Invisible Me:
A Narrative Study on the Racialized Experiences of Asian American Students

BY

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DISSERTATION
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“Without heart, there is no love. Without love, there is no life.”
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ABSTRACT

This study examined the racialized experiences of nine Asian American students at the University of Illinois at Chicago and their perceptions of the campus climate. Using a critical race theory lens, one-on-one interviews were conducted to understand how racial microaggressions and stereotypes were imposed on and internalized by the student participants. Research findings provided a better explanation of the Asian American student experience and how race impacts various elements of student life and influences interaction within an educational institution. Specifically, the nine Asian American students reported encountering the model minority stereotype, the perpetual foreigner stereotype, and cultural assumptions that threatened their sense of belonging on campus and possibly affected their student success. Student suggestions on how to better serve Asian American students were shared for campus leaders, faculty, and staff, and researcher implications were shared for higher education practitioners, developers, and researchers. This study contributes to the existing literature in the disciplines of education and Asian American studies.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I realize that even with the challenge to rethinking these stories pose, many people will find it difficult to embrace my assumption that racism is a permanent component of American life. (Bell, 1992, p. 13)

Asian Americans are currently the fastest growing sector of the U.S. college-going population. Recent data released by the U.S. Census report that the United States is on its way to becoming a ‘majority minority’ with Asians as the second-fastest population, growing 3 percent to 18 million (Chang, M.J., Park, J.J., Lin, M.H., Poon, O.A., & Nakanishi, D.T., 2007; Hune, 2002; Race in America, 2012, p. 3). As the National Commission on the Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education (CARE) reports, the growth in the Asian American population is anticipated to reach 40 million persons by 2050 (n.d.), almost double from 8 percent to 15 percent by 2060 (Samuelson, 2015). On a local level, Asian American numbers grew 16.4 percent from 2000 to 2010 according to the U.S. Census with 144,903 Asian-identified individuals living amongst the 2.69 million Chicago population (By the Numbers, 2011).

Evidently, changing trends in the demography of the United States have profound implications for the educational system. White enrollment in K-12 education decreased from 68 percent to 55 percent between 1989 and 2009, attributed to significant increases in Asian American immigrants and English Language Learners. Asian American enrollment increased from 235,000 to 1.3 million between 1979 and 2009 with an expected 30 percent increase by 2019 (CARE, n.d., pp. 6-7) at both two-year and four-year institutions (Diverse Webinar, 2014).

From these statistics, it is evident that the United States is at a crossroads of tremendous demographic changes to which American higher education must respond (CARE, n.d.). While the historical trends in the demography of the nation are a remarkable story in itself, the
reshaping of the nation is projected to continue at a fast pace for decades to come and will be a fundamentally different story than in the past. Educational institutions and their campus climate will need to be better prepared in meeting the complex needs of Asian American students. Institutional conditions will need to provide effective educational practices in level of academic challenge, student-faculty interaction, active and collaborative learning, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environments (Kuh, 2013).

**Research Topic and Problem**

Unfortunately, not all higher education institutions are prepared in providing a supportive campus environment for their Asian American students. As Hurtado and Guillermo-Wann (2013) argue, Asian American students indicate higher frequencies of discrimination and bias on college campuses than some racial groups. In fact, scholars have discovered that issues related to race are encountered by various racial groups early in their educational experience (Brookover, Schweitzer, Schneider, Beady, Flood, & Wisenbaker, 1978; Haynes, Emmons, & Ben-Avie, 1997; Hoy, 2012; Ruus, Veisson, Leino, Ots, Pallas, Sarv, & Veisson, 2007) and continue on into their college years (Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr, 2000; Baker & Robnett, 2012; Braxton, 2000; Edman & Brazil, 2009; Hurtado, 1992). Specifically, for Asian Americans, these racialized experiences take forms of marginalization, oppression, subordination, discrimination, harassment, and “othering” as early as in high school (Lew, 2010; Qin, Way, & Rana, 2008; Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal, & Torino, 2007; Wing, 2007) and persist on to university settings (Osajima, 1995; Wang, 2007). With the expected increase of Asian Americans on college campuses, educational institutions will need to understand that race plays a critical factor in shaping student educational experiences and academic success (Braxton, 2000; Museus, 2014; Reid & Radhakrishnan, 2003; Steele, 1997). Most importantly, educational institutions will need to
understand that racism is an everyday reality and that the existing racial representations of Asian racial groups in the United States have played an active role in the racialized experiences of Asian Americans students (Lee, 1999).

These racialized experiences take the form of *racial microaggressions*, defined by Sue et al. (2007) as brief indignities that communicate negative racial slights that have harmful psychological impact on the target person or group. Many of these racialized experiences encountered by Asian Americans stem from the Model Minority Myth, the racist assumption that Asian Americans can overcome adversity without assistance and are inheritably a successful race (Yi & Museus, 2015), and have detrimental effects on the college experience of Asian Americans (Kodama, McEwen, Liang, & Lee, 2002; Tang, 2007).

Wing (2007) reports that racialized experiences have portrayed Asian American students in stereotypical images such as a model minority, which places Asian Americans as the only racial minority group that has “made it” in America through effort and education and therefore can serve as a role model for other racial minorities to emulate (p. 456). This stereotype has resulted in Asian American students being excluded from resources and services that are available to other minority groups, such as academic support program facilities and scholarship opportunities, and have led to resentment and fear of Asian American overrepresentation on college campuses (Lee, 1999). Likewise, Sue et al. (2007) assert that racialized experiences have led to a stereotypical image in which Asian Americans are viewed as perpetual foreigners, which assumes that all Asian Americans are foreigners or foreign-born. This assumption usually leads to the troubling question such as “Where are you from?” asked of an Asian American despite their insistence of citizenship in the United States, implying “return to whatever Asian country you came from” (Katrak, 2000, p. 374). This stereotype has resulted in Asian American students
to experience more sociological and psychological pressure due to their dual cultural identities (Wong & Halgin, 2006). Furthermore, Lee (1999) argues that racialized experiences have resulted in the stereotypical assumption of Asian Americans being a homogenous race, which assumes that all Asians look alike and invalidates the interethnic differences of the Asian race. This stereotype has resulted in aggregated student data that ignores the existence of other Asian American groups and masks the needs of some Asian American students (Kibra, 1998; Quilan, 2015).

These forms of racism have become embedded and normalized and have led to Asian American students to encounter behaviors on college campuses that make them feel unequal, unwelcomed, and discriminated. With the projected growth of Asian American enrollment in higher education, research focusing on the college experience of Asian Americans and their experiences with race is therefore necessary.

**Significance of the Study**

Conducting research focusing on the racialized experiences of Asian American students is important because stereotypical images have led to the placement of Asian American students as the “Other,” individuals who are traditionally marginalized or, in other words, oppressed or subordinated (Kumashiro, 2000).

However, in order to understand how Asian Americans are othered, a brief focus on how othering has evolved in today’s multicultural era is significant. As Gordon and Newfield (1996) explain, the evolution of othering can be attributed to the problematic use of *multiculturalism*. They state that multiculturalism has replaced the emphasis on race and racism with an emphasis on cultural diversity, rejecting racial subordination, but sometimes, seemingly supporting it and giving new life through color blindness. It gives the impression that Americans live in a post-
racist era and downplays the ongoing existence of White supremacy. Also, they argue that multiculturalism underwrites alliances among racial minorities grounded in White-norming, yet it also gives Whites a new advantage. It implies that equity exists, ensuring racial minorities a position of independence and strength and granting a celebration of diversity, but in reality, there is a hidden attachment to "e pluribus unum, with unum regaining command when white-majority was disrespected or challenged" (p. 5). In other words, multiple groups are subsumed into a single whole, but when the privileged group’s power is threatened, then control is regained by the privileged. Additionally, they assert that multiculturalism has been adopted by the corporate world where people of color are given autonomy to build coalitions. However, in the business world, the term became a way to manage diversity in a controlled workplace environment where culture and race are dehistoricized and cultural difference is encouraged but suppressed simultaneously to expand political democracy. Furthermore, they argue that multiculturalism links culture with politics, clarifying the sociopolitical relations woven into different cultures, and at the same time, separating culture from politics where multiculturalism sometimes celebrates cultural diversity while preserving a political core from being affected by this diversity. In other words, multiculturalism reduces prejudice but does not change relative positions of various racial groups, avoiding institutional and structural determinants of inequality. Overall, Gordon and Newfield find the idea of multiculturalism problematic because they assert that the ideology of multiculturalism often puts elements of racial equality at conflicting odds and produces contradictions around race and racism. A product of a post-civil rights White racial consensus, multiculturalism has not truly escaped the conflicts within the consensus it was meant to reconstruct and acts more of an obstruction to the progressive work needed to achieve racial equality.
Similarly, Lee (2015) argues that *culture* instead of *race* has become the new language to explain notions of superiority and that it is not a person’s skin color that explains their abilities rather it is their culture. White opinion makers in the 1800s, according to Kim (1999), spoke openly about the intrinsic superiority of certain biological races over others, but in the early 1900s, scholars began to reject biological determinism, made a clear analytical distinction between culture and biological race, and rendered culture a relatively autonomous essence of its own. Kim asserts that it became possible to talk about a group’s culture while disavowing any claims about its intrinsic racial nature: before the civil rights era, the othering of Asian Americans occurred openly, and during the post-civil rights era, it had undergone cosmetic changes and occurs in a coded fashion like colorblindness. As Kim argues, colorblindness has expurgated overtly racial claims from the public transcript, often serves to disguise fundamentally racial claims, and has now been rearticulated in cultural terms: rather than asserting the intrinsic racial superiority of certain groups over others, opinion makers now claim that certain group cultures are more conducive to success than others.

