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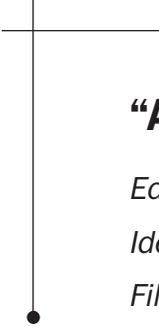
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“AM I REALLY ASIAN?”

*Educational Experiences and Panethnic
Identification among Second-Generation
Filipino Americans*

anthony c. ocampo

I remember being at an Asian American Student Union meeting where all the leaders of the different student organizations attended a workshop. For one of the activities, we all had to stand in a straight line. Then a facilitator would read statements and people had to either step to the right if they agreed and to the left if you disagreed. One of the statements was, “Filipinos are Asian American.” I stepped to the left. It must have been weird for people to see me do this since I was the president of the Filipino American student organization.

—Aaron, twenty-seven, second-generation
Filipino, University of California alumnus

AARON ADMITTED THAT HE THOUGHT LITTLE ABOUT the differences between Filipinos and other Asian Americans before entering the University of California (UC).¹ A few months into his freshman year of college, he could no longer ignore them. Although Filipinos are the largest Asian American population in California, they are far outnumbered by East Asians within the larger UC system.² Besides this gap in representation, Aaron noted that the respective stereotypes he heard about Filipinos and other Asians differed. Asians were stereotyped as studious science majors, while Filipinos were more inclined toward liberal arts fields and were seen as comparably less focused on their academics. As he spent more time in college, Aaron distanced himself from an Asian American identity. Sociological perspectives on identity suggest Aaron’s response to be counterintuitive, given the close (though problematic) association between

Asian American identity and educational achievement.³ Researchers argue that children of immigrants tend to adopt socially advantageous identities—those linked to economic, political, or cultural benefits.⁴ Aaron's story suggests the need to examine the educational arena as a "local context of integration" that influences how children of immigrants negotiate their ethnic and racial identities.⁵

This article examines how second-generation Filipino Americans' educational experiences and school racial context influence their sense of Asian American identity. Drawing on fifty in-depth interviews, I discuss how many Filipino Americans negotiate their individual and collective experiences in relationship to Asian American panethnicity, a process that shifts between high school and college. Within existing research on children of immigrants, studies focus primarily on mechanisms shaping *ethnic* or *national origin* identity, while saying relatively less about the factors affecting orientations toward *panethnic* categories.⁶ Interdisciplinary perspectives within ethnic studies and cultural studies have addressed the social construction of Asian American identity more directly. Previous scholars have highlighted Filipino Americans' cultural and political marginalization since the inception of pan-Asian identity in the 1960s, citing their distinct colonial history and socioeconomic patterns as explanations.⁷ Others have discussed how this schism opens the possibility for Filipino Americans to panethnically align themselves with groups beyond Asian America, including Pacific Islanders, Latinos, and people of color more broadly.⁸ Ultimately, this article focuses on the educational arena as a key site of Filipino American racial formation. Specifically, I argue that the micro-level interactions and racial stratification of educational spaces mitigate how second-generation Filipino Americans negotiate their panethnic ties with Asian Americans, as well as other racial groups.

IDENTITY PATTERNS OF THE IMMIGRANT SECOND GENERATION

Scholars of immigration have long considered identity to be a key measure of immigrant incorporation. Chicago School sociologist Robert Park argued that assimilation was an "inevitable" stage of the race relations cycle, an endpoint at which immigrants and their children would acculturate

seamlessly with native-born whites.⁹ His contemporaries further asserted that the *rate* of assimilation depended largely on whether immigrant groups distanced themselves from their ethnic culture.¹⁰ While such arguments adequately characterize the experiences of early twentieth-century European-descent immigrants, they cannot necessarily be applied to the identity experiences of contemporary immigrants and their children, who overwhelmingly hail from societies in Latin America and Asia and lack the white racial privilege necessary to identify as “unhyphenated” Americans.

In response, contemporary immigration researchers have posited the *segmented assimilation* framework, which dispels the notion that ethnic identity hinders one’s incorporation. Rather, they argue that identification with the ethnic community facilitates access to important cultural, social, and economic resources that lead to upward mobility and offset the negative effects of racial discrimination.¹¹ One limitation of this framework is that it tends to highlight the importance of maintaining *ethnic* identity, while implying that imposed racial identities are a liability. For example, Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou note that low-income second-generation West Indians become subject to the negative stigmas associated with native-born African Americans without noting the possible social, cultural, or political benefits of aligning oneself to the latter.¹² This is also a critique raised by other scholars.¹³ As such, researchers of the immigrant second generation have paid less explicit attention to mechanisms that facilitate identification beyond one’s ethnic group, such as panethnic or panminority communities.

Identity choices are not mutually exclusive, as identity is multilayered. Children of immigrants often switch seamlessly and imprecisely among ethnic, panethnic, and panminority categories. However, the degree to which these identities resonate varies greatly. In other words, the boundaries and rules of “legitimate” membership within these categories are constantly negotiated and can shift depending on the institutions, interactions, and situations that one encounters. With respect to the case in question, Filipino Americans have long expressed ambivalence about their status as Asian American. While Filipino Americans helped to establish this panethnic identity for political mobilization, East Asian Americans have historically dominated the discourse and development of many pan-Asian

organizations, much to the chagrin of more marginalized Asian-origin groups.¹⁴ At the same time, studies show that most people—whether of Asian descent or not—perceive Asian Americans to share a “common culture,” which is often conflated with East Asian American experiences.¹⁵ As a result, within Asian American communities, there are implicit “rules” of panethnic membership that are used, often unconsciously, to decipher the boundaries of community belonging.¹⁶

For example, working and living within an ethnic economy and being bicultural—though not all encompassing—have become dominant narratives of the Asian American experience. However, U.S. colonialism institutionally and culturally transformed Philippine society to the point that some argue that Americanization begins long before Filipino immigrants step foot onto American soil. This is evident in Filipino Americans’ patterns of incorporation. Compared to other Asian groups, Filipino immigrants are less likely to live in ethnic enclaves and rely on employment in the ethnic economy, due largely to their higher levels of English proficiency. In turn, their children are less likely to grow up being bilingual and are overwhelmingly monolingual English speakers, a stark contrast to their East Asian counterparts.¹⁷ These differences in cultural differences have made it difficult for Filipino Americans to build connections and maintain rapport within the larger Asian American community. Some scholars have proposed alternative panethnic frameworks for Filipino Americans. Joanne Rondilla argues that Filipinos’ indigenous cultural heritage, family structure, and migration history more closely resemble those of other Pacific Islander societies. Moreover, she notes that Filipino American and Pacific Islander interests continue to be marginalized within most pan-Asian organizations. At the same time, other research shows that Filipino Americans might view Pacific Islander as a default option when not wanting to identify as Asian American, rather than feeling tangible cultural links with other Pacific Islander groups.¹⁸

EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS AND ASIAN AMERICAN IDENTITY

Identifying as Asian American involves a constellation of factors that go beyond phenotype—social networks, political orientation, neighborhood

origins, linguistic abilities, and culture, to name a few. This article focuses specifically on the role of educational contexts in shaping one's orientation toward Asian American identity. While most studies of second-generation immigrants analyze the effects of identity on schooling, this study examines the reverse pattern, given the close relationship between Asian American identity and educational achievement.¹⁹

