employed		6.80
\$100,000 to \$124,999	9.52	<b>Marital Status</b>		
\$125,000 to \$249,999	14.29	Not Married		40.00
\$250,000 or over	4.90	Married/Cohabiting with Asian		43.95
DK/Refused	7.76	Married/Cohabiting with non-Asian		16.05

As researchers have increasingly turned to online convenience samples as sources of survey responses, concerns about generalizability and external validity of online surveys have also grown (Coppock & McClellan, 2019). To address these concerns, I compare CEPPAAS to US national probability samples of Asians in other studies in terms of respondent characteristics. First, Table 1 and Appendix Table A display the sample description that confirms overall conformity between the CEPPAAS sample and the Asian American population. For instance, the sample's ethnic makeup in CEPPAAS is similar to the result of the Pew Research Center's (2013) Asian American Survey and the American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015).<sup>3</sup> In addition, other demographic characteristics of CEPPAAS respondents such as gender, age, and generation, income, and education are comparable to the one in ACS and Pew AAS. Moreover, the distribution of respondents across the regions in the CEPPAAS sample is also similar to the Asian population percentage by state reported in the American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015).<sup>4</sup>

Additionally, there are several advantages to use CEPPAAS for the examination of Asian American public opinion toward immigration. To begin with, this data offers the most up-to-date information about Asian Americans. As previously stated, social scientists have not yet paid adequate attention to Asian Americans as a topic of research. Although more scholarly efforts have been made to study political participation of Asian Americans (Kuo et al., 2016; Phillips & Lee, 2018; Sui & Paul, 2017; Wong et al., 2011; Zheng, 2019), these studies rely mostly on the 2008 National Asian American Survey (Ramakrishnan et al., 2008). Because political contexts where racial and ethnic issues are discussed have been drastically changed since the Obama presidency and during the Trump era, it is critical to understand if and how this growing immigrant group has been forming their views on a variety of political issues with the updated data on Asian Americans. Another merit of using CEPPAAS is derived from its rich array of questions covering topics such as partisanship, racial and ethnic identity, vote choice, and policy preferences. Especially, this data includes a set of questions on several immigration policies unlike other studies examining only one particular immigration policy – mostly on a path to grant citizenship (Samson, 2015).

### *Dependent Variable*

This study is primarily interested in immigration attitudes of Asian Americans. To capture different elements of immigration debate recently salient in the United States, dependent variables draw upon the following set of four policy-related questions:

1. Do you support or oppose accepting Syrian refugees into the United States?
2. Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) allowed young people who were brought to the United States illegally when they were children to receive a renewable two-year period of deferred action from deportation and to be eligible for a work permit. DACA recipients are commonly called DREAMers. Do you support or oppose to giving legal status to DREAMers?
3. Do you support or oppose temporarily banning people from a few predominantly Muslim countries to enter the United States?
4. Do you support or oppose constructing a border wall between the U.S. and Mexico?

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<sup>3</sup> Asian American Survey from Pew Research Center was conducted in 2012, and the updated edition of survey reports was released in 2013. Note that differences in coding exist for age, generation, and education in three surveys. The information about family income is not available from Pew AAS.

<sup>4</sup> Respondents in this survey come from across all states that approximately meet the proportion of Asian American population in the main four regions: the West (46%), the Northeast (19%), the Midwest (12%), and the South (23%).



Responses are recoded to range on a 3-point ordinal scale from the conservative position (0) to “no opinion” (1) to the liberal position (2).<sup>5</sup> As a point of reference, roughly half of Americans say that the U.S. has a responsibility to accept refugees into the country according to the Pew Research Center’s survey (Hartig, 2018). According to Gallup Poll, Americans show overwhelming support (83%) for allowing DACA immigrants to become citizens (Newport, 2018). While the majority of Americans (57%) oppose building a border wall (Newport, 2018), polls also show the divide in public opinion on the Muslim travel ban (Bender, 2017; Sparks, 2018; 2017; Quinnipiac University, 2017).<sup>6</sup> This research aims at finding if Asian Americans show similar or different attitudes toward these immigration policies as the general public shows.

### ***Independent Variables***

As drawn upon the existing literature, the key independent variables are trifold. First, acculturation factors are measured by citizenship (non-citizen, American-born citizen, foreign-born citizen) and the length of stay in the United States (less than 5 years, 5-10 years, more than 10 years). Second, the following survey items are used to test group consciousness and political commonality. Group consciousness among Asian Americans is asked with the question: “*Please tell us how important each of the following is to your identity – Asian?*”. Answers are coded into a 4-response scale using the following values: not important (0), somewhat important (1), very important (2), and extremely important (3). In case of political commonality, respondents were asked to answer this question: “*How close do you feel to each of the following groups of people in your ideas, interest, and feelings - Whites, Blacks, Latinos?*” The responses are also coded into a 4-response scale: not close at all (0), not too close (1), fairly close (2), and very close (3). Lastly, this study uses respondents’ perceptions on the racial mix of a neighborhood to examine the role of contextual factors in immigration attitudes. It is a departure from most previous research that measures racial context using the proportion of foreign-born immigrants at the state or county level. As Ha (2010) points out, state and county are too large to represent individuals’ experience of social life and social contact (Ha, 2010; Nguyen, 2020). Individual perceptions of the racial mix of a neighborhood or the change of racial diversity in residence are not necessarily coincided with the actual number. Instead, how individuals perceive residential context can be more accurate to capture the true impact of racial threat and social contact with other groups (Newman & Valez, 2014). For this reason, I use the following question to measure the explanatory power of contextual factors: “*How would you describe the racial mix of your current neighborhood where you live?*”. Respondents’ answers were coded into a 5-point scale using the following values: mostly White (0), mostly Black (1), mostly Latino (2), mostly Asian (3), and mixed (4).

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<sup>5</sup> Survey researchers have opposing views on including a no-opinion option. Some believe that offering a no-opinion option reduces the pressure felt by respondents who have no true opinions, but others believe that this response option may discourage people from doing the cognitive work necessary to report the true opinions they have (Krosnick et al., 2002 for a literature review). The logic of including a no-opinion option in this research is based on the previous studies on Asian American political behavior. It is widely known that Asian Americans are more likely to not affiliate with political parties, are less likely to be familiar with the U.S. political system, and more likely to be recent immigrants (Aoki & Takeda, 2008; Lien, 2001; Wong et al. 2011). Therefore, it is likely that many Asian Americans have true no-opinions on many social and political issues.