Since the 1960s, the Model Minority Myth has led Asian Americans to be viewed as a culture of success and have attributed this success to Asian values and culture that emphasized learning and strong family structures (Lee, 2015). Recent media in the United States have applied economic successes of Asian countries to Asian Americans, making this racial group the poster child of American success and sometimes even called "honorary whites," and news outlets have applauded the “rise of Asian Americans” as the fastest growing group in the United States and most educated, happiest, and wealthiest (Lee, 2015, p. 373). This concept of Asian Americans as *model minorities*, successful individuals who can overcome challenges through hard work and determination (Kibria, 1996; Lee, 2006), remains by far the most common way
the racial group is viewed by Americans today, is problematic because it hides inequalities and disparities among Asian Americans, and relies on a new and divisive language of racism (Lee, 2015). As Ang (1996) explains, “racially and ethnically marked people are no longer othered today through simple mechanisms of rejection and exclusion, but through an ambivalent and apparently contradictory process of inclusion by virtue of othering” (p. 37). In other words, whereas previous forms of marginalization involved outright rejection or physical separation, Ang argues that present methods of othering occur via a contradictory process: using otherness as a means of incorporating previously excluded individuals into a society which, rather than achieving equality, transforms these individuals from outcasts to *pet people*, symbolic representatives who are no longer marginalized and no longer occupy the position of other (p. 37). Today, the act of incorporating racial minorities is often meant to show how progressive the United States has become; however, Ang (1996) asserts that American society has not dissolved issues of otherness but rather maintained a policy of *tolerance*. Consequently, current dominant racial discourse in the United States positions the privileged as the norm and casts racial minorities into subordinate groups as the Other. These regulative representations of Asian Americans, especially as the model minority, serve as oppressive tools for maintaining the power and status of the dominant group (Lei, 2003) and mask the growth in a new racism which has been likened to carbon monoxide, invisible, but potentially lethal (Sue et al., 2007). It ‘encourages Asian Americans to endure contemporary forms of racism without complaint’ and allows Americans to ignore the inequalities in the United States (Lee, 2015, p. 380). It is through the terrain of national culture that the Asian American is politically formed as the American citizen, and it is through culture that the Asian American becomes, acts, speaks itself as “American” (Lowe, 1996, p. 3). As Lee (2015) puts it simply:
To be Asian American in the twenty-first century is an exercise in coming to terms with a contradiction: benefiting from new positions of power and privilege while still being victims of hate crimes and microaggressions that dismiss Asian American issues and treat Asian Americans as outsiders in their own country (p. 391).

With this understanding, research on how the othering of the Asian American students in higher education and their racialized experiences is significant. Past research has focused mainly on Asian American students in primary and secondary school environments; only recently has there been a development in research on higher education. Despite growing in size and heterogeneity, Asian American students are not adequately researched in higher education, which implies that Asian Americans as a racial group do not need focus (Ching & Agbayni, 2012; Osajima, 1995). Accapadi (2012) reports that most research studies on Asian Americans have specifically focused on East Asian American communities, and Pendakur and Pendakur (2012) report that only 1% of articles published in peer-reviewed journals focus specifically on Asian Americans as a whole (p. 38). This is problematic because, although research on East Asian American communities gives voice to a historically overlooked racial category, this blanket representation perpetuates the notion of who “gets” to be Asian American, silences the experience of other marginalized communities within Asian America, and imposes recommendations for practice that might not be broadly applicable to multiple Asian American communities (Accapadi, 2012, p. 63). The few studies that have focused on Asian American students have been dissertations with limited circulation (Pope, 2000). Even then, most empirical research on Asian Americans has focused only on the Model Minority Myth and the amount has been scarce. In the 50-plus years of the Model Minority Myth’s existence, the majority of writings on the topic have only occurred in the past decade with 27 of 38 theses, 23
of 31 dissertations, and 156 of 248 articles focusing on the model minority stereotype (Hartlep, 2012; Hartlep, 2013). With the projected growth of Asian American enrollment in higher education, research focusing on the college experience on this racial population is necessary.

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the racialized experiences that nine Asian American students encountered or perceived at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). Through one-on-one interviews, I seek to learn whether or not stereotypes are imposed on these UIC Asian American students and to learn the impact on their student success. As described in the previous section, the placement of Asian Americans in education as the Other has perpetuated racial stereotypes on this student racial population; however, because Asian Americans have not been focused on in higher education research, this has resulted in the lack of exploration on the effects of racialized experiences and the impact on their student success.

Through the gathered data of this study, I hope to understand the Asian American student experience and how race may impact various elements of student life and their perceptions of the educational institution. Because dominant racial discourse tends to limit racial problems to the Black/White binary (Accapadi, 2012; Wang, 2007), there has been little information on Asian American student experience and how race may impact various elements of student life, so this topic goes unexplored. This lack of focus could be attributed to the commonly used student identity development model in higher education by Chickering and Reisser (1969), which fails to include the psychosocial development of Asian American students and how any threatening factors, like racialized experiences, may impact other areas of Asian American student identity development (Kodama et al., 2002). As Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, and Renn (2010) explain, Chickering and Reisser’s model, which contributes to the development of student identity involving seven vectors: developing competence; managing emotions, moving through
autonomy toward interdependence; developing mature interpersonal relationships; establishing identity; developing purpose, and developing integrity, did not derive from an Asian American sample and ignores the uniqueness of racial and ethnic identity development of Asian Americans. As Batra (2006) and Kodama et al. (2002) explain, the vectors identity and purpose are core to Asian American identity student development and both inform each other due to strong external and domain influences, which do not appear in Chickering and Reisser’s model. Specifically, Kodama, McEwen, Liang, and Lee (Bonner Network, n.d.) define external as the Western norms (racism, social norms, stereotypes, sexuality explored) and domain as the ethnic and cultural norms (family values and norms, sexuality discouraged). Any impact on these influential factors may impact other areas of Asian American student identity development.

To date, there is very limited research on this topic, specifically on the influence of Western values and racism from U.S. society, in particular, on Asian American students (Kodama et al., 2002). As Museus (2014) explains, racial identity is strongly shaped within the systems of oppression. With racial identity development seen as a process of adaption, racial subjugation and marginalization of people of color can create psychosocial challenges and make it difficult for Asian Americans to develop a positive cultural identity. Thus, there is a need to move to an identity and psychosocial model that is dynamic, is informed by interdisciplinary scholarship, acknowledges multiple heterogeneous Asian Americas, and honors the intersection of racial identity with other social identities: we need an “Asian Americanist” approach that allows for the possibility of multiple points of entry or exit for one’s racial identity journey; informs one’s relationship with one’s other identities; and is nonlinear and nonhierarchical in design (Accapadi, 2012, p. 72). While the main goal of my study is not to design a psychosocial student development model for Asian Americans, my hope is that this study can provide a clear
understanding of racial identity and the impact of racialized experiences on the participating Asian American students. This study makes a contribution to the existing literature on this issue.

**Definition of Terms**

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined in order to understand the key terms used in this proposed research.

**Racialized Experiences**

Racialized experiences are the everyday interactions that communicate denigrating messages of racial minority status that take subtle or overt forms of marginalization, oppression, subordination, discrimination, harassment, and “othering.” Racial microaggressions, the most common form of racialized experiences, can be encountered in public, in private, in all settings from agencies such as friends, authority figures, strangers, and the media (Lew, 2010; Qin, Way, & Rana, 2008; Sue et al., 2007; Wing, 2007).