The model minority stereotype—the idea that Asian Americans are inherently gifted intellectually or possess unique values that incline them to perform well academically—is one of the most widespread and problematic cultural constructions about Asian Americans. Initially developed as a neoconservative strategy to dispel claims of racial discrimination, the model minority stereotype became popularized in large part because of mass media depictions of them as “whiz kids.”²⁰ Researchers have long attempted to dispel the model minority myth, as it largely obscures the heterogeneous educational challenges faced by Asian Americans. While large numbers of Asian American students indeed attend selective public and Ivy League universities, there are still many who drop out of high school, who join gangs instead of extracurricular clubs, who never take a single Advanced Placement course, and who attend community college instead of the Ivy League.²¹ Despite this reality, the model minority stereotype serves as a litmus test to set boundaries for who is “authentically” Asian American.²² Higher achieving Asian Americans tend not to question the link between model minority and Asian Americans, whereas those who fall short academically feel “less Asian” and more alienated from the panethnic community. In the latter case, this is particularly true when there are multiple Asian American ethnicities in the same school context.²³

Studies of the immigrant second generation have paid increasing attention to how both of these variables—educational achievement and identification—are gendered processes. Within Asian immigrant families, children view doing well in school as a form of long-term family obligation, given its potential payoff in the labor market during adulthood, and daughters overwhelmingly feel the burden to succeed more than sons.²⁴ Moreover, immigrant parents enforce stricter rules on daughters for multiple reasons—patriarchal attitudes, safety, or the desire to keep them morally upstanding—a mechanism that keeps them in line with their schooling

and explains why they earn better grades and have higher educational ambitions and attainment, even across class groups and ethnicities.²⁵ The gender gap in achievement is evident among Filipino Americans. As in other immigrant families, second-generation Filipina American daughters are more closely monitored by their parents than their brothers. Though this surveillance is often a source of bitter resentment for these young women, this familial structure provides a set of constraints that lead them to academically outperform their male counterparts on multiple measures. Studies show that second-generation Filipina Americans report higher educational expectations, earn higher grade point averages, and attend more highly selective colleges.²⁶ In addition, some studies show that Filipino American boys may be subject to criminalization by teachers due to their racial presentation of self, which can further deter their academic success.²⁷ Ironically, studies also show gender to be a barrier when Filipina Americans reach higher education. For example, respective studies by Tracy Buenavista and Diane Wolf show that Filipino immigrant parents often pressure their daughters to prioritize nonacademic familial obligations over their college endeavors.²⁸

Ultimately, researchers have not addressed thoroughly whether the higher achievement of girls may translate into a greater likelihood of identifying as pan-Asian. Most research tends to focus on how immigrant parents expect daughters to carry the burden of maintaining *ethnic* identity.²⁹ However, relatively fewer second-generation studies address how gender shapes *panethnic* identities, which unlike ethnic identity is often negotiated outside the boundaries of the immigrant family. The findings linking education to Asian American identification and education to gender suggest that there may be an indirect link between gender and panethnic identity among Filipino Americans. As such, the educational narratives of Filipino Americans may help shed light on this relationship.

METHODOLOGY

This study draws from fifty in-depth interviews with second-generation Filipino American adults from two multiethnic, middle-class neighborhoods in Los Angeles: Eagle Rock and Carson.³⁰ I conducted the interviews between March 2009 and January 2010. The socioeconomic background

of my primary respondents was a reflection of the broader population of Filipino Americans in the United States—most had parents who were college-educated professionals, and most described themselves as middle class.³¹ While both neighborhoods are multiethnic, they are racially distinct. In both neighborhoods, about 20 percent of residents are Filipino and over 35 percent are Latino (including both immigrant and U.S.-born), and the remaining are white. However, in Eagle Rock, the remaining population is white, whereas in Carson, it is mostly African American with a small but visible number of Samoans (about 3 percent). While neighborhood context is not the focus of this article, I remain mindful within the analysis of how it may mitigate the relationship between educational experiences and identity.

Filipino Americans provide a strategic case to examine the relationship between education and pan-Asian identification. While officially designated as Asian American by the U.S. Census Bureau and other organizations, Filipino Americans' position within the panethnic collective remains “tumultuous,” given their feelings of marginalization within panethnic political, cultural, and academic organizations.³² In addition, despite their middle-class status, Filipino Americans' collective educational attainment is comparatively low. While most do not drop out of high school and pursue higher education, Filipino Americans avoid applying to highly selective colleges, have lower rates of college graduation, and veer away from the STEM fields.³³ Such factors may yield variability in the orientation toward Asian American identity, thus highlighting the underlying key mechanisms.

Respondents' educational backgrounds were diverse. About two-thirds graduated from public high schools, and the remainder attended private Catholic schools. Given the racial demographics of their neighborhoods, Filipino Americans were the predominant Asian-descent group in their high school. Respondents from Eagle Rock generally attended schools with Latinos and whites, whereas those in Carson had classmates who were Latino, African American, and Samoan. To examine how identity might shift across educational levels, I selected respondents with a variety of postsecondary pathways. In my sample, twenty-one attended a UC campus, nine went to private colleges, eight attended a California State University (CSU) institution, and the remaining twelve went to community colleges

or vocational schools. For most respondents, college provided the first major opportunity for day-to-day contact with large numbers of other Asian American peers.

Interviews lasted approximately ninety minutes and addressed a number of themes related to identity, including neighborhood and school experiences, family dynamics, friendship patterns, and negotiations of ethnicity and race. My interviews attempted to uncover moments when Filipino Americans invoked a sense of *we-ness* with Asian Americans and other groups both outright and implicitly. Such questions included the following: (1) What do you consider to be your racial identity? (2) Which ethnic and racial groups do you feel you and other Filipinos are most similar to? and (3) Have you ever identified as Asian American, and if so, in what contexts? Following the interview, respondents also filled out a brief questionnaire inquiring about basic demographic information, parental socioeconomic status, schools attended, and college major. In the questionnaire, I also asked an open-ended question about self-identity and asked respondents to select their racial identity from a set of discrete categories (e.g., white, black, Latino, Asian, Pacific Islander).

As with other qualitative studies, researcher site and sample selection set limitations for the broader implications of the study. The experiences of my respondents may not be generalizable to Filipino Americans from working-class backgrounds or from other regions in the country. For example, it is feasible that in cities where Filipino Americans are less visible, they may be more inclined to identify as Asian American in order to be racially legible to others. Nonetheless, this study provides lessons for understanding how children negotiate competing, often contradictory notions of identity in order to determine their racial position within their local context, as well as the broader society.

CHOOSING A BOX: ASIAN AMERICAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER?