<sup>6</sup> These are a CNN poll, a NBC/WSJ poll, and a Quinnipiac Poll, respectively.

### ***Control Variables***

In addition to the independent variables, I further include additional control variables measuring individual-level characteristics that have been proven to influence immigration attitudes. Several basic demographic and socioeconomic factors such as gender, age, education, income, employment, and marital status are included (Kuo et al., 2016; Rouse et al., 2010; Tropp et al., 2018). In addition, political orientation like party identification is included because policy preferences are linked to political orientation (Verba & Nie, 1972).

Because three competing theories offer conflicting results about immigration attitudes of Whites and Latinos, I employ multinomial regression models to explore a series of determinants on Asian American attitudes toward immigration. As it is expected to have a substantial percentage of respondents with no-opinion based on the literature review, multinomial logistic regression models allow for a dependent variable with more than two categories. As noted in the previous section, possible interaction effects between independent variables are not incorporated in the model.

### **Empirical Results**

#### ***Positive Attitudes toward Immigration among Asian Americans***

Basic summary statistics of the various dependent, independent, and control variables are presented in Table 2.<sup>7</sup> The results display strong support for some of the key variables and no support for others.

First, the overall findings from descriptive analyses show that Asian Americans hold liberal stances in four immigration policies, which are in line with the recent research on Asian American partisanship and vote choice (Kuo et al., 2016; Masuoka et al., 2019; Ramakrishnan et al., 2017; Raychaudhuri, 2018; Zheng, 2019). Generally speaking, the majority of Asian Americans support giving legal status to DACA recipients (56.9%) and opposing to build a border wall (51.4%). For the other two immigration policies, Asian Americans are more likely to support accepting Syrian Refugees to the United States (38.5%) and opposing to Muslim travel ban (42.9%). While Asian Americans tend to take positive attitudes toward immigration, the extent to which Asian Americans favor such policy is varied. For instance, Asian Americans' support for DACA is 18.4 % higher than their support for Syrian refugees. Their opposition to build a border wall is about 10 % stronger than Asian Americans' disapproval of the Muslim travel ban. Despite variations in the degree of support for less restrictive immigration policies, this population holds positive attitudes toward immigration in general. Concurrently, this study supports the interpretation that Asian Americans' vote preference for Democrats over Republicans in recent elections is not likely to be a sporadic episode but derived from their liberal ideological stance as shown in Asian American immigration attitudes.

Second, the descriptive statistics indicate that acculturation is a strong factor to produce positive attitudes toward immigration among Asian Americans. Bivariate correlations between acculturation and immigration attitudes turn out to be significant, meaning that there is a strong relationship between the two. To illustrate it, nativity (American-born citizenship) increases Asian American's likelihood of taking a pro-immigration position by 7.3% for Syrian refugees, 15% for DACA, about 10% for Muslim travel ban, and nearly 20% for a border wall. Similarly, Asian respondents who stay in the United States for 10 years and longer are likely to have positive

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<sup>7</sup> For the sake of brevity, I do not present the full results of descriptive statistics including control variables.

attitudes toward immigration. Recent immigrants from Asia who lived in the United States for less than 5 years are about 10% less supportive of accepting Syrian refugees and DACA than their peers with a longer history of staying in the United States. The length of stay in the United States shows even a greater relationship with liberal attitudes toward a Muslim travel ban and a border wall. Respondents who lived in the United States for less than 10 years are less likely to oppose these policies (the differences of 17.9% and 28.2%, respectively). This is a contrasting result from the previous research on Latino immigration attitudes that show convergence of acculturated Latinos to more restrictive attitudes like Whites (Binder et al., 1997; Branton, 2007; Hood et al., 1997; Knoll, 2012; Miller et al., 1984). Unlike Latinos, more acculturated Asian Americans and native-born Asian Americans tend not to support restrictive immigration policies.

Third, two other models for group consciousness and political commonality as well as contextual factors turn out to be less significant to determine Asian American public opinion on immigration. Group consciousness as an Asian American has a somewhat mixed impact on immigration attitudes. For policies such as Syrian refugees, the Muslim travel ban, and a border wall, a strong group identity as Asian Americans does not elicit more liberal stances on these issues. Percentages of respondents with liberal stances are not drastically different across the group consciousness categories. However, respondents who think that Asian identity is *very or extremely important* are more likely to support giving legal status to DACA recipients.

When it comes to political commonality with other groups, this research offers mixed results as well. As expected in the previous studies on immigration attitudes among Latinos (Samson, 2014, 2015), political commonality with Whites works in a conservative direction for some immigration policies. Asian Americans who perceive political commonality with Whites (*very close*) are less likely to possess liberal stances on the Muslim travel ban and a border wall. However, the same variable also positively influences Asian Americans' liberal stances. Asian American respondents who feel *very close* to Whites are more likely to express liberal attitudes in policies such as Syrian refugees and DACA. Political commonality with Blacks has influenced immigration attitudes among Asian Americans at a limited level. When it comes to supporting Syrian refugees and DACA, Asian Americans who feel *not close at all* with Blacks are less likely to show liberal attitudes. For the Muslim travel ban and a border wall, Asian Americans with a lack of political commonality with Blacks (*not close at all*) are more likely to have conservative stances. Also interestingly, Asian Americans' perceived commonality with Latinos indicates opposing attitudes depending on the policies. For instance, Asian Americans' supports for accepting Syrian refugees and granting legal status to DREAMers significantly increases when they feel *very and extremely close* to Latinos (about 20% differences in responses for both survey items). On the contrary, this same variable is too weak to differentiate Asian Americans' attitudes toward the Muslim travel ban and a border wall.