**Student Success**

Student success includes the various indicators that lead to student attainment such as enrollment in postsecondary education; grades; persistence to the sophomore year; motivation; length of time to degree; proficiency in writing, speaking, critical thinking, problem solving, scientific literacy, and quantitative skills; effective communication; academic and social self-confidence and self-esteem; self-awareness; confidence; self-worth; social competence; sense of purpose; appreciation for human differences; commitment to democratic values; a capacity of work effectively with people from different backgrounds; campus engagement; overall retention; graduation; responsible citizenship; post-college employment; and income (Hurtado, 2007; Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges, & Hayek, 2006; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2010). With the changing racial demographics of college campuses, student success now also includes feeling
comfortable and affirmed; impressions of institutional quality; willingness to attend the institution again; social integration; access to cultural services and programs; parental encouragement; academic support and preparation; financial aid support; and overall satisfaction (Hokoana & Oliveria, 2012; Sima & Inman, 2011).

**Asian Americans**

Asian Americans are those ‘who call the United States their home and trace their ancestry to countries from the Asian continent and subcontinent and islands within the Pacific Rim’ (Kodama et al., 2001, p. 412). Specifically, *Asian American* describes those with origins from East Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia including the Philippines who have been racialized and grouped as *Asian* in policy and legislation (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). Pacific Islander groups (with origins from Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, and other Pacific Islands) are not included in this definition to recognize their distinct histories and marginalization by this conflation (Lee, 2006).

For the purpose of this study, the racial label of *Asian American* will be used. While in most research literature the term *Asian American* is interchangeably used with *Asian* or *Asian American and Pacific Islanders*, I will intentionally use *Asian American* in this study to reflect this population’s racial obstacles in America and to argue that the many racial stereotypes stemming from the Model Minority Myth were of American production. As later discussed, the racial label *Asian American* is problematic and has a political history that has advantaged and disadvantaged this racial group.

**Research Questions**

To understand what racialized experiences Asian American students may encounter or perceive at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), I have constructed research questions that
are derived from past literature focusing on the racial experiences of Asian Americans college students. Specifically, I will answer the central research question: *What racialized experiences (forms of racism), if any, do Asian American students encounter and perceive at UIC?* The three guiding issue subquestions included are:

1. *How, if any, do encounters with or perceptions of racialized experiences affect Asian American student perspectives of the institution?*

2. *How, if any, do encounters with or perceptions of racialized experiences at UIC impact the students’ perception on their own academic success?*

3. *How, if any, are encounters with or perceptions of racialized experiences understood by UIC Asian American students? Are they addressed by the students? If so, how?*

The central question seeks to elicit an understanding of what racialized experiences exist at UIC as encountered and perceived by the Asian American students. As Creswell (2012) states, the central research question should provide some direction for the study but not leave the direction open wide. The three guiding issue subquestions asked seek to refine the central research question to provide greater specificity. Creswell (2012) defines issue subquestions as “questions that narrow the focus of the central question into specific questions (or issues) the researcher seeks to learn from the participants in the study” (p. 134). I ask the first subquestion to understand the perceptions of UIC for the Asian American students if or when they encounter or perceive racialized experiences on campus. I ask the second subquestion to learn from the Asian American students of any impact on the perception of their own academic success due to racialized experiences. I ask the third subquestion to learn how the Asian American students possibly understand from where these racialized experiences stem and whether or not they address them in any way. Collectively, I hope these subquestions will contribute to the central
research question to gain clarity on what racialized experiences may be encountered and perceived by Asian American students at UIC.

**Conceptual Framework**

In order to capture a detailed understanding of the Asian American student experience, I propose this Asian American Racialized Experiences Model (Figure 1.1) as the conceptual framework for this study. With this framework, I provide a model on the elements and factors, informed by previous literature, on the racialization of Asian American students and illustrate the many constructs involved in the Asian American student experience and their encounters with race. As briefly described in the previous sections, Asian American students encounter distinct types of racism; thus, I hope to use this framework to reflect the previous works of literature that inform my research and to guide the research questions that will uncover the unique types of racism encountered and perceived by the research participants.

**Asian American Racialized Experiences Model: A Proposed Framework**

The proposed model for this study hopes to show the constructs that may be involved in the racialized experiences encountered by Asian American students. Specifically, the model hopes to show the various constructs that simultaneously influence, shape, and impact Asian American students. The racial triangulation construct includes the influential events in history, media, and education that may have led to the racialization and stereotypes of Asian Americans (Ono & Pham; 2009; Tamura, 2001; Wang, 2007). The racialization and stereotype construct lists Asian American stereotypes that permeate society such as the model minority, perpetual foreigner, and homogenous and invisible race (Lee, 1999; Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal, & Torino, 2007).
Parallel to the aforementioned constructs is the campus racial climate construct, which defines the respectful attitudes, behaviors, and standards within an educational institution (Hurtado, 2007; Hurtado, Griffín, Arellano, & Cuellar, 2009; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2010). This shapes the campus culture construct, which defines the normalized and shared values, patterns, language, and priorities of an educational institution and can feed into assumed stereotypes (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pederson, & Allen, 1998; Kuh et al., 2010; Maton, Wimms, Grant, Wittig, Rogers, & Vasquez, 2011; Nora & Cabrera, 1996; Summers, Svinicki, Gorin, Sullivan, 2002). Simultaneously, both levels of constructs can lead and contribute to the racialized experiences that can impact Asian American students. Encompassing this area is a construct to illustrate the institution as an active actor that shape various elements of student experience, including student academic growth and success. As Hurtado (1992, 2007), Kuh et al. (2010), and Museus (2014) argue, the institution plays an influential role on the academic experience of Asian American students and can contribute to their sense of belonging and academic success.

Furthermore, the model hopes to illustrate that Asian Americans experience race differently depending on their life experiences. This is illustrated in the construct consisting of personal history, cultural heritage, and particular milestones. These life experiences can shape an Asian American student, whose encounters with racialized experiences within the institution, in an academic or social setting, can possibly impact their student success. Tangent to these is a construct consisting of items identified in the research data (inclusive and culturally sensitive environment; culturally relevant courses and programming; racial visibility in administration and resources; campus space dedicated to Asian Americans) that can contribute to or impact student success.
For this study, I hope to use a Critical Race Theory (CRT) lens to allow an in-depth understanding of the perspectives of Asian American students and their perceived or encountered racialized experiences. CRT is ideal to guide the main research question of the study and its subquestions. Also, CRT provides opportunities for research participants to provide thorough responses to the interview protocol and the variables I wish to examine. As a latter section will describe, CRT is appropriate to provide an insight to the life experiences, personal goals, perceptions of the college climate and culture, experiences with race, and response and understanding of the Asian American student participants. Moreover, CRT in this study can reveal how race interacts within the institution and reveal any intersections of the Asian American identities like gender identity, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, or class.

Figure 1.1. Asian American Racialized Experiences Model
Background

My interest in conducting this study stems from my life, educational, and professional experiences. As a native Filipino who moved to Miami, Florida at age nine, my acculturation to America came easily. While Miami was not specifically considered “White” culture, the Latino cultural normative was relatable to me because of the Spanish influence in Filipino culture, and because linguistically, I spoke and understood enough Spanish to relate to the dominant Cuban culture. Additionally, because of my young mind, I quickly acquired English as a second language and became satiated with American customs and practices.

I was not only able to effortlessly adjust socially, but also, I became easily accustomed to a new education system. My early childhood years of Catholic school in the Philippines had prepared me for the demands of the English language curriculum and the discipline needed to succeed in an American school system. As a student, I excelled with high marks in most subjects, especially in the arts, which led to an invitation to attend a magnet school art program. However, rather than pursue a path in the creative arts, I turned down the art school invitation and opted to attend the public school system of Dade County. It was during my high school years that I became aware of my differences from my peers, sexually and racially, with the latter topic placing me in a cultural dichotomy.

I would argue that, while I acculturated into the American culture and also retained my Filipino identity, my bicultural identity as Filipino-American placed me in a paradoxical social status. I was able to interact within social context of American culture, but my Filipino identity remained unrecognized in society, mainly in education. As I reflect back on my educational experience, I never realized how absent was my Filipino identity. None of my teachers were of Asian descent, and the recognition of any type of Asian focus in the curriculum was nonexistent.
The only Asian teacher introduced to me was in junior high school where a Korean teacher substituted and whom some students would disrespect and present challenges to her authority. I now wonder if the mistreatment she had received was due to her status as a substitute teacher, or due to her slight Korean accent, or due to her gender and/or racial identities.

Similarly, I encountered forms of harassment due to my smaller physical build and non-Caucasian features. Insults directed at me usually came with the aggregation of my Filipino identity into the most common Asian identity of Chinese and even transitioned into the Spanish language as a derogatory term: *Chino conchino* (Dirty Chinese). Additionally, my talents in the arts conflicted with the American emphasis on competition and athleticism for males, resulting in the feminization of my masculinity and creation of assumptions about my sexuality. In the classroom, my "othering" also took subtle form. The only mention of Asians appeared in my U. S. History course when World War II came into discussion, with the Japanese in the role of the antagonists. Other than that, no recognition or celebration of Asian cultures had entered the hallways of my elementary school, junior high school, and senior high school.