Though Filipino Americans are commonly perceived to be Asian, the actual term did not resonate strongly during the interviews. Unlike previous studies of other Asian American groups,³⁴ respondents generally did not use “Filipino” and “Asian” as interchangeable descriptors. Moreover, no

one used phrases to panethnically identify in an outright fashion (e.g., “As an Asian American . . .,” “Being Asian . . .”), opting instead to identify by ethnicity (e.g., “As a Filipino . . .,” “Being Filipino . . .”).³⁵

While about half of respondents selected Asian American as their racial background on the post-interview survey, even these individuals displayed ambivalence. When I inquired about whether he ever identified as Asian American, Cesar, a twenty-four-year-old sales associate, replied, “Not verbally when I’m speaking. Sometimes when I take a test, and it asks if I want to fill out ethnicity, and there’s no choice for Filipino, and there’s only a choice for Asian. That’s the only time I ever say I’m Asian.” The other half of respondents identified as Pacific Islander on the survey. However, this too was a default category of choice. While scholars highlight the potential cultural overlap in Filipino American and Pacific Islander experiences, respondents had little to say about this even when probed. Most selected Pacific Islander merely as a means to say they were *not* Asian American. Even those from Carson had little to say about the overlap between Filipino Americans and Samoan Americans, except for the commonality of large families. In both the neighborhood and schools, Filipino Americans in Carson noted having very little interaction with the Samoan community.

Viewing race as cultural, Filipino Americans more commonly viewed themselves as similar to Latinos. Though none selected Hispanic/Latino on the post-interview survey, many highlighted the overlap in Filipino and Mexican cultural practices, such as Catholic religion, family dynamics, foods, rituals, and surnames. While Filipino Americans acknowledged that other Asian Americans had close family units, they believed that the heightened interdependence and extended kin networks they had in their families more closely mirrored those of Latinos, even among individuals who selected Asian American on the postinterview form. In other words, even though Filipinos might have checked the Asian box on an official form, they may have been more ambivalent on a cultural level.

However, in trying to uncover situations when Filipino Americans might have “felt more Asian,” I did find that education was the primary link that respondents identified. One Filipina American said, “Education’s where the similarity with the stereotypical Asian person is. That’s about it

though.” Such a comment illustrated how much Filipino Americans internalized the association between Asian Americans and the model minority myth, which in turn they used as a litmus test of panethnic belonging. In the sections that follow, I address how Filipino Americans’ individual and collective educational experiences influenced their orientation toward Asian American identity, and how this negotiation process in turn shifted between high school and college.

ASIAN AMERICAN BY DEFAULT: FILIPINO AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES IN HIGH SCHOOL

ACADEMIC TRACKING AND RACIALIZATION

Every respondent attended a high school that utilized academic tracking in some capacity—the practice in which schools systematically sort students into remedial versus college preparatory courses.³⁶ Filipino Americans identified two primary tracks in high school: regular and honors/Advanced Placement (AP). While respondents who attended private schools noted few significant differences between the tracks with the exception of pace of material, those from public schools characterized the remedial track as overly “elementary” and “unchallenging.” Moreover, they critiqued teachers’ ability and willingness to maintain basic order. Raymond, a twenty-six-year-old registered nurse from Eagle Rock, recalled his first two weeks attending his local public high school before transferring to an all-boys Catholic school:

It was crap. It was horrible. The teachers didn’t seem like they cared. They weren’t willing to stop people from disrupting class. They were just talking. I wasn’t understanding what the teacher was saying. It was just a big social hour. Even when the teacher was talking, no one was listening.

Catherine, a twenty-three-year-old college student from Carson, told a similar story about her local public school. An honors student herself, Catherine expressed her shock when comparing her experience with an AP math teacher to that of her cousin, who had the same instructor for a remedial math course. She recalled, “We would have homework every week, and he would push us so hard. So I was surprised when my cousin said all they do is sit there and watch movies and play with their phones.

We weren't even allowed to have our phones out!” Even if respondents characterized their public school as “ghetto,” they acknowledged that the honors students were “always smart and serious about school.”

Whether they attended private and public schools, respondents said Filipino Americans were well represented in the honors and AP tracks. Most respondents took at least a few honors and AP courses, and thus were able to compare the composition of the different tracks. Many pointed out that their school tracking system was racially stratified—racial groups were noticeably organized distinctly between the different tracks. In both Eagle Rock and Carson, Filipino Americans were the predominant Asian American group in their neighborhoods and high schools, even when the school was located outside the boundaries of their neighborhood. Those from Eagle Rock described the advanced tracks as consisting mainly of Filipino Americans and whites, with a handful of other Asian Americans and some Latinos. In turn, the regular tracks were overwhelmingly composed of Latino students, as well as a few Southeast Asian and Filipino immigrants.

The racial stratification of the tracking system was more pronounced among Carson respondents. From junior high through high school, respondents noted that Filipino Americans dominated the advanced tracks with “maybe one or two Latinos or blacks here and there.” The regular tracks in their schools consisted of Latinos, African Americans, and Samoan Americans, academic divisions that translated into social divisions outside the classroom. Rachel, a twenty-eight-year-old academic counselor from Carson, recalled:

I'd say [the honors track] was 75 percent Filipino. And then in the other 25 percent, there were Latinos and like one or two black students. We traveled in cohorts in middle school and high school. . . . Because of the way I was tracked, I was only in one remedial class as a sophomore. They put me in regular geometry with a bunch of seniors, and it was the only time where I had mostly black and Latino students in my class.

Rachel's story demonstrated the degree to which Filipino Americans were collectively segregated from other minority students in their schools, a trend that was echoed by Eileen, a twenty-seven-year-old graduate student from Carson. Eileen said, “I remember looking back at some statistics of my

school, and it said it was 62 percent Hispanic. And I remember thinking, ‘Really? Was I just in this bubble?’ Mexicans were practically invisible to me [because] we weren’t in the same classes.” The tracking system deterred Filipino Americans’ interactions with other minorities in the school context, which meant Carson respondents had little opportunity to develop a panethnic consciousness with Samoans. As compared to Eagle Rock respondents, they were less likely to identify as Pacific Islander because they associated this label with Samoan Americans, whom they perceived to be less academically inclined due to their lack of representation in the honors tracks.

The racially stratified tracking systems led respondents from both neighborhoods to view themselves as the designated “model minority” in their high school. Eileen noted how this designation became racialized:

At Carver High School, being Filipino and being smart was pretty synonymous. In this sense, Filipinos were the Asian ones in Carson. Filipinos were the ones who always succeeded from elementary and high school. I had GATE [Gifted and Talented Education] or honors classes my whole life, and all the people who were on that track were mostly Filipino. If you were Filipino and not in the advanced classes, you’d be looked down upon because Filipinos are *supposed* to be in those classes.

Eileen and others frequently used the term “Asian” as a proxy descriptor for academic achievement, using it synonymously with studious, intelligent, hardworking, and college bound.

PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT FROM SCHOOL OFFICIALS

Teachers and counselors also reinforced the model minority designation in their interactions with the honors and AP students. Given that Filipino Americans were well represented in the honors tracks and Latinos, African Americans, and Samoan Americans were not, some respondents believed that they were treated as “favorites” due to their ethnicity. Jacob, a twenty-three-year-old Filipino and African American educational tutor from Carson, was able to clearly see the difference between teachers’ interactions with Filipino American students versus other minorities due in part to his multiracial identity:

There was favoritism. A lot of black and Mexican students wouldn't do as well as Filipinos at Washington. But I don't think it's their fault. I think that they get put into the lower track classes, so they end up with the teachers that aren't expecting them to do well, so they don't end up doing well. . . . Teachers and counselors had higher expectations for Filipinos. Putting them in more challenging classes. And if there *were* black students—and if I recall, there'd maybe be like two or three—it's the Filipinos who were considered the smart ones [by teachers], and so they'd get called on more.

Whereas other Filipino Americans were not aware of their privileged interactions, Jacob experienced being racialized as both Filipino and African American by teachers. In his first two years of high school, he was enrolled in the regular tracks with mostly black and Latino students, but he eventually negotiated his way into honors track in his junior year. “It was like going to two different schools,” Jacob recalled. Counselors viewed him as “just an athlete” and discouraged him from taking academically rigorous courses. They pushed him, instead, into vocational classes, such as cooking. Later Jacob said he was seen as “more Filipino” when he switched tracks. While being multiracial made it difficult to fit in fully with either his black or Filipino American classmates, he felt that his Filipino side gave him the advantage of being perceived as more of a good student than if he were only African American. Ultimately, as compared to his Filipino American peers, being multiracial and thus an “outsider-within” provided Jacob the consciousness to see more clearly the disparities in how teachers and counselors acted toward students of different races.³⁷

Lia, a twenty-one-year-old aspiring writer from Carson, was among the few Filipino Americans who observed teachers' preferential treatment. She recounted:

Whenever I would come in late or turn in an essay late, my teachers would be like, “Oh, that's fine.” They thought I was smart because I was Filipino. But when a black or Latino kid did what I did, they'd be sent to detention. [The teachers] would be on their asses. One time I remember, I came into my psych class, and he was like, “Oh hey, why you late?” And I would joke around with him. But when a black kid did that, he would lock the door on him.

From Lia's account, it was not clear whether the preferential treatment was due to her ethnicity or her gender, but what is telling is that she and others associated preferential treatment in their schools with the former. Others found that counselors extended fewer educational opportunities to students who were not Filipino American. Ronald, a twenty-six-year-old graphic designer from Eagle Rock, observed differences in the postsecondary expectations counselors held for Filipino Americans and Mexican Americans:

I remember my Mexican friend had a really good rank and asked the counselor about college, specifically Stanford. The counselor was pretty discouraging, telling him he probably wouldn't get in. But I remember Filipinos who were ranked lower than him would be told by the same counselor to apply to Stanford. My Filipino friend didn't get in, but my Mexican friend did, and he said the counselor didn't even congratulate him.

Even though Ronald acknowledged that his Mexican American friend had a more impressive academic record than he did, he felt that counselors presented him with more appealing collegiate choices merely because he was Filipino American. Interestingly, Jacob and Ronald were among the few respondents who cited the preferential treatment that Filipino Americans received. Most of the other respondents felt that teachers and counselors "treated everyone the same" regardless of race, even when they acknowledged the racial stratification within their school's tracking system.

"ASIAN" EDUCATIONAL VALUES

Respondents' experiences in high school prompted them to characterize education as a "family value" distinctly shared by Filipino Americans and other Asian Americans. Though Filipino Americans were the primary Asian-descent group in their high schools, some noted the commonalities shared with the few Asian Americans that attended their schools. Renee, a twenty-three-year-old music instructor, compared her academic pressures to those of her Japanese American classmate Lynn:

I see a lot of commonalities between me and my Asian friend Lynn. Her parents always wanted her to try really hard at school. She was really smart. I don't even know why she went to high school 'cause she could

have been in college already. Her dad was always so hard on her. Always pushing her more, and that’s kind of how my dad is. Our dads would always push us to do better.

Lisa, a twenty-two-year-old medical technician, expressed similar feelings: “I think that Asian parents are very strict as far as studying and not staying out late. You know when you’re growing up, academics is a core value for Asian families.” Renee and Lisa’s respective remarks demonstrate how respondents framed this internalized pressure to do well in school as an “Asian” value. It is worth noting that female respondents were more likely than males to talk about having strict parents. But interestingly, parental strictness often had more to do with their *social* behaviors than academic habits (e.g., staying out late, hanging out with certain friends, dating choices). In addition, besides *feeling* expectations to do well in school, neither female nor male respondents could identify concrete ways in which their parents structured their academic lives, which is unlike the case of other Asian American groups. For example, few had stories of being forced (or even encouraged) to take AP courses, none were punished when earning subpar grades, and not one reported receiving any assistance during their college application and selection process. This helps explain why there was no statistical difference in the patterns of Asian American identification between female and male respondents.³⁸

Although Filipino Americans had few opportunities in high school to compare their experiences with other Asian American groups concretely, they could do so with other minority groups. Some made blanket statements about Latinos, African Americans, and Samoan Americans in their high schools “not taking advantage of honors and Advanced Placement classes,” based on their minimal presence in their AP classes. Others like Cesar, a twenty-four-year-old sales associate, attributed this difference to the level of priority that Asian and non-Asian families attach to education:

I’m not saying that Latinos don’t embrace education because all the Latinos I know have parents that believe education is important. But I think they prioritize education differently from how Asians do. . . . With my parents, they always said, “Don’t work. Just go to school.” A lot of them told me that they *had* to work even though they had to go to school. Then I have other Latino friends whose parents don’t care as much about their schooling as mine do.

Cesar acknowledged that both Asian and Latino families valued education, but he felt that for Latinos, education took a back seat to nonacademic family obligations, such as the need to contribute financially to the household. Joseph, a twenty-three-year-old graduate student, went as far as to frame lower academic achievement in racial terms. He seemed critical about the level of codependence that he felt Filipino Americans and Latinos had with their families: “Some Filipinos don’t go to college, and instead are at the community college taking random classes and working at the local yogurt shop. They kinda have more of the Hispanic or Latino mentality—stay at home, care more about social gatherings with family and friends, not concentrating on school.” While he meant his comment in jest, he commonly associated high achievement with being “more Asian.”

“AM I REALLY ASIAN?” RENEGOTIATING BOUNDARIES OF ASIAN AMERICAN IDENTITY IN COLLEGE

After high school, the effect of education on Asian American identification depended on which postsecondary pathway respondents followed, as this affected how frequently they encountered other Asian ethnicities. Those who attended UC or private institutions lived on campus or very close to the college, which prompted them to shift their social lives toward campus life and away from their neighborhood.³⁹ Some felt that East Asian Americans overwhelmingly outnumbered Filipino Americans, as noted by a remark from Dustin, a twenty-seven-year-old school counselor:

It was funny because I had this idea that every Asian was Filipino. In my neighborhood, if you’re Asian, you’re Filipino. It was not until after high school that I had to realize that not everyone was Filipino, and that was the first time I encountered people who were Korean and Chinese American.