Likewise, the descriptive statistics present that contextual factor like the perceived racial mix of respondents' neighborhood is not so strong to distinguish Asian American attitudes toward immigration. As the existing studies on contextual factors mainly focus on the impact of increasing immigrants or Latinos to immigration attitudes of Whites and Blacks, this researcher was also interested in the effect of living in the mostly Latino neighborhood on Asian American attitudes toward immigration. However, Asian Americans living in the predominantly Latino community do not necessarily report stronger attitudes toward immigration than other respondents with different racial compositions of residence. As differences in responses for this survey items are less than 10% for all immigration measures, political commonality with Latinos may not be influential to lead Asian American immigration attitudes to either a conservative or liberal direction. Instead, strong

**Table 2**  
*Descriptive Statistics of Asian American Attitudes toward Immigration*

	Syrian Refugees			DACA			The Muslim Travel Ban			A Border Wall		
	Oppose	Support	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	No Opinion	Oppose	Support	No Opinion
	30.34	38.5	31.2	17.0	56.9	26.1	42.9	30.9	26.3	51.4	27.1	21.5
<b><i>Acculturation Factors</i></b>												
non-citizen	25.7	34.5	39.9	16.2	44.6	39.2	35.1	24.3	40.5	37.8	29.1	33.1
American-born citizen	29.5	41.8	28.7	17.2	60.0	22.8	46.7	31.0	22.3	56.4	24.6	19.0
foreign-born citizen	35.5	35.0	29.4	17.3	59.9	22.8	41.1	35.5	23.4	51.8	30.5	17.8
Stay in the U.S. less than 5 years	28.2	29.6	42.3	16.9	35.2	47.9	28.2	25.4	46.5	28.2	32.4	39.4
Stay in the U.S. for 5-10 years	20.0	40.0	40.0	20.0	49.2	30.8	29.2	30.8	40.0	30.8	32.3	36.9
Stay in the U.S. for 10 years+	31.7	39.4	28.9	16.7	60.3	23.0	46.1	31.6	22.4	56.4	25.9	17.7
<b><i>Attitudinal Factors</i></b>												
Asian ID - not important	25.5	33.3	41.2	31.4	37.3	31.4	37.3	33.3	29.4	45.1	27.5	27.5
Asian ID - somewhat important	28.5	34.3	37.2	19.7	49.6	30.7	43.8	22.6	33.6	49.6	21.9	28.5
Asian ID - very important	31.0	40.6	28.4	13.3	62.7	24.0	42.4	33.2	24.4	56.8	26.9	16.2
Asian ID - extremely important	31.5	39.5	29.0	16.7	58.3	25.0	43.8	32.2	23.9	48.2	29.7	22.1
White - not close at all	29.6	29.6	40.7	7.4	48.1	44.4	55.6	7.4	37.0	63.0	11.1	25.9
White - not too close	26.0	38.6	35.4	15.7	59.8	24.4	49.6	23.6	26.8	58.3	19.7	22.0
White - fairly close	30.4	37.6	32.0	17.1	55.9	27.0	41.4	32.0	26.5	50.1	28.0	21.9
White - very close	33.7	42.2	24.1	19.3	58.4	22.3	39.2	37.3	23.5	47.6	33.1	19.3
Black - not close at all	47.2	27.0	25.8	30.3	39.3	30.3	39.3	40.4	20.2	49.4	33.7	16.9
Black - not too close	31.3	35.6	33.1	14.8	57.4	27.8	41.9	30.3	27.8	48.9	29.9	21.1
Black - fairly close	27.1	43.1	29.8	17.3	61.0	21.7	45.1	30.2	24.7	54.2	24.4	21.4
Black - very close	17.9	46.3	35.8	7.5	59.7	32.8	41.8	23.9	34.3	52.2	17.9	29.9
Latino - not close at all	49.0	24.5	26.5	32.4	36.3	31.4	39.2	38.2	22.5	44.1	36.3	19.6
Latino - not too close	30.8	34.8	34.4	17.6	55.2	27.2	44.0	30.8	25.2	52.0	29.6	18.4
Latino - fairly close	26.9	43.0	30.2	14.1	63.3	22.6	44.3	28.5	27.2	54.1	22.3	23.6
Latino - very close	17.9	51.3	30.8	6.4	64.1	29.5	38.5	30.8	30.8	48.7	25.6	25.6
<b><i>Contextual Factor</i></b>												
mostly White neighborhood	31.9	41.3	26.7	21.5	57.6	20.8	42.0	36.1	21.9	51.7	33.0	15.3
mostly Black neighborhood	20.0	70.0	10.0	10.0	70.0	20.0	50.0	20.0	30.0	70.0	10.0	20.0
mostly Latino neighborhood	30.8	41.0	28.2	17.9	61.5	20.5	35.9	38.5	25.6	41.0	38.5	20.5
mostly Asian neighborhood	37.7	32.8	29.5	18.	46.7	35.2	37.7	33.6	28.7	43.4	31.1	25.4
multiracial neighborhood	25.7	36.6	37.7	12.0	59.4	28.6	46.7	23.6	29.7	55.4	18.1	26.4

Note: Observation = 735. Percentages of respondents are reported.

positive immigration attitudes exist among Asian Americans whose residential context is *mostly* Black-dominant. For all immigration measures, these respondents show the strongest supports for pro-immigration policies. Although the number of respondents who live in the mostly Black neighborhood is too little to confirm its explanatory power, it is worth revisiting this finding in the next section with multinomial logistic regression.<sup>8</sup> Another noticeable finding is from respondents who live in the neighborhood with mostly fellow Asians are least likely to hold positive attitudes toward pro-immigration policies. However, the percentage differences in the response categories are less than 10%, meaning that it requires a further statistical test to examine its explanatory power. Overall, it turns out that living in the predominantly one racial neighborhood does not necessarily make Asian Americans take positive or negative attitudes toward immigration. In particular, neither racial threat theory nor social contact theory explains Asian American public opinion on immigration.

Lastly, descriptive statistics of variables presented in Table 2 provide us with a very intriguing discovery. There are many Asian Americans who express *no opinions* on immigration issues – 31.2% for the Syrian refugee, 26.1% for DACA, 26.3% for the Muslim travel ban, and 21.5% for a border wall. What explains no opinions in Asian American immigration attitudes? As it was shown to influence Asian Americans' liberal stances toward immigration, acculturation factors also turn out to be significant to explain *no opinions* among them. On all four immigration policies, non-citizens are more likely to express *no opinions*, often in substantially higher percentages than the others. That is, the *no opinion* response among Asian Americans significantly increases when they are non-citizens - 10% for Syrian refugees, 16.4% for DACA, 17.3% for the Muslim travel ban, and 15% for a border wall. In addition, Asian Americans who have lived in the United States for less than 10 years are more likely to hold *no opinions* toward immigration policies. In other words, these patterns support the hypothesis that acculturation increases the likelihood of expressing an opinion among Asian Americans.