My college years in Florida as an undergraduate and a graduate student also had a disconnection from Asian cultures. While I attended a very diverse university for both degrees, I focused more on my sexual identity rather than my racial identity. I think this subconscious choice resulted from the previous absence of Asian topics in my early education, where I was exposed to the Filipino culture at home but nowhere else.

The focus on my racial identity did not begin until I moved to Chicago to begin my professional career. I went from a Cuban-centric city to an ethnically diverse city with a large Asian American population that suddenly made me aware of my “Asianness.” I became
cognizant of being Asian American in a new city with large Asian and Asian American populations.

While working at UIC, I noticed the lack of services for the international Asian students and the domestic Asian American students. Despite being the largest student racial group on campus, Asian and Asian American students, unlike the other student racial groups, lacked an academic support unit. An Asian American cultural center eventually opened in 2005 and an official minor in Asian American studies started in 2010, all resulting from student led activism. Despite these minimal advancements, there is still presently no academic support unit specifically for Asian and Asian American students. This absence creates an assumption that Asian Americans do not need academic support compared to their racial peers and leads to racial stereotypes that all Asian Americans are academically successful (Osajima, 1995).

A similar exclusion also exists for Asian and Asian American faculty on campus. Because UIC does not consider Asians or Asian Americans as a historically under-represented group, Asian and Asian American faculty do not qualify for membership in a minority scholar program open to other faculties of color. Furthermore, this disparity is evident in the low number of Asian or Asian American administrators, especially in roles that provide direct service to students. This then results in the lack of Asian or Asian Americans in influential roles that can benefit the academic experience and identity development of Asian and Asian American students.

My perspectives bring into focus the racialized experiences affecting Asian American students. My personal experience, in conjunction with the previous research presented in the following literature review, shows the need for further research on Asian American college experiences.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mesmerized by the racial equality syndrome, they are too easily reassured by simple admonitions to "stay on course," which come far too easily from those . . . who are not on the deprived end of the economic chasm between blacks and whites. (Bell, 1992, p. 13)

Asian Americans have been historically placed in a triangulated position between Whites and Blacks, which has had implications for Asian American racial identities (Junn & Masuoka, 2008). This results often in viewing racial issues as a Black/White binary which leads to the overshadowing of Asian American racial equality needs. Thus, an understanding on how racial meanings have been constructed about Asian Americans or how they have been racialized, requires a departure from this binary (Ng, Lee, & Pak, 2007). An appropriate method to understand the racialization of Asian Americans is to use a Critical Race Theory (CRT) approach because CRT examines the ways racism is so embedded in society that it appears normal and looks at how social and political forms of power include and exclude people of color (Glesne, 2011). As I wish to illustrate in the following section, there is a need to disrupt the normative Black/White binary to racism and to bring attention to the many variables that have shaped and continue to affect Asian Americans.

I begin with a discussion on how the label Asian American is problematic on this racial group. This section describes the evolution of racial labels assigned to Asian Americans, the political advantages and disadvantages of the label, and the implications of the label on an ethnically diverse group. This section informs all the research questions and brings focus onto the desired study population.

Then, I describe in this literature review the social challenges of Asian Americans in history, in the media, and in education. It provides historical landmark policies and events that
segregated and discriminated on Asian Americans, and it shows the influential effects of these mandates on access to education and on media representations. This section therefore provides an insight on the research question on how Asian American students understand or deal with racialized experiences.

Next, in this literature review, I describe in detail the racialization and stereotypes of Asian Americans that resulted from the aforementioned social challenges. Specifically, the third section describes the origin of the Model Minority Myth and focuses on the three most prominent racial stereotypes which stem from the Myth: the model minority, the perpetual foreigner, and the homogenous yet invisible race. This section therefore provides background on the research questions on racialized experiences and how Asian Americans students understand and deal with them.

Additionally, I show in this literature review the importance of a welcoming campus environment. This section emphasizes on the impact of the campus climate and campus culture on the academic experiences of Asian Americans. Specifically, it defines the difference between campus climate and campus culture and why both are important to student success. This section therefore provides answers on the research question on how racialized experiences affect the opinions of the campus climate for Asian Americans.

Last, I describe in this literature review the campus experiences of Asian Americans in higher education. This last section shows the historical challenges Asian American students have experienced in university settings. Specifically, it describes the political challenges Asian Americans have encountered in obtaining access to higher education and the types of discrimination encountered. This section therefore provides background on the research
questions on how racialized experiences impact the student success of Asian Americans and how racialized experiences affect their opinions of the campus climate.

Collectively, I provide a review of literature that describes how Asian American students have been affected and continually to be affected. This chapter provides almost a holistic description on the historical and social aspects that have led to the racialization of Asian Americans while simultaneously affecting this racial group’s student success. Specifically, I show how perceptions of prejudice and encounters with racialized experiences can lower the quality of college experience, affect the academic performance, and lessen commitments to both the institution and graduation (Nora & Cabrera, 1996). Most importantly, I hope for this chapter to identify gaps in current research and allow this study to move forward to better understand the Asian American college student experience.

**Asian American As a Racial Category**

Asian Americans have been in the United States for centuries since Chinese immigrants settled in the United States in the late nineteenth century (Tamura, 2001). These early settlers found themselves lumped *Asiatics or Orientals* by the dominant U.S. society and became a separate racial category in the U.S. census in 1860 (Junn & Masouka, 2008). It was not until the 1960s did young U.S.-born Asian American civil rights activists on college campuses began to reject the then common term *Oriental* and coined *Asian American*, a term that has since gained currency and has become an institutionalized dimension of the contemporary U.S. racial system and part of the U.S. census (Kibria, 1998). *Asian American* became adopted by college activists of different Asian ethnicities as a panethnic identity to acknowledge their similar treatment as minority group members and as a strategy to form political coalitions for equity and empowerment. *Asian American* provided political advantages for the Asian American
community to band together, support a common vision, and enhance their status as a significant minority population, and it became a means for equity, empowerment, mobilization, and a way to end racial discrimination (Batra, 2006; Hune, 2002; Kibria, 1998).

In the 1970s, the U.S. Census Bureau expanded the *Asian American* category to include Pacific Islanders and created the *Asian or Pacific Islander* (API) category. While some may consider this expansion to be advancement, various ethnic-specific groups who have sought inclusion or exclusion, disagreed with it because API became a term to represent numerous groupings as if they are a single category (Hune, 2002).

Overall, the *Asian American* category is problematic for many Asian Americans because it limits on how people can identify. Prior to the late 1960s the Asian American population was small in number with mostly of Chinese and Japanese immigrants (Kibria, 1998). The expansion post-1960s, according to Kibria, grew the ethnic diversity of Asian Americans and shifted the composition of the Asian American population to include national origins from India, Korea, and the Philippines among others. As Kibria explains, these Asian immigrants of various origins presented a challenge to the established notion of who is Asian in the U.S. and presented the need for an institutional expansion to the boundaries of ‘Asian.’

Additionally, the *Asian American* category fails to reflect the meaning of race in the U.S. today. Transnationalistic Asian groups may have a greater tendency to dissociate from the U.S. systems of racial categorization and instead identify with ‘homeland’ racial conceptions to make sense of themselves (Kibria, 1998). Because racial formation and definition of racial categories in the U.S. are uniquely American constructs, new Asian immigrants may favor distinctive national origin groups over a pan-ethnic racial identity and not adhere to the categories imposed upon them (Junn & Masouka, 2008). As Kibria (1998) states, racial categories are problematic
because “the distinguishing feature of racial categories is that they involve ‘the signification of human biological characteristics in such a way as to define and construct differentiated social collectivities’” (p. 941). Thus, Kibria argues, today’s Asian American category is outdated and limited to only a particular phenotype reflecting the Chinese and Japanese origins of the Asian American population in the first half of the century. Furthermore, the idea of a shared pan-Asian racial category may seem especially problematic in situations where class or occupational interests overlap with those of ethnic origin because it limits the expression of the diverse Asian American cultures, masks specific needs, and creates a competition for ethnic-specific interests (Kibria, 1998).

Overall, the racial categorization can be troublesome because it influences individual life experiences. It reflects relations of power, in particular the ability of the dominant group to construct and impose definitions upon others, and has a complex interaction between policies of the state, institutions, political economy, and the stereotypes that result for people categorized by race to either adopt or turn away from (Junn & Masouka; 2008; Kibria, 1998). In the case of Asian Americans, as long as they are classified as “Asian” regardless of their length of residence in the U.S., the racial category will continue to be problematic for this group and be treated as a racial “other” (Kibria, 1998).