College provided the first opportunity for respondents to interact with other Asian Americans in such large numbers, as well as have meaningful and sustained interaction with them. In contrast, those who attended CSU campuses, community colleges, or vocational schools remained socially embedded within their family and neighborhood networks. Ines, a twenty-three-year-old visual manager, said of her high school peers, “I

don't recall a lot of Filipinos going away for college. They're always doing stuff with their family and old friends. They're still hanging out with the same old people [from the neighborhood]. Given that their social lives remained centered around the neighborhood, these students lacked the same degree of interaction with other Asian Americans than their peers who attended UC and private colleges.

SHIFTING PANETHNIC BOUNDARIES AND RACIAL DILEMMAS

Unlike Eagle Rock and Carson, where Filipino Americans were the primary Asian population, UC campuses and private colleges housed students of multiple Asian American ethnicities. While respondents generally viewed themselves as Filipino, many also admitted never seriously considering the difference between Filipino and Asian American identity *until* college. Eileen recalled an experience in her first week at UC Berkeley:

I remember the Filipino organization at Berkeley had a workshop where they asked the first-year students, “Who do you most identify with besides Filipinos? Black, Latino, Asian, or white?” And I remember at the time, I was like, “Duh, Asian. How could you even ask that question? That’s such a stupid question.

However, the more time Eileen and others spent at their schools, the more they observed differences between the academic experiences of Filipino Americans and other Asian Americans, particularly those who were East Asian. Such observations prompted them to question whether they were “really” Asian. For example, respondents who attended the two most selective UC campuses—Berkeley and Los Angeles—were surprised to find that Filipino Americans were labeled an “underrepresented minority,” a clear discursive divergence from the status they held during high school. In fact, both institutions housed organizations whose primary objective was to deter Filipino student attrition. Rachel said her decision to become an academic counselor was motivated by the stark differences in Filipino Americans’ experiences at Carver High School and UCLA:

Retention was a big deal for Filipinos. There were about twenty-eight of us [Filipinos] from Carson, but most of us didn't graduate. I felt like the higher education system was not something we were meant to understand and navigate through. Some were dismissed for not doing

well. A lot of folks came in as pre-med or engineering, but it didn't work for them. High school was easy. You kind of just showed up, did your homework, and you got an A. At UCLA, it was just too hard, and many of them [her Filipino classmates] it seemed just weren't academically ready to be there.

Others recalled disparaging remarks from East Asian Americans about Filipinos. One student from UC Berkeley said he overheard his graduate student instructor make such a comment: "I don't really think of Filipinos when I think of the typical Asian student. They're not really known as the smart ones." Given that respondents' sense of pan-Asian identity was built around educational achievement, hearing such remarks prompted many to question their status as Asian Americans.

This racial dilemma seemed most pronounced for respondents within the science and engineering majors. Over half of those who attended UC or private schools had attempted to major in the STEM fields, yet only five graduated with a bachelor's of science degree. While attrition is normal within the sciences, researchers show that the rate is markedly high for Filipino Americans due to the lack of social support and underrepresentation in these majors.⁴⁰ In contrast, East Asian Americans are overrepresented in STEM fields and some even feel expected to be science majors. However, Joey and Jerome, both physicians from Eagle Rock, recalled that Filipinos were "nowhere to be found" in their science courses during their undergraduate years, nor in their respective medical schools.

Eileen said that her struggles as a molecular cell biology major prompted her to have an "identity crisis." While many undergraduates encounter failure in the sciences, she framed hers through a racial lens. She tearfully recounted her experiences as one of only a handful of Filipino Americans in her science classes:

The Chinese and the Indian students were the ones doing well. That's how I perceived it. I looked around and there weren't a lot of Filipinos in the sciences, not a lot of Filipinos who were professors, and not a lot of Filipinos who were physicians. Filipinos are underrepresented in those areas, and that's why I felt, "Am I Asian or am I not?" In Carson, Filipinos were the Asians ones. I had an identity crisis when I went to Berkeley where Filipinos were not doing well, and I started to question whether I was Asian.

According to Eileen, while other Asian Americans were stereotyped as being the face of the typical science majors, Filipino Americans at her school were “in more ‘social justice’ majors like sociology,” and the few who majored in science tended to have subpar grades as well. Her sense of Asian American identity declined the more poorly she performed in her courses, illustrating the close association respondents made between Asian American identity and achievement. This experience led Eileen to assert other differences between Filipino Americans and Asian Americans, whether she could prove them or not:

They [Chinese and Indians] don’t know what it’s like to be Filipino. The Chinese students, the South Asian students, they all stick together. I felt like I couldn’t relate to any of them. They don’t know what its like to have to be there for your family on the phone when I have a midterm the next day even though I’m 500 miles away here at Berkeley.

Eileen had so deeply internalized the idea that Filipino Americans were academically subpar that she even showed suspicion when presented with educational opportunities from professors. A notable African American biology professor had once approached her to work in his lab, a highly coveted position among undergraduates. Eileen said she repeatedly dodged the professor’s offer: “I was so scared that he didn’t mean what he said. I thought, ‘He had to be wrong. He has this wrong impression of me. I was sure it was a mistake on his part.’” Fortunately, two years later, she mustered up the courage to accept his offer, but her immediate reaction is indicative of how respondents internalize an identity of educational disadvantage within college, despite having seen themselves as model minorities during high school.

Eileen’s feelings of being “less Asian” parallel findings on other Asian Americans who felt “less Korean” or “less Chinese” when they fell below educational expectations.⁴¹ However, my findings reveal that even respondents with stellar grades experienced racial dilemmas due to the *collective* underperformance of Filipino Americans, relative to their Asian American classmates. Unlike Eileen, Joey had nearly a 4.0 GPA as a biology major at UCLA and was able to go directly to medical school at UC Davis after college. Previous studies suggest that Asian Americans who excel academically often ascribe to the model minority stereotype, yet this was

not the case with Joey. He argued that other Asian Americans were well prepared in college, a trait he did not associate with Filipino Americans, who happened to have their own retention center on campus. “Regular Asians [referring to Chinese and Koreans] look down on Filipinos for not being in the science majors,” he said. Joey also noted that while his other classmates applying to medical school were mostly East Asians, he was the only Filipino undergraduate working toward graduate school of any sort. As a result, Joey “refused to check the Asian box” when applying to medical school and identified himself as Pacific Islander to signal to admissions committees that Filipino Americans were, in his opinion, “more oppressed” and “more underrepresented” than East Asian Americans.

NOT THE SAME AFTER ALL: DISCOVERING DIFFERENCES WITH ASIAN AMERICANS

Science courses were not the only spaces where differences from other Asian Americans became salient for respondents. Many had roommates or housemates of other Asian ethnicities, which provided opportunities to compare academic experiences. Respondents often characterized the academic drive of other Asian Americans as excessive and overly intense as compared to what they knew of their Filipino American peers. Jenn, a twenty-four-year-old sales associate and pre-pharmacy student at University of the Pacific, said that her Vietnamese American roommates stressed her out and often made her feel guilty for “not studying enough.” Jayson, a twenty-four-year-old nursing student and alumnus of UC San Diego, was quite critical of his other Asian American classmates:

If you look at Chinese and other Asian parents, the kids are at a chokehold to their parents. I mean, Filipino parents are strict, but Asian families tend to be a lot more hardcore with regulating their kids. I had a friend from college who was a girl. Plus she was the eldest. Her parents were very overprotective, and plus, she told me that they *made* her go to Chinese school. Between going to American and Chinese school, her parents basically had her on lockdown. She said it was always hard for her to go out because her parents had her on a schedule! Her parents were always telling her, “You gotta study.” She didn’t get to have as much fun as the Filipinos did.