Group consciousness and political commonality provide mixed results as well. Asian Americans who think that Asian identity is *not* or *somewhat important* are more likely to have *no opinions* on Syrian refugees. However, group consciousness does not necessarily lead Asian Americans to have *no opinions* toward other immigration measures as the percentage differences in the response categories are less than 10%. In addition, Asian Americans who do not feel close at all with White are more likely to express *no opinions* toward immigration policies. To put it differently, political commonality with White can explain Asian American immigration attitudes in both directions - liberal and conservative - except DACA. However, political commonality with other racial groups does not explain the *no opinion* responses among Asian Americans. Similarly, there is no consistent pattern in Asian Americans' *no opinions* depending on the racial mix of respondents' neighborhood.

### ***Determinants of Asian Americans' Liberal Stances and No Opinion toward Immigration***

To test the effects of key independent variables on Asian Americans' overall positive attitudes towards immigration as well as their tendency to express no opinion, I employ multinomial logistic regression models. To interpret the multinomial logistic regression results, it should be noted that the comparison response category is the conservative attitudes toward

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<sup>8</sup> The number of respondents whose perceived racial mix of a neighborhood is mostly Black is only 10. On the other hand, the numbers of Asian Americans living in other neighborhoods are 288 for *mostly White*, 39 for *mostly Latino*, 122 for *mostly Asian*, and 276 for *multiracial*.

immigration – opposition to Syrian refugees and DACA but supports for the Muslim travel ban and a border wall. For acculturation factors, U.S.-born citizen is used as the baseline comparison group. Respondents who think that Asian identity is not important as well as those who feel not close at all to other racial groups are used as the baseline group for group consciousness and political commonality.<sup>9</sup> When it comes to contextual factors, Asian Americans living in the *mostly White* neighborhood is used as the baseline comparison group. In addition, the following groups are the baseline for demographics: *male* (gender), *Generation Z* (age), *high school degree or below* (education), *earn less than \$19,999* (income), *not-working* (employment), *not married* (marital status), *Republican* (party identification), and *Chinese* (national origin).

Table 3 presents the results of the multinomial logistic regression model to explain which combination of acculturation, group consciousness and political commonality, and contextual factors influence Asian Americans' liberal stance and their choice of no response.<sup>10</sup> Among the two acculturation factors, I find that length of stay in the United States – not nativity – is statistically significant to explain Asian American immigration attitudes. More specifically, citizenship does not necessarily increase the odds of taking immigration-friendly attitudes among Asian Americans. As coefficient values indicate, there is not much difference in liberal attitudes and *no opinions* between foreign-born citizens and non-citizens with a longer length of U.S. residence (*10 years or more years*) compared to U.S.-born citizens. On the other hand, being a non-citizen with *less than 5 years* of stay in the United States, compared to U.S.-born citizens, decreases the probability of reporting pro-immigration attitudes toward DACA and a border wall. In addition, length of stay (*less than 5 years*) increases the odds of reporting no opinions among non-citizens on the Muslim travel ban.

For the second theory about racial identity and political commonality, group consciousness turns out to be significant for Asian American policy stances on Syrian refugees and DACA. Respondents with a strong Asian American identity (*very important* and *extremely important*) are indeed more supportive of DACA than Asian Americans who think that racial identity is *not important*. In particular, the likelihood of having *no opinion* on Syrian refugees and a border wall are decreased among the respondents whose Asian identity is *very important* and *extremely important*. Although the p-value is not shown statistically significant for a border wall, the same direction of coefficients indicates that the respondents with strong group consciousness are led to hold attitudes in these immigration policies.

When it comes to political commonality, respondents who see more commonality with White tend to have an opinion than individuals without a feeling of closeness to Whites. This result holds true for Syrian refugees and the Muslim travel ban. It is noticeable that political commonality with White decreases the odds of reporting a liberal stance on the Muslim travel ban. That is, respondents who feel *very close* to White are less likely to oppose the Muslim travel ban, compared to Asian Americans who do not see closeness with White. Interestingly, the opposite effect occurs for political commonality with Black. Asian Americans who have strong political commonality with Black are more likely to report *no opinions* on the Muslim travel ban and a border wall, but the odds of having a liberal stance on the Muslim travel ban increases among the same group of respondents compared to Asian Americans who feel *not close at all* with Black. Asian Americans' perceived political commonality with Latino shows an interesting result as well. The likelihood of

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<sup>9</sup> For political commonality with White, response categories of both “*not close at all*” and “*not too close*” are combined to use as the baseline comparison group due to the small size of respondents who feel *not close at all* with White ( $n = 27$ ).

<sup>10</sup> Appendix Table B displays the full results of the multinomial logistic regression model including demographic variables.