**The Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans**

For Asian Americans, racism has been a permanent structure since the beginning of Asian American history. Since their arrival in the United States, Asian Americans have been historically situated in a triangulated position in relation to the Black/White binary and have provided a critical link in the racial triangulation of minority Americans by serving as a buffer group between other groups (Junn & Masouka, 2008). This racial positioning, as Kibria (1998)
and Kim (1999) explain, pits Asian Americans against other minorities thus weakening minority solidarity and power and has placed Asian Americans in disadvantage in U.S. racial formations. Because race is a system of power that draws on physical difference to construct and give meaning to racial groups and the hierarchy in which they are embedded, this field of racial positioning valorizes Asian Americans as a model minority and suggests Asians are different from other racial minorities (Kibria, 1998; Kim, 1999). This polarization cast the racial identities of Asian Americans either symbolically “whitened” or “blackened” or in a mediating position between Blacks and Whites, which obscures the process of “Asianization,” the ways in which “Asian groups become Asian as defined against, and in relation to, each other” (Visweswaran, 1997, p. 6). It evokes the culturally-rooted and ultimately essentialist dimension of the chronic disadvantage of other racial minorities, and it suggests that Asian American cultural values have allowed them to overcome disadvantage in contrast to other minorities and that Asian Americans are heirs to the European immigrant story of successful triumph over adversity and assimilation into mainstream U.S. society (Kibria, 1998).

As Kim (1999) describes, racial triangulation occurs by means of two types of simultaneous, linked processes: (1) processes of “relative valorization,” whereby Whites valorize Asian Americans relative to other subordinate groups on cultural or racial grounds in order to dominate both groups and (2) processes of “civic ostracism,” whereby Whites construct Asian Americans as immutably foreign and inassimilable with Whites on cultural and/or racial grounds in order to ostracize them from body politic and civic membership (p. 107). These linked processes is what, I argue, has placed Asian Americans as honorary Whites, as a valorized model minority, yet still viewed as perpetual foreign in the United States.
Racial positioning of Asian Americans in a valorous level, as Kim further explains, deflects demands for racial reform for other minority groups while the civic ostracism of Asian Americans ensures that this racial group will not actually “outwhite” Whites. This allows the chief architects of positionality, White opinion makers, to continue to police the boundary between Whites and Asian Americans by imputing permanent foreignness to the latter. Since positionality consists of a plane defined by at least two axes – superior/inferior and insider/foreigner – it emphasizes both that groups become racialized in comparison to one another and that they are differently racialized. In the case of Asian Americans, their valorization as the model minority may prosper in American society because it has been culturally programmed to do so, but, in the eyes of most Whites, they will never be truly American (Kim, 1999).

As Kibria (1998) asserts, race definition in the U. S. has occurred in relation to whiteness and has been defined as the center or norm – the standard against which the racial identities of others are defined and measured. Because racial membership is widely believed to be a given, biological matter, Kibra argues that the presumed traits of races, and the institutional conditions and inequalities with which they are intertwined, can also be seen as ‘natural.’ As part of a system of power, racial categories and their meanings reflect the ability of dominant groups to impose their designations upon others. Thus, as Kibra explains, White people in the U.S. have control over the development of racial images and stereotypes, which play an important part in this process of hierarchical racial positioning, and have the privilege to affirm and embedded them in social institutions, such as education. This has allowed White opinion makers to take control without appearing racist -- or to reassert their racial privileges while abiding to colorblindness. It allows them to displace non-Whites, thus shifting attention away from the
exercise of White racial power (Kim, 1999). As I describe in the following sections, the racial triangulation of Asian Americans has led to their racialization in history, media, and education.

**In History**

As stated earlier, Asian Americans have been present in the U.S. for centuries. Filipinos settled in New Orleans in the late eighteenth century, Chinese and Asian Indians migrated to California in the mid-nineteenth century, Japanese in the late nineteenth century, and Koreans and other Asian ethnic groups since the early twentieth century. They were part of the labor force that helped build the transcontinental railroads, contributed to the fishing industry, and worked in sugarcane fields (Tamura, 2001). Despite the contribution of Asian Americans to the economic labor, this racial group was prevented from progressing in American society and encountered a number of social and legal barriers that prevented them from citizenship, ownership of land and businesses, interracial marriage, and equal access to education.

This xenophobia towards Asian Americans in the United States originated from the indecision of the English settlers on how to handle the Chinese immigrants who had arrived (Tamura, 2001). Entering the U.S. at mid-century during escalating national strife over slavery and Black-White relations, Chinese immigrants were considered a racial wild card and did not fit into the prevailing bipolar racial framework (Kim, 1999). Not knowing what to do with a new racial group that was neither the indigenous Native Americans nor enslaved Africans, the English settlers chose to deal with the Chinese immigrants through exclusion by law and denial of U.S. citizenship. Whites denigrated Chinese immigrants by associating them with Blacks by applying laws that curtailed Black civil rights like becoming citizens, voting, holding public offices, and attending public schools with Whites (Kim, 1999). This set precedence paved the way for treatment of subsequent Asian immigrant groups, all of whom were collectively labeled
as “Orientals” (Wang, 2007) and resulted in a series of exclusion acts between 1882 and 1934 barring various Asian ethnic immigrants from citizenship (Visweswaran, 1997).

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and 1892, enacted by the U.S. Congress, closed the door to further Chinese immigration. In 1893, the Supreme Court ruling in *Fong Yue Ting v. the U.S.* resulted in Chinese immigrants being excluded from the Bills of Rights with possibilities of deportation without due process (Tamura, 2001). In 1917, the growing anti-Asian sentiment led to the creation of Asiatic barred zone which prohibited all Asian immigration to the United States, and the passing of the Immigration Act of 1924 established a system of national quotas that favored the entry of European immigrants and discriminated against Asian immigrants (Baldoz, 2004).

For Filipino immigrants, these exclusionary laws placed this ethnic group in a unique status where, despite being American colonial subjects, they encountered the same racial boundaries encountered by other Asian immigrants. As Baldoz (2004) explains, Filipinos, who were exempted from the Asiatic barred zone, were denied U.S. citizenship, were deemed as threats to the American social order, were forbidden to marry Whites, were prohibited from owning land or commercial property, and were placed to work in lower roles on farms and plantations. When the Philippines was granted independence through the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act in 1934, Filipinos lost their exemption from the Asiatic barred zone and a quota of 50 persons per year was placed on them. However, as Baldoz (2004) describes, this limitation was not enough to soothe the fears of White laborers who noticed the growing social, political, and labor rebellions of Filipinos. In 1936, in response to these concerns, the U.S. Congress passed the Filipino Repatriation Act, which offered Filipinos in the United States a free one-way ticket back to the Philippines with the agreement to never return to America. This
exclusion of Filipinos created a “racial state,” which Baldoz (2004, p. 973) asserts, having favored the political interests of Euro-American elites and valorized a hierarchy for all Whites to claim full political and economic rights, and at the same time, excluding Asian immigrants from citizenship, social resources, and legal protections.

These exclusionary laws also affected immigrants from South Asia. According to Prashad (2000), the first South Asians came to the United States in the late 1700 as workers on ships that traded between New England and India. The majority of South Asian immigrants arrived in the northwest and west coasts to work in the timber industry and on farms from the late 1800s to 1920, but the enactment of the 1913 Alien Land Law prevented them from owning land and become farmers. Finding themselves restricted by laws originally meant for Chinese and Japanese immigrants, a number of court cases involving South Asians from 1906 to 1923, challenged citizenship laws where some South Asians won and were regarded White persons and granted citizenship while some lost their case were regarded non-White and were excluded from naturalization (Visweswaran, 1997). The verdict of the 1923 United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind ended all opportunities for South Asians to become U.S. citizens, limiting the definition of a “white person” only to immigrants from northwestern Europe (Prashad, 2000, p. 72) and causing seventy South Asians who had been granted citizenship before the Thind case to have their citizenship rescinded (Visweswaran, 1997). A year later, the Immigration Act of 1924 stopped further immigration. It was in 1946 when the United States allowed small quotas of South Asians to enter, but only a few came. By then, workers from Mexico and the Caribbean worked the farming industry, so there was no reason for the United States to allow Asians into the country (Prashad, 2000).