One young woman said her boyfriend frequently joked about the differences between Filipino Americans and other Asian Americans: “[My

boyfriend] always said to me, ‘I wouldn’t have liked you when we were kids because all the Filipino kids, they’d spend their time in dance crews while the *Asian* Asians were doing SAT prep.’” This use of the term “*Asian* Asians” suggests that Filipino Americans fall short of what it means to be an authentic Asian American. Also implicit in these remarks is that non-Filipino Asian Americans were expected not only to do well in school, but also to partake in academically oriented extracurricular activities, an obligation that not a single respondent mentioned having.

This became evident when respondents discussed the role their parents played in the college application process. Joey had once thought of himself as the quintessential model student—he attended after-school tutoring, he took an SAT prep course taught by college student volunteers, and he was proud to have been accepted to UCLA, his dream school and a place few other Filipino Americans he knew had even applied, let alone matriculated to. However, upon meeting his Chinese American girlfriend in college, he characterized his high school experiences differently:

I don’t wanna stereotype [Asians], but they all have nice houses, nice cars, and grow up in Asian middle-class suburbia. Like my girlfriend, she’s Chinese, and she had friends who went to Stanford, Harvard. Her mom was always helping her out with school, on her projects. A lot of Filipinos I know from Eagle Rock are at community colleges, working part-time jobs. . . . UCLA for me was my dream school, but for her and her friends, the UCs are the backup schools.

Joey realized that his “dream school” was one that some Asian American classmates felt they merely “ended up” at when they were not accepted to Ivy League institutions. Unlike the experiences of Joey’s girlfriend, not one respondent recalled their parents actively assisting them with their schoolwork, let alone the college application process. For example, not one had considered enrolling in more established SAT programs, such as Kaplan or Princeton Review, as most considered this an “unnecessary” expense.

Ironically, the more common role that Filipino parents played was in *restricting* their children’s postsecondary choices. Several noted that their parents were the reason they did *not* apply to a broader range of schools, especially those that were more distant and private. One woman noted, “I didn’t apply to any schools in the East Coast because they were too far and I didn’t want to waste my parents’ money on tuition.” Such a remark

contrasts from findings on East Asian American students, whose parents actively encourage application to Ivy League and other selective institutions. Ultimately, the college application process was another sphere in which Filipino Americans felt they could not relate to other Asian Americans. Respondents cited these differences as reasons why “East Asians didn’t mix with Filipinos” in college.

FROM PAN-ASIAN TO PANMINORITY IDENTITY

As respondents became aware of differences between themselves and other Asian Americans, they also discovered similarities with other underrepresented minorities, namely Latinos and African Americans. Underrepresentation and attrition were important issues that galvanized Filipino Americans from UCLA, UC Berkeley, and UC San Diego, which in turn facilitated panminority alliances among themselves, Latinos, and African Americans. Amy noted, “I don’t see Asians interact with blacks and Latinos. I’m not sure if I’m biased, but I mainly see Asians stick mainly to themselves. Or if they do interact, it’s with whites.” She felt Filipino Americans were more “down” and “politicized” for race-related activism issues, just as Latinos and African Americans were: “Asians are more conservative, but when you see Filipinos, they get along with Mexicans and blacks. It’s like there’s no cultural barrier.” While there were indeed politically involved East Asian American students at all these campuses, respondents’ perception of them seemed to coincide with Amy’s remarks.

Erick, a twenty-six-year-old youth outreach coordinator, felt that major choice created more opportunities for Filipino Americans to interact more with underrepresented groups than with other Asian Americans. On many campuses, the buildings for science and engineering majors are separate from those for humanities and social sciences. For example, Erick noted how UCLA students commonly identified as “north campus” or “south campus,” referring to the respective locations where liberal arts or science students spent most of their time. According to him, Filipinos, Latinos, and African Americans “kicked it on north campus” while “most of the Asians were in the engineering buildings”—a pattern that is unsurprising given the underrepresentation of the former groups in the hard sciences. In addition, because Filipino Americans were designated as un-

derrepresented, they had a retention center alongside those for blacks and Latinos. As Erick noted, “We [Filipinos] were literally the group between the African Student Union and MEChA [a Chicano/Latino student campus organization].”⁴² These retention organizations facilitated traffic among Filipino, Latino, and African American students within the same space with a similar purpose—to preempt their dropping out from college—a departure from the model minority story that respondents held on to during high school. In sum, the proximity with blacks and Latinos in both their academic and social spaces allowed respondents to share stories and become more aware of the similar plights their respective groups were experiencing in college—a precondition to panminority identification.

The sudden shift from model minority to struggling student was particularly transformative for Eileen, who earlier had unquestionably thought of herself and other Filipino Americans as part of the pan-Asian collective. Nearly falling through the academic cracks made Eileen more empathetic to the struggles of her Latino and black peers, whom she once viewed as merely beneficiaries of affirmative action. Her college experiences helped her “unlearn” her own presumptions:

I learned about ideas of power and struggle. When I was struggling, I met a black professor who reached out to me. Now my mentor in science is a Latina woman. They told me about all the times they were discriminated against, and how they were always the “only ones” in their classes. Filipinos drop out of the pipeline and don’t end up going into science, I think what’s ironic is that the thing that kept me in that pipeline were my mentors who were black and Latina. And these are the people who in Carson, I didn’t associate myself with, and I ended up realizing that in college, after I felt isolated, our struggles are actually very similar and that we’re aligned in that way. I think it’s interesting that it actually happened that way, and that’s why I’m actually invested to go back to Carson because I think it’s important to erase these separation lines and say, “Hey we’re all underrepresented, and we all need to help each other.”

For Eileen, feeling marginalized in the classroom became the common narrative of Filipino American, African American, and Latino undergraduate. She also developed a more structural, rather than individualistic, understanding of why she and other Filipino Americans did not perform well in higher education. Eileen’s orientation toward her own racial identity

shifted—she went from identifying strongly as Asian American to adopting a panminority racial consciousness in which she developed a sense of “we-ness” with Latino and black undergraduates.

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN FILIPINO AND ASIAN EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Although respondents generally noted that their parents were uninvolved in their academics during college, many conveyed that they felt pressured to select majors in “lucrative” fields—those known to translate into well-paying jobs after college. Dustin expressed that he was passionate about ethnic studies during college and had one day hoped to become a college professor. However, he felt compelled to hide his passion and take on a double major in economics because of his parents:

My parents, they’d always tell friends and family, “My son goes to UCLA.” They told everyone that I was a business major, and that I was going to open my own business. For me, economics is dry and boring, and it didn’t interest me. It didn’t stimulate me. It didn’t speak to me, and I hated it. Eventually, I told my parents about the ethnic studies major, but they would always refer to me as an economics major. They always said disapprovingly, “What are you gonna do with that ethnic studies major?”