**Table 3**  
*Multinomial Logistic Regression Coefficient Results of Asian American Attitudes toward Immigration*

	Syrian Refugee		DACA		Muslim Travel Ban		Border Wall	
	No Opinion	Support	No pinion	Support	No Opinion	Oppose	No pinion	Oppose
Citizenship (ref. = U.S. born citizen)								
Foreign-born Citizen	-0.080 (0.271)	-0.229 (0.263)	0.223 (0.340)	-0.001 (0.304)	0.109 (0.284)	-0.127 (0.252)	0.030 (0.327)	-0.219 (0.267)
Non-Citizen; less than 5 yrs	-0.0412 (0.439)	-0.376 (0.460)	-0.149 (0.519)	-1.082** (0.517)	0.836* (0.447)	-0.109 (0.459)	0.273 (0.483)	-0.807* (0.468)
Non-citizen; 5-10 yrs	0.614 (0.543)	0.327 (0.539)	-0.530 (0.620)	-0.614 (0.576)	0.742 (0.520)	0.0716 (0.511)	0.357 (0.561)	-0.641 (0.531)
Non-citizen; 10 or more years	-0.211 (0.504)	0.0203 (0.477)	0.0372 (0.624)	-0.217 (0.594)	0.311 (0.520)	0.280 (0.469)	-0.589 (0.603)	-0.326 (0.468)
Asian American Identity (ref. = Not important)								
Somewhat important	-0.491 (0.472)	-0.413 (0.489)	0.363 (0.517)	0.691 (0.491)	0.339 (0.483)	0.509 (0.453)	0.0773 (0.532)	0.287 (0.472)
Very important	-0.951** (0.441)	-0.459 (0.451)	0.658 (0.488)	1.254*** (0.458)	-0.463 (0.446)	-0.113 (0.410)	-0.724 (0.500)	0.00845 (0.429)
Extremely important	-0.777* (0.444)	-0.418 (0.454)	0.477 (0.488)	1.029** (0.460)	-0.291 (0.451)	0.179 (0.415)	-0.404 (0.498)	-0.0824 (0.435)
Commonality to White (ref. = Not close at all or not too close)								
Fairly close	-0.150 (0.287)	0.0793 (0.288)	0.186 (0.364)	0.0949 (0.333)	-0.327 (0.313)	-0.421 (0.279)	-0.126 (0.354)	-0.369 (0.294)
Very close	-0.933** (0.382)	-0.252 (0.359)	-0.556 (0.474)	-0.173 (0.418)	-0.664* (0.400)	-0.635* (0.347)	-0.512 (0.457)	-0.508 (0.369)
Commonality to Black (ref. = Not close at all)								
Not too close	0.269 (0.444)	0.259 (0.433)	0.383 (0.490)	0.723 (0.463)	0.734 (0.480)	0.488 (0.411)	0.457 (0.530)	-0.0352 (0.424)
Fairly close	0.308 (0.471)	0.317 (0.454)	-0.325 (0.520)	0.142 (0.485)	0.411 (0.502)	0.504 (0.429)	0.210 (0.555)	0.0736 (0.445)
Very close	0.861 (0.668)	0.299 (0.648)	0.605 (0.817)	0.440 (0.792)	1.382** (0.667)	1.170* (0.610)	1.384* (0.744)	1.036 (0.640)
Commonality to Latino (ref. = Not close at all)								
Not too close	0.822* (0.424)	0.874** (0.417)	0.340 (0.467)	0.739* (0.440)	-0.104 (0.458)	-0.0279 (0.398)	-0.146 (0.501)	0.146 (0.415)
Fairly close	0.776* (0.437)	1.110*** (0.424)	0.586 (0.490)	1.295*** (0.460)	0.139 (0.461)	-0.0282 (0.406)	0.483 (0.503)	0.480 (0.427)
Very close	1.251** (0.632)	1.607*** (0.599)	1.504* (0.792)	1.869** (0.770)	-0.252 (0.601)	-0.845 (0.557)	-0.224 (0.660)	-0.582 (0.569)
Racial Composition of Neighborhood (ref. = Mostly white)								
Mostly Black or Latino	0.129 (0.494)	-0.0657 (0.463)	0.114 (0.586)	0.126 (0.524)	0.0763 (0.471)	-0.259 (0.442)	0.229 (0.544)	0.108 (0.460)
Mostly Asian	-0.250 (0.326)	-0.558* (0.323)	0.558 (0.386)	-0.0828 (0.364)	0.0317 (0.337)	-0.243 (0.310)	0.272 (0.380)	-0.238 (0.321)
Multiracial	0.303 (0.255)	-0.212 (0.252)	0.704** (0.320)	0.388 (0.289)	0.468* (0.267)	0.318 (0.239)	0.858*** (0.308)	0.566** (0.257)

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1.

supporting Syrian refugees and DACA among Asian Americans increases by feeling of closeness to Latinos at all response categories compared to Asian Americans who feel *not at all* close to Latinos. Concurrently, political commonality with Latinos increases the probability of reporting *no opinions* toward Syrian refugees at all levels of political commonality and toward DACA among Asian Americans who feel very close to Latinos.

Finally, a contextual factor turns out to be statistically significant to explain Asian American immigration attitudes to a certain extent. Compared to respondents who live in the mostly White neighborhood, respondents who perceive that their neighborhood is *racially mixed* are more likely to oppose constructing a border wall. Living in a racially mixed residence also positively influences the odds of taking *no opinions* toward immigration among Asian Americans except Syrian refugees. That is, those respondents are less likely to take a stance than Asian Americans living in the mostly White community for DACA, the Muslim travel ban, and a border wall. In addition, the odds of supporting Syrian refugees decrease when respondents perceived racial mix of their community is predominantly Asian as opposed to the respondents from in the predominantly White neighborhood. To put it differently, there is a reverse relationship between Asian Americans' positive attitudes toward Syrian refugees and the Asian racial homogeneity in a residential context. Due to the small sample size in both response categories, the combined racial mix of "Black and Latino" neighborhoods is used in the models, and it does not significantly change the probability of reporting liberal stances on immigration policies.

When a variety of demographic variables such as ideology, partisanship, age, education, and income are statistically significant in explaining Asian Americans' positive attitudes and *no opinions* toward immigration, the national origin category stands out for our attention.<sup>11</sup> Filipino Americans are less likely to oppose a border wall and have attitudes on the same policy compared to Chinese Americans. Asian Indian Americans are more likely to support DACA and to express *no opinions* on it whereas Korean Americans are more likely to form attitudes toward DACA. Although it was not in the scope of the present study, examining ethnic variations in immigration attitudes and political behaviors, in general, is worth for future research.

## Discussion and Conclusion

As one of the very few attempts to study Asian American policy references, this paper contributes to expanding our understanding of how this immigrant group positions themselves in the contemporary immigration debate. In summary, Asian Americans are generally supportive of policies that benefit immigrants. They have positive attitudes toward immigration by supporting Syrian refugees and DACA while opposing the Muslim travel ban and a border wall. These findings are consistent with the recent studies on Asian American vote choice and party identification that show this group's increasing supports for the Democratic Party (Kuo et al., 2016; Masuoka et al., 2019; Ramakrishnan et al., 2017; Raychaudhuri, 2018; Zheng, 2019). This study uncovers that the acculturation theory works in the opposite direction for Asian Americans. Contrary to the assimilation theory, Asian Americans' immigration attitudes do not become more restrictionist with each generation. Unlike the Latino population whose nativity plays an important part in support for more restrictive immigration policies (Knoll, 2012; Stringer, 2018), I find that how much Asians are acculturated into the United States measured by the length of stay positively relates to this group's liberal stances on immigration. Recent immigrants from Asia are less likely to hold pro-immigration stances than respondents with extended time spent in the United States. The statistical significance of acculturation factors is limited to explain particular policies out of

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<sup>11</sup> Please see Appendix Table B for the impact of national origin on Asian American immigration attitudes.



four, but this result confirms the findings from the previous research that acculturation driven by the length of stay in the United States is significant for Asian immigrants to form public opinion on social and political issues (Masuoka et al., 2019; Wong et al., 2011). This opposite effect of acculturation to immigration attitudes between Latinos and Asian Americans deserves further scholarly attention. Both Latinos and Asian Americans are the largely immigrant-dominant population with internal variations in terms of national origin, immigration history, and other demographic factors. However, acculturation factors influence their immigration attitudes differently. The possible explanation could be the effect of a linguistic tradition. Latinos are often connected with their common Spanish language and heritage whereas Asian Americans are linguistically so diverse. However, it is also known that there are significant intragroup differences based on cultural and political backgrounds among Latinos (Rouse et al., 2010). Having both Latinos and Asian Americans in the data with more measures for intra-ethnic difference would offer possible explanations on this aspect.