Only after World War II did immigration restrictions loosen and attitudes towards all Asian Americans changed. Because of China’s ally relationship with the U.S. and the contributions of Japanese American soldiers during the second war, Congress in 1943 repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act and passed the McCarran-Walter Act in 1952. The latter eliminated laws preventing Asians from becoming American citizens and allotted each Asian nation a minimum quota of 100 visas per year to individuals with families already in the United States (Tamura, 2001; The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, n.d.). Thirteen years later, Congress passed the Immigration Act of 1965, which dismantled the quota system that had been based on national origins since the 1920s and expanded the visa quota to 170,000 per year with a preference, similar to the McCarran-Walter Act, to Asian immigrants with relatives already in the United States, but this time, with a special preference for immigrants with strong backgrounds in science, technology, engineering, medicine, business, and entrepreneurship (Tamura, 2001; Visweswaran, 1997). Opening the doors to immigration with no restrictions for Asian immigrants, Congress, after passing the Immigration Act of 1965, did not expect the
unprecedented amount of Asians, South Asians, and Southeast Asians willing to migrate, changing forever the ethnic landscape of the United States (Tamura, 2001).

Post-1965 Asian American immigration, according to Lee (2015), differed from earlier arrivals. While the 1965 Immigration Act liberalized the nation’s immigration policy and ushered in Asian immigrants with no connection to pre-World War II communities, immigrants who arrived later embedded themselves within civil rights movements; women’s liberation; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights; and the end to the Vietnam War. As Lee further explains, there was an increase in Asian immigration in the 1980s which continued into the twenty-first century. By 2011, the total Asian American population was 18.2 million, which included 59% foreign-born Asians and 41% U.S. born (Lee, 2015, p. 286). In addition to a surge in the increase of immigrants, the change in policy also resulted in the racial restructuring of U.S. society. Lee asserts that every sector, from politics and education, to health care and intermarriage, had transformed everyday life throughout the country due to Asians’ growing numbers, economic investments, and contributions. For example, engineers and medical professionals from India, the Philippines, China, and Taiwan had made up one third of these professions in the U.S. labor market since the 1980s. As Lee explains, these affluent and professional immigrants included English-speaking scientists, doctors, nurses, engineers, real estate moguls, capitalist entrepreneurs, and social elites who formed an enclave of economically successful Asian Americans. However, at the same time, less fortunate Asian immigrants also contributed to the shaping of post-1965 America. Asians fleeing their home countries due to war, political repression, or economic hardship entered the country legally or illegally with limited education, basic English language skills, and lower socioeconomic status. As Lee
describes, these immigrants worked as low-skilled workers, waiters, domestic workers, garment workers, cooks, and laundrymen.

**In the Media**

Asian Americans have also encountered obstacles in U.S. mainstream media representations. Although not commonly associated with the Asian American college experience, this topic warrants focus, specifically how historical contexts have portrayed Asian Americans in the media. Therefore, I explain in this section how history helped shape the media representations of Asian Americans and how these stereotypical images have contributed to the obstacles of Asian American students.

Early Asian American images reflect specific American events related to class shifts and cultural crises in history. Drawing upon preexisting images of the Chinese, White opinion makers had woven a largely negative image of China as alien, despotic, and backward for decades (Kim, 1999). As Lee (1999) explains, Chinese settlers, in the mid-nineteenth century, were viewed as “pollutants” to the westward expansion and as an interruption to slavery. When the American working class was formed in the 1870s and 1880s, Chinese immigrant workers were seen in racialized subordinated roles called “coolies” and became a threat to Irish immigrant workers, resulting in the anti-Chinese movement. As middle-class domesticity, gender roles, and Victorian sexual behavior became defined in the later 1880s, Chinese domestic servants were viewed as “deviant,” a figure of forbidden desire that threatened family households. By the turn of the century, more U.S. acquisition of territories and colonies led to more Asiatic immigration, causing new Asian immigrants to be viewed as “the yellow peril.” The beginning of the Cold War in the 1960s and the international expectation for structural changes in American political economy led to the representation of Asian Americans as a “model
minority,” an assimilated racial minority group in American society. In the 1970s, upward mobility of Asian Americans became a threat to all racial groups and led to a representation of the Asian American as the “gook,” an invisible enemy in subversion to American culture (Lee, 1999).

These historical dominant representations of Asian Americans in the media have affected Asian American professions and education. Ono and Pham (2009) describe how “yellowface,” the practice of adorning white actors in Orientalist make-up and costuming, had a detrimental effect on labor and the lack of inclusion of Asian American actors. However, when given acting roles, Asian females were cast in sexually exotic or in “deviant” roles while Asian males were characterized in asexualized roles or as a “model minority,” with the latter image placing Asian American students as the modern “yellow peril” or the academically threatening group in higher education.

As mentioned above, a special consideration is needed in order to understand the sociopolitical context of the United States and the existing media representations of Asian Americans. There has been no real exploration on the direct relationship between racialized media images and their impact on Asian American students. The entertainment industry has played an active role in the production and dissemination of stereotypical images of Asian Americans, therefore, understanding how stereotypical images influence human thoughts and actions is of considerable import because, as Bandura (2001) argues, behavior is shaped and controlled by environmental influences or by internal dispositions. With this understanding, one can see how mainstream media has a strong influence on the treatment of Asian Americans. These forms of racism have become embedded and normalized in popular media and have rendered Asian Americans in forms of “otherness” in society, specifically in education.
In Education

Like all racial minority groups, Asian Americans experienced challenges in obtaining education before the 1960s. Children of Asian immigrants were excluded from public education in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, leading to legal battles. For example, historical cases like *Tape v. Hurley*, *Aoki v. Deane*, and *Gong Lum v. Rice* resulted in Asian Americans gaining access to public education, but only in segregated forms (Wang, 2007). Similarly, barriers existed in higher education. Only Asian students from abroad with strong academic skills were recruited and given preference for admission at Ivy League universities. Other universities took notice and replicated this recruitment process, causing an influx of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Filipino students on college campuses.

Once these foreign students finished college, they were sent back to their native countries to assist with American businesses and missionary work. For those who stayed in the United States and raised a family, opportunities for social mobility were limited due to racial discrimination. First-generation Asian Americans ended up living in urban ghettos and working in professions of labor and servitude. However, by the end of the 1930s, the children of first-generation Asian Americans emerged from their neighborhood ghettos with high academic credentials and with career aspirations in law, engineering, medicine, and science (Wang, 2007). Social scientists became fascinated with these American-educated second-generation Asian Americans and began to establish a link between Asian culture and the ability to overcome adversity and achieve success, resulting in the creation of the Model Minority Myth.

**Racialized Stereotypes of Asian Americans**

The racial triangulation of Asian Americans in history, in the media, and in education has contributed to the construction of specific racialized stereotypes that have rendered Asian
Americans as different, subject to unequal treatment, or experience racial microaggressions: the everyday interactions that communicate denigrating messages because of their racial minority status (Lee, 2006; Sue et al., 2007).

In the following section, I describe the racialized stereotypes that permeate our society and clarify how the Asian American student experience differs from other racial groups. Despite the rich history of Asian Americans, they are seen in the three most common racialized stereotypes: the model minority, the perpetual foreigner, and the homogenous yet invisible race.

The Model Minority

The model minority stereotype assigns a certain status to Asian Americans as a model for success through effort and education for other racial minorities to emulate in American society (Wing, 2007). In educational settings, the model minority stereotype places pressure on Asian American students to conform to a stereotype that they did not endorse, particularly if they were not good at a particular subject or did not enjoy it (Sue et al., 2007). Consequently, Asian Americans may question their place in the educational environment and may internalize self-defiant behavior if they do not meet the model minority standards, causing them to internalize an inferior status mindset (Tang, 2007). As Liem (1997) explains, guilt and shame have a pervasive influence in Asian American culture because these emotions signify identification with or obligation with the racial group. Therefore, if an Asian American student fails to meet the model minority standards, they have failed to meet expectations prescribed on them socially and culturally. Consequently, Asian American students may consider themselves inferior due to their guilt and shame, which are two of the most “toxic” emotions that can interfere with the academic success of students (Kodama, McEwen, Lian, & Lee, 2001).
The model minority stereotype also leads to favoritism. As Qin, Way, and Rana (2008) report in their research, teachers held Asian American students in higher standards and preferred to teach them over other students. This resulted in unjust treatment of the Black, Latino, and White students whose resentment of their Asian American peers turned into harassment. Asian American students were bullied for getting good grades, being too smart, or studying too much. They were ostracized socially and felt isolated and shunned by their peers.

However, despite the harmful effects of the model minority stereotype, a couple of researchers report positive results. Qin et al. (2008) describe how an Asian American student felt validated when other students would come for academic help. Wong and Halgin (2006) reveal how some Asian American students showed pride in being members of a model group because their group membership reflected a collective similarity in values, beliefs, and goals and a cultural connectedness in tradition, customs, and values. Schmidt (2015) recently highlighted the soon-to-be-released book *The Asian American Achievement Paradox* in which the authors argue the benefits of model minority stereotype when viewed through a positive lens. In the book, the authors argue that teachers making assumptions about Asian American students can enhance the performance of Asian American students. They argue that once the students were anointed as a model minority, the students performed better academically, including mediocre Asian American students.