Dustin’s concerns about his choice of major stemmed from a two-fold desire to help his parents save face among other Filipino co-ethnics and eventually obtain a good job to support his family. His worries mirrored those of many other respondents, and resembled those documented among other Asian groups in previous studies.

Interestingly, respondents who opted for community college or vocational school (for academic or financial reasons) did not experience the same racial dilemmas as their counterparts whose social lives shifted from the neighborhood to the college campus. Because they stayed within their neighborhoods, respondents continued to view Filipinos as the model minority among the different ethnic and racial groups within their vicinity. Their social lives did not revolve around campus life, and the only time they interacted with their college peers was when they attended classes. Instead, their social lives revolved around their neighborhood, where Filipino Americans remained the predominant Asian group. As Bryan, a part-time tutor at the local high school in Carson, pointed out, “I guess I’m

Asian. There’s no other Asians in Carson besides Filipinos, so we can fill that box in.” Bryan’s comment reflected how his “membership” as an Asian American has never been seriously contested, and it also demonstrated how pan-Asian identity is often a default racial category that respondents select. In other words, his lack of interactions with other Asian ethnicities in his school experiences meant that he rarely had the opportunity to hear the academic narratives of other Asian Americans. As such, there was little need for him to question whether Filipinos were “really” Asian Americans.

CONCLUSIONS

Despite their official classification as Asian, Filipino Americans expressed ambivalence about their panethnic identity. While previous studies have focused on how historical colonialism or neighborhood experiences relate to this identity dissonance, this article has specifically addressed the role of educational contexts. Respondents in this study negotiated individual and collective Filipino Americans experiences with the model minority narrative—despite the problematic nature of this stereotype—to assess their panethnic membership. Respondents generally did not strongly adopt Asian American identity, but conceded that they were “the Asian ones” during high school, a context in which there were few other Asian Americans with whom they could compare themselves. This characterization was reinforced by two trends: their overrepresentation within honors courses relative to other minorities and the preferential treatment they received from school officials. Even respondents who maintained mediocre grades viewed themselves as Asian, given that Filipino Americans were *collectively* designated as model minorities. This challenges previous studies that have shown that Asians distance themselves from Asian American identity when they individually perform poorly in school. This link between collective academic experiences and panethnic identity also sheds light on why Asian American identification did not differ significantly by gender.

However, upon entering college, many respondents also entered a new racial context where East Asian Americans not only outnumbered Filipino Americans, but also redefined the boundaries of pan-Asian identity. While respondents had once viewed themselves as model minorities

in high school, this shifted in college, where they felt that their East Asian counterparts outperformed them academically, particularly in challenging fields, such as science and engineering. At campuses like UC Berkeley and UCLA especially, respondents' sense of Asian American identity became disrupted by Filipino Americans' designation as "underrepresented minorities," a category reserved for minority groups with unusually high attrition from the college. The increased day-to-day interactions with other Asian Americans also prompted them to discover differences in their academic experiences. Many were surprised to find out how involved East Asian parents were in their children's academic lives—enrolling them in language schools and SAT preparation courses and pushing them to attend prestigious colleges. These were framed as "typical Asian experiences" to which Filipino Americans did not necessarily relate, thus further dampening the possibilities of pan-Asian identification. Ultimately, racial identity dilemmas were experienced only by Filipino Americans who attended UC and private institutions, as respondents who attended CSUs and community colleges remained socially embedded in their neighborhood context, where they were still the primary Asian group.

Respondents' sense of marginality as Asian Americans prompted many to develop a panminority identity. Filipino Americans' individual and collective underperformance became a basis of identification with Latinos and African Americans. For respondents like Joey, academic underrepresentation provided a rationale for identifying as Pacific Islander, mainly as a means of signaling how incongruent his experiences were from those of other Asian Americans. This shared status as underrepresented minorities also created opportunities for Filipino Americans to work closely with Latinos and African Americans on educational outreach and political activism, which further enhanced a panminority consciousness that was not necessarily salient during high school.

While previous research has suggested that children of immigrants generally opt for socially advantageous identities, my findings have shown that this is not the case when there is a perceived mismatch between personal experiences and stereotyped cultural connotations of the racial label. As demonstrated by the educational narratives of Filipino Americans, children of immigrants may feel more comfortable adopting identities that

fit their experiences, even when those labels are popularly associated with social disadvantages (as is the case with Latinos and African Americans in higher education). Lastly, my findings highlight the utility of centering *disidentification* as an outcome of interest, as it reveals how individuals understand their racial position vis-à-vis other ethnic groups within the larger U.S. context.

Notes

1. The names of the respondents, high schools, and organizations have been changed to maintain confidentiality.
2. Robert Teranishi, “Asian Pacific Americans and Critical Race Theory: An Examination of School Racial Climate,” *Equity and Excellence in Education* 52, no. 2 (2002): 144–54. Teranishi notes that at the most selective UC campuses, the ratio of Chinese to Filipino American students is seven to one, despite the relatively even population of these two ethnicities in the state.
3. Mia Tuan, *Forever Foreigners or Honorary Whites? The Asian Ethnic Experience Today* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1998).
4. Mary Waters, *Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).
5. Mark Ellis and Gunnar Almgren, “Local Contexts of Immigrant and Second Generation Integration in the United States,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 35, no. 7 (2009): 1059–76.
6. Panethnicity refers to the collective umbrella category that includes immigrant groups of different national origins. The actual term “panethnicity” is most often used by scholars, and respondents generally do not use it. Rather, they most often use the term “race” to describe their identity beyond their ethnic origin group.
7. Antonio Tiongson, Jr., “Reflections on the Trajectory of Filipina/o American Studies: An Interview with Rick Bonus,” in *Positively No Filipinos Allowed: Building Communities and Discourse*, ed. Antonio Tiongson, Ricardo Gutierrez, and Edgardo Gutierrez (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), 162–71; Yen Le Espiritu, “Asian American Panethnicity: Contemporary National and Transnational Possibilities,” in *Not Just Black and White*, ed. Nancy Foner and George Frederickson (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2004), 217–36.
8. Elizabeth Pisares, “Do You (Mis)Recognize Me?,” in Tiongson, Gutierrez, and Gutierrez, *Positively No Filipinos Allowed*, 172–98; Joanne Rondilla, “The Filipino Question in Asia and the Pacific: Rethinking Regional Origins in Diaspora,” in *Pacific Diaspora: Island Peoples in the United States and Across the Pacific*, ed. Paul Spickard, Joanne Rondilla, and Debbie Wright (Manoa: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 56–66.
9. Robert E. Park, *Race and Culture* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1950).