In its attempts to test several competing theoretical frameworks, this research also shows the mixed results on the effects of group consciousness and political commonality as well as contextual factors. Respondents' strong identity as Asian American is positively correlated with liberal attitudes toward immigration, especially for DACA. However, perceptions of political commonality with other groups lead respondents to have immigration attitudes for both directions – *pro-immigration* and *anti-immigration*. While feeling closeness with White generally makes respondents less supportive of immigration-friendly policies, political commonality with Black and Latino increases liberal stances among Asian Americans. The racial composition of respondents' residence does not necessarily influence to differentiate Asian Americans' immigration attitudes. In addition to the reverse effect of acculturation as well as the limited impact of attitudinal and contextual factors on Asian American immigration attitudes, this study discovers the high level of the *no opinion* responses among Asian Americans. The likelihood of expressing *no opinions* on the Muslim travel ban increases among the respondents whose length of stay in the United States is *lesser than 5 years* and who *feel close* to Black. Likewise, political commonality with Latino increases the *no opinion* responses toward Syrian Refugees and DACA. Another way to examine this finding is to look at who is less likely to express *no opinion* toward immigration policies. Asian Americans with strong Asian identity and political commonality with White are less likely to report no opinion toward Syrian refugees and the Muslim travel ban, respectively.

This study by no means provides an exhaustive understanding of Asian American attitudes toward immigration (Rouse et al., 2010). It is clear that there may be other factors to influence Asian American immigration preferences that are not addressed in this study. I am limited by the type and number of questions about immigration and possible independent variables asked across various surveys of Asian Americans (Rouse et al., 2010). For instance, this research uses Asian Americans' perception on their own community in terms of racial composition. The conventional measures for contextual factors can be added to improve the statistical analysis. Along with the perceived racial mix of a neighborhood, frequency of contacts with other racial groups and its quality (Tropp et al., 2018) or the size of the foreign-born population within a county (Hawley, 2011) can be considered to test the threat hypothesis.

Some important lessons from this research are that future research should explain the substantial numbers of Asian Americans who hold *no opinions* on immigration needs further examination to see if this tendency also stands for non-immigration policies. Particularly, it is important to note that the current immigration discussion centers on Asian Americans. For instance, the Trump administration's series of new restrictions on green card and visas as well as his

insistence on using the term “Chinese virus” during the Covid-19 pandemic would have shaped Asian American immigration attitudes differently (Somin, 2020; Vang, 2020). Because Asian Americans became the immediate target of these anti-immigration policies and the victims of increasing verbal and physical assaults on Asian Americans, the considerable portion of Asian Americans with *no opinions* on immigration would have decreased or even disappeared. As suggested in a few studies (Huo et al, 2018; Vega & Ortiz, 2018), the ideological contexts around the time of immigrants’ arrival to the United States such as the restrictive immigration policies and unwelcoming atmosphere in society might play a role to form Asian American immigration attitudes or *no opinion*. These factors may trigger racial identity and help to form political commonality with other marginalized racial groups. Thus, future studies should include several questions that cover these recent policies to measure Asian American immigration preferences. In addition, differences in ethnic groups as shown in Koreans, Indian, and Filipino deserve additional scholarly attention.

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### Notes on Contribution

**Dr. Saemyi Park** is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Her research agenda centers broadly on studying the politics and policies of differences and commonalities in racial and ethnic groups in the United States. In particular, Dr. Park's research interests include political representation, political participation and civic engagement, and public opinion of racial and ethnic groups.

**Appendix Table A***Comparison of Sample Characteristics between CEPPAAS and the Existing Data*

Characteristics	Percent of Respondents		
	CEPPAAS	ACS (2015)	Pew AAS (2012)
<b><i>National Origin</i></b>			
Chinese	26.53	23	20.73
Asian Indian	17.69	19	16.51
Filipino	17.14	18	14.35
Japanese	12.65	7	14.66
Korean	8.44	9	14.35
Vietnamese	7.48	9	14.35
Other	10.07	15	5.00
<b><i>Gender</i></b>			
Male	48.16	47.4	48.33
Female	51.84	52.5	51.66
<b><i>Age</i></b>			
Generation Z	8.72 (age 18-22)	9.84 (age 18-24)	24.15 (age 18-34)
Millennials	30.65 (age 23-38)	17 (age 25-34)	38.62 (age 35-54)
Generation X	26.02 (age 39-54)	30.07 (age 35-54)	34.6 (age 55 & older)
Boomer	31.2 (age 55-73)	18.27 (age 55-74)	
Silent	3.41 (age 74 & older)	4.56 (age 75 & older)	
<b><i>Family Income</i></b>			
Up to \$19,999	9.12	8.62	N/A
\$20,000-\$49,999	20.68	18.99	N/A
\$50,000-\$74,999	17.82	14.84	N/A
\$75,000-\$ 99,999	15.92	13.06	N/A
\$100,000-\$124,999	9.52	11.45	N/A
\$125,000-\$249,999	14.29	18.87(\$125K-\$199K)	N/A
\$250,000 or over	4.9	14.14 (\$200K & up)	N/A
DK/Refused	7.76		N/A
<b><i>Education</i></b>			
	11.16	28.9	25.57
	(H.S. or less)	(H.S. or less)	(H.S. or less)
	17.55	18.72	14.86
	(Some college)	(Some college)	(Some college)
	43.54	29.99	58.95
	(College degree)	(College degree)	(College graduate+)
	27.76	22.31	
	(Advanced degree)	(Advanced degree)	