While the model minority stereotype could uphold positive academic achievement and work ethic performances of Asian American students, the racial reality is that it actually leads to exclusion in social academic environments, dismisses experiences of discrimination, and suggests successful assimilation in society. Consequently, the model minority stereotype minimizes socioeconomic or educational disadvantages of Asian Americans, deprives them of
proper academic opportunities and support, damages student self-esteem, and limits opportunities for social integration and economic advancement (Seligson, 2015; Shankar, 2015; Sue et al., 2007). As Hartlep (2014) explains, the model minority stereotype is troublesome because it reduces Asian American students to a monolithic group narrowing student success. Rather than recognizing the racial diversity of Asian Americans, Hartlep states that the model minority stereotype perpetuates sociopolitical forms of anti-Asian racism and maintains the status quo of power relations.

The model minority stereotype has permeated American society for over fifty years and stemmed from the Model Minority Myth. First coined in the 1960s, the Model Minority Myth describes a model minority as “one who works hard . . . willing to endure hardship, discrimination, and even insult without resistance, subservient to and respective of authorities, and totally apolitical” (Wang, 2007, p. 86). Early articles written about the Model Minority Myth appeared only in anecdotal and journalistic forms that highlighted the “success” of Asian Americans overcoming adversities in U.S. society as a "model minority." The term entered mainstream media in the January 1966 issue of the New York Times Magazine in the article "Success Story: Japanese American Style" by sociologist William Peterson, who wrote how Japanese culture with its family values and strong work ethic enabled the Japanese Americans to overcome prejudice. In December of 1966, a similar article describing the “success” of Chinese Americans appeared in U.S. News and World Report (Chin, 2001).

By the 1970s, the model minority thesis had rooted itself so firmly into mainstream perceptions of Asian Americans that it had become a racial stereotype. In the 1980s, a number of articles published in Newsweek, The New Republic, Fortune, Time, and Parade prominently publicized the academic successes of Asian American youth, reflecting the rhetorical power of
this widely accepted stereotype. It was not until 1990s, specifically after the publication of *The Bell Curve*, did the model minority stereotype become so widely accepted that researchers, in search of an underlying scientific explanation, began treating Asian American success as a factual empirical phenomenon (Chin, 2001). This led to a trend where many universities recruited and admitted only Asian students from abroad with strong academic skills (Wang, 2007).

While early publications masked the detrimental effects of the model minority stereotype, later research began to critique the model minority thesis and clarify it more to be as a myth. Despite the assumption that Asian Americans are all “successful,” later studies showed the opposite of the model minority stereotype---that many Asian American students experience academic difficulty and lack academic support from their family. Instead of an ascription of high intelligence, academic success for Asian Americans goes beyond a racial level. Interrelated structural, social, and cultural factors such as socio-economic status, language skills, immigration status, historical and political circumstances, social and economic mobility, minority status could influence the academic achievement of Asian American students (Wing, 2007). Also, the assumption that Asian Americans have constant academic support from families was also a myth. In fact, many Asian American students who come from lower class families sought outside resources for academic support and had to construct a network of external agents who could provide access to information and resources in order to achieve academically (Lew, 2011).

As described in this section, subscribing to the model minority stereotype only affirms the unique racialized experiences of Asian American students. It places them in a victorious status yet pits them against other racial groups in education. The stereotype has become a
hegemonic device that desensitizes the general public about the troubling history of race relations in the United States and only serves to maintain White privilege (Ng, Lee, & Pak, 2007). As one of the most common racialized image in American society for Asian Americans, it is evident that the model minority stereotype has made a significant impact on the experiences of the Asian American students.

**The Perpetual Foreigner**

The perpetual foreigner stereotype assumes that all Asian Americans, despite citizenship in the United States, are foreigners or foreign-born. This racial stereotype assumes that Asian Americans are aliens in their own land, did not belong in America, or are less likely associated with the term “American,” and, on some level, equate “White” with “American” (Sue et al., 2007). In educational settings, the perpetual foreigner stereotype causes Asian Americans to experience more sociological and psychological pressure. Because Asian Americans have dual cultural identities as Asian and American, they struggle with identity issues involving these dual factors (Wong & Halgin, 2006). Specifically, Asian American students feel pressure to conform to Western culture and negate their cultural upbringing, like the value of silence to show attentiveness in the classroom and avoid being penalized for lack of participation (Tang, 2007; Wong & Halgin, 2006). This pressure places Asian Americans in conflict with Western individualistic culture, causing them to possibly struggle between personal interests and parental expectations and possibly experience “racial shame” (Kodama et al., 2001; Liem, 1997; Wong & Halgin, 2006).

The perpetual foreigner stereotype resulted from Asian Americans being constructed as immutably foreign as the only group in American history to be legally rendered “aliens ineligible to citizenship” (Kim, 1999). This results in the marking of Asian Americans as an immigrant, an
outsider, or the “Other.” For example, Asian Americans tend to be marked as “foreign” because of their language skills: for speaking their native language, for speaking with a foreign accent, or for being bilingual (Qin et al., 2008). As Leonardo (2013) explains, Asian Americans are socially defined by their relationship to a language outside of English, even if English is their main spoken language. This assumed characteristic marks them as foreign or exotic, either of which becomes significant in their educational experience. This leads to a perceived immigrant status where Asian Americans experience racial microaggressions in forms of questions like “Where are you from?” or “Where were you born?” and given compliments like “You speak good English” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 75). Whether a sign of interest or not, this assumption implies that Asian Americans could not be “real” Americans. Thus, this stereotype has the effect of a glass ceiling and prevents Asian Americans from full social integration and acceptance (Junn & Masouka, 2008).

Also, Asian Americans tend to be marked as “foreign” because of their physical attributes. As Takaki (1993) argues, Asian Americans have a “racial uniform” that they cannot avoid—the shape of their eyes, their hair color, and their skin color—or physical attributes that mark them as the foreign “Other” (p. 12). As Sue et al. (2007) explain, Asian American women are perceived as exotic and become objectified as a fetish for subservience, passive companionship, or sexual pleasure, while Asian American men are perceived as puny or weak because the Western definition of masculinity constitutes them outside of the "appropriate" and "normal" physique of a “man” and produces them as a racialized, gendered foreign “Other” within the regulative ideal of White hegemonic masculinity. Because physical attributes of Asian Americans differ from Western physical attributes, the exotification of Asian American women could foster animosity with other women and the emasculation of Asian American men
could lead to bullying in educational settings (Lei, 2003). At some colleges, the emasculation of Asian American men have led to hazing in Asian American fraternities, where some members participate in activities that result in alcohol poisoning or physical injury to break away emasculating stereotypes (Mangan, 2015).

**The Homogenous and Invisible Race**

The homogenous race stereotype assumes that all Asians look alike and invalidates the interethnic differences of the Asian race and suggests cultural differences between groups do not exist or do not matter. This homogenous race stereotype stemmed from the historical clustering of Asian immigrants of different ethnic origins into one “Mongolian,” “Asiatic,” or “Oriental” racial category (Kim, 1999). Because Asian Americans are classified as a group usually based on their racial phenotype, it is race rather than individual characteristics that structure worldviews. Thus, most Asian Americans share a set of physical characteristics that allows racial group status to be assigned quickly and at face value. Whether of East Asian, South Asian, or Southeast Asian origin, Asian Americans are readily identifiable and immediate racialized (Junn & Masouka, 2008).

While homogeny can signify a community with common ancestry, history, cultural symbols, and group solidarity (Kibria, 1998), in educational settings, the homogenous stereotype leads to aggregated student data that ignores the existence of other Asian American groups and hinders the cultural values of other Asian ethnicities. Additionally, aggregated student data lumps all Asian Americans, causing certain ethnic groups to get lost in the shuffle and giving the perception that Asian students do not need help. As Quinlan (2015) explains, without disaggregating data, it masks the poverty rates and English language acquisition needs of some Asian American students. Moreover, this perceived cultural homogeneity leads to similar
treatment of all Asian Americans, usually as undesirable lesser beings (Sue et al., 2007). For example, Asian Americans report of Whites receiving preferential treatment in sport programs, where Asian American students are often overlooked or disassociated from traditional sports predominantly played by non-Asian Americans (Lei, 2003).

This disregard or lack of acknowledgement brings attention to the reality that Asian American identities are often ignored and rendered invisible. As Tang (2007) explains, *invisibility* is the unintentional or subtle form of discrimination that creates barriers for Asian Americans in schools and impedes their access to resources and services. For Asian American college students, invisibility then situates them in a paradoxical status where they are often an overrepresented racial group in many universities across the United States yet disenfranchised within educational institutions. This results in Asian American students being excluded from the resources and services that are available to other minority groups such as academic support programs and scholarship opportunities (Wang, 2007; Wu, 2002).