10. William Warner and Leo Srole, *The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1945).
11. Alejandro Portes and Ruben Rumbaut, *Legacies* (Berkeley: University of California Press and Russell Sage Foundation, 2001).
12. Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou, "The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and Its Variants," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 530 (1993): 74–95.
13. Karyn Lacy, *Blue Chip Black* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Kathryn Neckerman, Prudence Carter, and Jennifer Lee, "Segmented Assimilation and Minority Culture of Mobility," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22, no. 6 (1999): 945–65.
14. Yen Le Espiritu, *Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identities* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992).
15. Janelle Wong, S. Karthick Ramakrishnan, Taeku Lee, and Jane Junn, *Asian American Political Participation: Emerging Constituents and Their Political Identities* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2011).
16. Nazli Kibria, "The Contested Meanings of 'Asian American': Racial Dilemmas in the Contemporary U.S.," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21, no. 5 (1998): 939–58.
17. Min Zhou and Yang Xiong, "The Multifaceted American Experiences of the Children of Asian Immigrants: Lessons for Segmented Assimilation," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28 (2005): 1119–52.
18. Anthony Ocampo, "Are Second Generation Filipinos 'Becoming' Asian American or Latino? Historical Colonialism, Culture, and Panethnicity," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (forthcoming).
19. Jennifer C. Ng, Sharon S. Lee, and Yoon K. Pak, "Contesting the Model Minority and Perpetual Foreigner Stereotypes," *Review of Research in Education* 31 (2007): 95–130.
20. Rosalind Chou and Joe Feagin, *The Myth of the Model Minority: Asian Americans Facing Racism* (New York: Paradigm Press, 2008). For example, the mass media took note of the disproportionately high representation of Asian Americans in Advanced Placement courses, college-bound academic tracks, and highly selective and prestigious colleges and universities in special issues of popular magazines, such as *Time* and *Newsweek*. The stereotype was further popularized by political conservatives hoping to quell reform efforts in the post-civil rights era. Conservatives cited Asian American educational "success stories" to dispute the ongoing existence of institutional racism, instead arguing that educational inequality was the direct consequence of mediocre efforts of African American and Latino students.
21. Jonathan W. Lew, June C. Chang, and Winnie W. Wang, "The Overlooked Minority: Asian Pacific American Students at Community Colleges," *Community College Review* 33 (2005): 64–84; Daniel Soodjinda, "A Response to the Model Minority Thesis" (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 2009).

22. Chou and Feagin, *Myth of the Model Minority*.
23. Vivian Louie, *Compelled to Excel* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2004); Robert Teranishi, *Asians in the Ivory Tower* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2010).
24. Barbara Schneider and Yongsook Lee, “A Model for Academic Success: The School and Home Environment of East Asian Students,” *Anthropology and Educational Quarterly* 21 (1990): 358–77; Min Zhou and Carl Bankston, *Growing Up American* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1998).
25. Yen Le Espiritu, *Homebound: Filipino American Lives Across Cultures, Communities, and Countries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Portes and Rumbaut, *Legacies*.
26. Yen Le Espiritu and Diane Wolf, “The Paradox of Assimilation: Children of Filipino Immigrants,” in *Ethnicities*, ed. Ruben Rumbaut and Alejandro Portes (Berkeley: University of California Press and Russell Sage Foundation, 2001). Espiritu and Wolf note that it is also the case that Filipina American women are discouraged from pursuing educational opportunities that would take them far away from home, which they suggest relates to parents’ concern about their moral well-being. This also been shown to be the case among other second-generation groups, including West Indians, South Asians, and Latinos.
27. Teranishi, “Asian Pacific Americans and Critical Race Theory.”
28. Tracy Buenavista, “Movement from the Middle: Filipina/o 1.5-Generation College Access, Retention, and Resistance” (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2007); Diane Wolf, “There’s No Place Like Home: Emotional Transnationalism and the Struggle of Second Generation Filipinos,” in *The Changing Face of Home*, ed. Peggy Levitt and Mary Waters (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2006), 255–94.
29. Espiritu, *Homebound*; Waters, *Black Identities*.
30. In line with previous studies on the children of immigrants, I classified individuals as “second generation” if they had at least one foreign-born parent and were themselves born in the United States or migrated before age eight. While the maximum age for being considered second generation is higher in some studies, I chose age eight as my cutoff so that I would include only respondents whose primary school socialization occurred within the U.S. context. According to the 2010 U.S. census, median household incomes in Eagle Rock and Carson were above \$65,000, well above the \$42,000 national median.
31. Espiritu, *Homebound*.
32. Tiongson, “Reflections on the Trajectory of Filipina/o American Studies.”
33. STEM stands for science, technology, engineering, and math. For studies that discuss Filipino Americans’ academic underperformance relative to that of East Asians, see Chiara Paz, “The Invisible Hand: How Parental Expectations Shape the Pinay Undergraduate Experience” (paper, annual meeting of the Association of Asian American Studies, Dallas, Tex., 2010); Robert Teranishi,

- Miguel Ceja, Anthony Lising Antonio, Walter Recharde Allen, and Patricia M. McDonough, "The College Choice Process for Asian Pacific Americans," *Review of Higher Education* 27 (2004): 527–51; Zhou and Xiong, "Multifaceted American Experiences."
34. Chou and Feagin, *Myth of the Model Minority*; Louie, *Compelled to Excel*.
 35. In this section, I attempt to adhere to the original identity term used by respondents. While it is common for academic researchers to be precise about the terms "Filipino" and "Filipino American," respondents rarely used the latter to describe their identity during the interviews. They most often described themselves as "Filipino."
 36. Jeannie Oakes, *Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1987).
 37. Patricia Hill Collins, "Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought," *Social Problems* 33, no. 6 (1987): 514–32; Stephen Shigematsu, *When Half Is Whole* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2013). Shigematsu's book provides a series of excellent narrative accounts of how multiracial individuals develop a salient awareness of the racial dynamics associated with their multiple ethnic and racial identities.
 38. A chi-square test revealed that the relationship between gender and Asian American identification was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 0.102, p = .749$). This means that Filipino females were not more likely to identify as Asian than were males, despite having reported more strictness in the qualitative interviews.
 39. While students who attended UC schools or private institutions moved out of their parents' home for college, many noted that they did not want to leave Southern California in order to stay close to their family. Several noted not even applying to schools outside the region, not wanting to be "more than a short drive away in case anything were to happen." Others noted applying and being accepted to schools farther away, such as UC Berkeley in Northern California or New York University, and not even considering these other schools because they feared being away from family or because their family would not allow them to go. This trend echoes findings by Diane Wolf cited earlier on second-generation Filipinos in Northern California. However, this challenges findings on other Asian Americans, who tend to opt for the more prestigious college options, no matter the distance from parents, as noted in research by Vivian Louie and Robert Teranishi cited earlier in this study.
 40. Paz, "Invisible Hand."
 41. Sara Lee, "Class Matters: Racial and Ethnic Identities of Working Class and Middle Class Korean Americans," in *Becoming New Yorkers*, ed. Philip Kasinitz, John Mollenkopf, and Mary Waters (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2004); Louie, *Compelled to Excel*.
 42. MEChA stands for the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán, and has been a prominent student activist organization since the 1960s Chicano movement.