**Appendix Table B**

*Full Multinomial Logistic Regression Coefficient Results among Asian Americans*

	Syrian Refugee		DACA		Muslim Travel Ban		Border Wall	
	No Opinion	Support	No Opinion	Support	No Opinion	Oppose	No Opinion	Oppose
Citizenship (ref. = U.S. born citizen)								
Foreign-born Citizen	-0.080 (0.271)	-0.229 (0.263)	0.223 (0.340)	-0.001 (0.304)	0.109 (0.284)	-0.127 (0.252)	0.030 (0.327)	-0.219 (0.267)
Non-Citizen; less than 5 yrs	-0.0412 (0.439)	-0.376 (0.460)	-0.149 (0.519)	-1.082** (0.517)	0.836* (0.447)	-0.109 (0.459)	0.273 (0.483)	-0.807* (0.468)
Non-citizen; 5-10 yrs	0.614 (0.543)	0.327 (0.539)	-0.530 (0.620)	-0.614 (0.576)	0.742 (0.520)	0.0716 (0.511)	0.357 (0.561)	-0.641 (0.531)
Non-citizen; 10 or more years	-0.211 (0.504)	0.0203 (0.477)	0.0372 (0.624)	-0.217 (0.594)	0.311 (0.520)	0.280 (0.469)	-0.589 (0.603)	-0.326 (0.468)
Asian American Identity (ref. = Not important)								
Somewhat important	-0.491 (0.472)	-0.413 (0.489)	0.363 (0.517)	0.691 (0.491)	0.339 (0.483)	0.509 (0.453)	0.0773 (0.532)	0.287 (0.472)
Very important	-0.951** (0.441)	-0.459 (0.451)	0.658 (0.488)	1.254*** (0.458)	-0.463 (0.446)	-0.113 (0.410)	-0.724 (0.500)	0.00845 (0.429)
Extremely important	-0.777* (0.444)	-0.418 (0.454)	0.477 (0.488)	1.029** (0.460)	-0.291 (0.451)	0.179 (0.415)	-0.404 (0.498)	-0.0824 (0.435)
Commonality to White (ref. = Not close at all or not too close)								
Fairly close	-0.150 (0.287)	0.0793 (0.288)	0.186 (0.364)	0.0949 (0.333)	-0.327 (0.313)	-0.421 (0.279)	-0.126 (0.354)	-0.369 (0.294)
Very close	-0.933** (0.382)	-0.252 (0.359)	-0.556 (0.474)	-0.173 (0.418)	-0.664* (0.400)	-0.635* (0.347)	-0.512 (0.457)	-0.508 (0.369)
Commonality to Black (ref. = Not close at all)								
Not too close	0.269 (0.444)	0.259 (0.433)	0.383 (0.490)	0.723 (0.463)	0.734 (0.480)	0.488 (0.411)	0.457 (0.530)	-0.0352 (0.424)
Fairly close	0.308 (0.471)	0.317 (0.454)	-0.325 (0.520)	0.142 (0.485)	0.411 (0.502)	0.504 (0.429)	0.210 (0.555)	0.0736 (0.445)
Very close	0.861 (0.668)	0.299 (0.648)	0.605 (0.817)	0.440 (0.792)	1.382** (0.667)	1.170* (0.610)	1.384* (0.744)	1.036 (0.640)
Commonality to Hispanic (ref. = Not close at all)								
Not too close	0.822* (0.424)	0.874** (0.417)	0.340 (0.467)	0.739* (0.440)	-0.104 (0.458)	-0.0279 (0.398)	-0.146 (0.501)	0.146 (0.415)
Fairly close	0.776* (0.437)	1.110*** (0.424)	0.586 (0.490)	1.295*** (0.460)	0.139 (0.461)	-0.0282 (0.406)	0.483 (0.503)	0.480 (0.427)
Very close	1.251** (0.632)	1.607*** (0.599)	1.504* (0.792)	1.869** (0.770)	-0.252 (0.601)	-0.845 (0.557)	-0.224 (0.660)	-0.582 (0.569)

(continued)

	Syrian Refugee		DACA		Muslim Travel Ban		Border Wall	
	No Opinion	Support	No Opinion	Support	No Opinion	Oppose	No Opinion	Oppose
Racial Composition of Neighborhood (ref. = Mostly white)								
Mostly Black of Hispanic	0.129 (0.494)	-0.0657 (0.463)	0.114 (0.586)	0.126 (0.524)	0.0763 (0.471)	-0.259 (0.442)	0.229 (0.544)	0.108 (0.460)
Mostly Asian	-0.250 (0.326)	-0.558* (0.323)	0.558 (0.386)	-0.0828 (0.364)	0.0317 (0.337)	-0.243 (0.310)	0.272 (0.380)	-0.238 (0.321)
Multiracial	0.303 (0.255)	-0.212 (0.252)	0.704** (0.320)	0.388 (0.289)	0.468* (0.267)	0.318 (0.239)	0.858*** (0.308)	0.566** (0.257)
National Origin (ref. = Chinese)								
Asian Indian	-0.214 (0.369)	-0.0627 (0.364)	1.345*** (0.493)	0.997** (0.459)	0.218 (0.390)	0.514 (0.352)	0.560 (0.443)	0.375 (0.373)
Filipino	-0.337 (0.342)	-0.404 (0.349)	-0.135 (0.429)	0.0450 (0.391)	-0.411 (0.350)	-0.503 (0.326)	-0.759* (0.409)	-0.589* (0.340)
Japanese	-0.232 (0.363)	-0.0104 (0.354)	0.508 (0.447)	0.471 (0.404)	-0.246 (0.401)	0.125 (0.333)	-0.0297 (0.464)	0.296 (0.360)
Korean	-0.702 (0.487)	0.376 (0.442)	-1.153** (0.570)	-0.228 (0.464)	-0.574 (0.498)	0.307 (0.414)	-0.913 (0.576)	0.108 (0.444)
Vietnamese	-0.346 (0.461)	0.00619 (0.442)	0.540 (0.590)	0.594 (0.538)	0.524 (0.461)	0.151 (0.440)	-0.0756 (0.514)	-0.383 (0.451)
Other	-1.030** (0.486)	0.624 (0.412)	0.415 (0.546)	0.575 (0.498)	-0.0872 (0.467)	0.618 (0.402)	0.329 (0.509)	0.438 (0.441)
Gender (ref. = Male)								
Female	0.327 (0.244)	0.0206 (0.235)	0.740** (0.305)	0.509* (0.279)	0.412 (0.254)	0.398* (0.226)	0.416 (0.289)	0.248 (0.242)
Generation (ref. = Generation Z (18-22))								
Millennials (23-38)	0.627 (0.535)	-0.369 (0.479)	-0.240 (0.669)	-1.094* (0.616)	0.155 (0.509)	-0.292 (0.463)	0.417 (0.545)	-0.221 (0.482)
Generation X (39-54)	-0.517 (0.535)	-1.786*** (0.480)	-0.774 (0.669)	-1.883*** (0.617)	-0.335 (0.519)	-0.698 (0.465)	-0.158 (0.554)	-0.638 (0.483)
Boomers (55-73)	-0.0388 (0.536)	-1.323*** (0.486)	-0.452 (0.686)	-1.177* (0.627)	-0.477 (0.523)	-0.683 (0.469)	-0.699 (0.564)	-0.875* (0.480)
Silent (74-91)	0.196 (0.742)	-1.415* (0.737)	-0.808 (0.996)	-0.705 (0.840)	-0.0515 (0.733)	-0.840 (0.704)	-0.945 (0.876)	-0.620 (0.700)
Education (ref. = High school degree or below)								
Some college	0.413 (0.419)	-0.0103 (0.429)	0.814 (0.514)	0.366 (0.488)	-0.136 (0.412)	-0.0279 (0.414)	0.367 (0.458)	-0.339 (0.418)
College degree	-0.299 (0.383)	0.205 (0.388)	0.240 (0.454)	0.342 (0.426)	-0.653* (0.381)	0.112 (0.378)	0.0182 (0.432)	0.176 (0.380)
Graduate or professional degree	-0.130 (0.424)	0.211 (0.425)	-0.130 (0.513)	0.334 (0.472)	-0.955*** (0.430)	-0.0409 (0.413)	-0.575 (0.493)	-0.0690 (0.419)

(continued)

	Syrian Refugee		DACA		Muslim Travel Ban		Border Wall	
	No Opinion	Support	No Opinion	Support	No Opinion	Oppose	No Opinion	Oppose
Income (ref. = Less than \$20,000)								
\$20,000 to \$49,999	-0.339 (0.456)	-0.0835 (0.472)	0.621 (0.541)	0.685 (0.520)	0.0868 (0.450)	-0.0172 (0.433)	0.00727 (0.489)	0.361 (0.459)
\$50,000 to \$74,999	-0.872* (0.469)	-0.599 (0.487)	-0.0105 (0.564)	0.584 (0.536)	-0.351 (0.479)	0.0820 (0.448)	-0.897* (0.518)	0.0124 (0.468)
\$75,000 to \$100,999	-0.886* (0.494)	-0.440 (0.501)	0.233 (0.589)	0.431 (0.556)	-0.318 (0.492)	-0.268 (0.461)	-0.985* (0.543)	-0.240 (0.481)
\$100,000 to \$124,999	-1.136** (0.559)	-0.454 (0.558)	-0.206 (0.671)	0.517 (0.609)	-0.0302 (0.548)	-0.105 (0.516)	-0.353 (0.646)	0.800 (0.550)
\$125,000 to \$249,999	-0.950* (0.529)	-0.768 (0.540)	0.133 (0.620)	-0.121 (0.582)	0.110 (0.528)	-0.456 (0.501)	0.302 (0.584)	0.300 (0.526)
\$250,000 or higher	-0.435 (0.672)	-0.0998 (0.640)	-1.259 (0.989)	0.255 (0.707)	0.677 (0.737)	0.830 (0.633)	-0.554 (0.972)	1.003 (0.663)
Don't Know / Refused	-0.199 (0.551)	-0.681 (0.602)	0.329 (0.634)	-0.267 (0.639)	0.0249 (0.549)	-0.236 (0.543)	0.0264 (0.581)	-0.0557 (0.570)
Employment (ref. = Not working)								
Working full-time	-0.129 (0.272)	0.0807 (0.264)	-0.0550 (0.335)	-0.0319 (0.303)	-0.316 (0.283)	-0.0269 (0.254)	-0.0749 (0.323)	0.244 (0.268)
Working part-time	-0.926*** (0.346)	-1.062*** (0.361)	-0.469 (0.414)	-0.617 (0.392)	-0.359 (0.368)	-0.338 (0.342)	-0.667 (0.406)	-0.548 (0.350)
Self-employed	-0.186 (0.473)	0.439 (0.443)	0.485 (0.632)	1.039* (0.587)	-0.975** (0.475)	-0.508 (0.405)	-0.582 (0.526)	-0.0999 (0.436)
Marital or Partnership status (ref. = Not married)								
Married or living with an Asian	0.129 (0.273)	-0.313 (0.270)	-0.0628 (0.336)	-0.0831 (0.309)	-0.142 (0.286)	-0.762*** (0.255)	-0.464 (0.324)	-0.486* (0.271)
Married or living with a non-Asian	-0.363 (0.366)	-0.0530 (0.334)	-0.0380 (0.443)	0.402 (0.397)	-0.387 (0.379)	-0.208 (0.316)	-0.690 (0.428)	-0.287 (0.339)
Party ID (ref. = Republican)								
Independent	0.147 (0.330)	0.636* (0.341)	0.106 (0.387)	1.003*** (0.351)	0.983*** (0.355)	1.199*** (0.327)	1.240*** (0.388)	1.319*** (0.328)
Democrat	0.619** (0.298)	1.844*** (0.301)	0.459 (0.364)	2.104*** (0.328)	1.063*** (0.318)	1.845*** (0.285)	1.319*** (0.370)	2.568*** (0.298)
Not think in terms of party	1.095*** (0.351)	0.728* (0.380)	1.234*** (0.411)	1.058*** (0.409)	1.373*** (0.360)	0.861** (0.353)	1.662*** (0.398)	1.486*** (0.357)
Constant	0.495 (0.882)	0.208 (0.886)	-1.747* (1.038)	-2.117** (0.980)	-0.375 (0.897)	-0.229 (0.842)	-0.758 (0.980)	-0.358 (0.859)
Observations	735	735	735	735	735	735	735	735

Note. Standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variables are immigration attitudes. Comparison Response Category is the conservative policy stance toward immigration.

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1