This dual status of visible yet invisible has situated Asian Americans in a paradoxical status in American society. Asian Americans have been socially constructed as a visibly homogeneous, foreign, model minority yet remains invisible, subordinated, “othered,” or marginalized in many environments, particularly in education. As Osajima (1995) argues:

university personnel have difficulty “seeing” Asian American issues because their vision has been distorted by stereotypes of Asian Americans and by the dominant tendency to limit racial problems to the Black/White binary. Racial politics in higher education construct a selective visibility, which focuses people’s attention on certain aspects of the Asian American experience, while simultaneously rendering invisible the concerns of Asian American activists. This selective visibility/invisibility arises from the unique
position Asian Americans occupy in the contemporary racial formation of the United States . . . shaping what people in higher education see and do not see. (p. 41)

In this section of the literature review, I described the racialization and stereotyping of Asian Americans. I provided a closer examination of the racialized experiences encountered by Asian American students that directly impact their college experience and student success. The following section will assist in building a stronger argument by providing further evidence on how the campus climate and campus culture also impact the daily-lived experiences of Asian American students.

**Campus Impact in Higher Education**

A discussion on campus impact is important in order to understand its effects on college students and how their experiences on campus can shape their student success. Hurtado (2007) explains that early college impact research drew from social psychology and sociology. This is primarily because college impact research assumes that college campuses shape the development of students in preparation for work and society. According to Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, and Whitt (2010), college is comparable to building a jigsaw puzzle, where students begin with an empty bag in which they place puzzle pieces they collect during the course of their academic years. They state that, unlike a jigsaw puzzle, college often does not come with directions; therefore, some students neither know they are constructing a bigger picture nor have the ample support in making that picture meaningful for the present or useful for future opportunities. Thus, it is important to understand the connection between student experiences and the campus social structure.

According to many theorists, *social structure*, the “persisting patterns of behavior and interaction among people or social position,” (Hurtado, 2007, p. 95) plays an essential role in
shaping student experiences on a college campus. As described in Hurtado (2007), Alex Inkeles asserts that institutions, particularly schools, induce psychic structures or regularities in the personalities of participants; Max Weber argues that beliefs, once established, shape the attitudes, values, and motives for future participants within a social structure; Emile Durkheim states that individual states of minds within social systems maintain the social order of participants; and Karl Marx believes that the values, beliefs, and motives of a social structure are shaped by one’s fit or position within that structure. While it is argued that social structure and its institutions shape individuals, there is still much needed research in order to understand how student experiences on campus can shape student success within the campus climate of higher education.

**Campus Climate**

Campus climate is defined as the overall normative “feel” of an institution or the current attitudes, behaviors, and standards and practices of employees and students of an institution (Hurtado, 1992; Museus, 2014; Rankin & Reason, 2008). For students of color, the campus climate can range from the inclusivity of the environment to the student body demographics and can be experienced in dramatically different ways. This includes those attitudes, behaviors, and standard or practices that concern the access for, inclusion of, and level of respect for student minority needs, abilities, and potential (Rankin & Reason, 2008). As Reid and Radhakrishnan (2003) explain, racial minority students view the general campus climate from two perspectives: racial climate and academic climate. Racial climate is composed of student observations of their experience as racial minorities on campus. These include everything from their experiences with racism to their belief that the university lacks diversity support. Specifically, racial climate includes community members’ attitudes, perceptions, behaviors, and expectations around issues
of race, ethnicity, and diversity that are subjected to and shaped by the policies, practices, and behaviors of those internal and external to the educational institution (Hurtado, Griffin, Arellano, & Cuellar, 2009). Academic climate is composed of student observations of their academic experience. These include their interaction with instructors and their peers and their access to academic mentoring (Reid & Radhakrishnan, 2003). Together, these two perceptions of campus climate have strong connections to a student’s sense of belonging, purpose of attending the university, and overall student success.

Summers, Svinicki, Gorin, and Sullivan (2002) state that neglecting to attend to the racial climate of an increasingly ethnically diverse campus has resulted in difficulties for all students. Adjustment problems with the curriculum, insufficient support services that do not reflect racial identities, financial problems, and the nature of interpersonal relationships with faculty, peers, and academic staff are some of the experiences that negatively impact students of color. Also, experiences of hate crimes, prejudice, racism, and discrimination on campus can impinge on student cognitive growth and affect development, and can lead to maladjustment and heightened feelings of not belonging at the institution (Nora & Cabrera, 1996; Maton, Rogers, Vasquez, Wimms, & Wittig, 2011). Furthermore, these negative perceptions of the campus climate have been associated with poor academic performance and lower self-esteem, consequently, leading to an unfavorable perception of their educational climate (Reid & Radhakrishnan, 2003; Suarez-Balcazar, Orellana-Damacela, Rowan, Portillo, & Andrews-Guillen, 2003).

Past studies have shown that African American students report lower levels of satisfaction with racial climates and perceive differential treatments on the basis of their race more frequently than their non-African American peers (Sima & Inman, 2011; Solorzano, Ceja,
Specifically for Latino students, research has shown that student perceptions of the campus climate impact educational outcomes such as positive academic performance and abilities to be future scholars (Hurtado & Carter, 1994; Hurtado & Ponjuan, 2005; Solorzano, 1998). Unfortunately, very little has been published solely on Asian Americans in higher education and how the campus climate factors in their student success; most research have been inclusive of other racial identities (Ching & Agbayani, 2012; notable exceptions by Buenavista, Jayakumar, & Misa-Escalante, 2009; Lee, 1996; Lee & Kumashiro, 2005; Li & Wang, 2008; Museus & Kiang, 2009; Museus, & Truong, 2009; Peng, & Wright, 1994; Teranishi, 2002, 2004). According to Teranishi, Behringer, Grey, and Parker (2009), Asian Americans are often overlooked because of a binary Black/White conceptualization of race. When Asian Americans do appear in the literature, the research usually favors East Asian American communities, placing a blanket recommendation assumed to be appropriate for all Asian Americans (Accapadi, 2012). Thus, this leads to a skewed representation and oversimplification of the diverse communities under the pan-Asian American label, silencing the unique voices of Asian American students in higher education.

This homogeneous classification leads to a universal racialization of all Asian Americans as a perpetual foreigner and as a model minority. In educational settings, these stereotypical images interconnectedly place Asian Americans in a vulnerable racial position where they are ostracized from both the White majority and situated against other racial minorities, primarily African Americans. Being neither Black nor White, Asian American students are cast as interlopers in racial discourse, rarely gaining visibility and voice as racial minorities (Ng, Lee, & Pak, 2007). Consequently, only a limited amount of educational research has focused on Asian Americans and their encounters with racialized experiences therefore placing the field of
education behind in addressing the educational concerns and needs of Asian American students. Early educational research showed that Asian American students experienced a greater amount of social alienation than White students, had lower social adjustment due to racism, and reported levels of depression related to their negative perceptions of the campus climate (Ng et al., 2007). As Cress and Ikeda (2003) assert, Asian American students are more likely than all other students to experience feelings of depression, view campus climates negatively, and tend to be academically disengaged. For example, Museus and Maramba (2010), whose study examined the impact of culture on Filipino American students’ sense of belonging in higher education, revealed that Filipino students participate in cultural suicide, the detachment from Filipino culture in order to succeed in an educational environment incongruent from their culture. To counteract this, Museus and Maramba suggest that college campuses practice cultural integrity; educational programming that engages the cultural backgrounds of Asian Americans and fosters their student success. By providing diverse programming, a supportive campus climate then contributes to student success by engaging and retaining students: “Student reactions to college do not just affect student learning and development, but also their chance to succeed because grades, persistence, student satisfaction, and engagement go hand in hand” (Kuh, 2013).

This focus by educational researchers on “campus climate” provides a profile of the status of racial and ethnic diversity within the university setting. It is argued that the climate of a campus can be best examined by looking at the impact of structural diversity, psychological climate, and behavioral dimensions of the campus culture (Summers, Svinicki, Gorin, & Sullivan, 2002).

Campus Culture

While campus climate is the overall normative “feel” of an institution, campus culture is
more about the normative “beliefs” of an institution. Like the campus climate, the campus culture of a university can also have a positive or negative influence on college students, their experiences, and their student success. According to Kuh et al. (2010):

campus culture refers to a widely shared, generally enduring set of beliefs and values represented by the language people use; institutional norms and established patterns of behavior by students, faculty, administration, and others; and certain aspects of the physical environment that manifest institutional values and priorities. (p. 341)
In other words, campus culture is accepted patterns of thinking and behaving that tend to become shared among all members of the educational institution. These properties of the environment are central to shaping social interaction and the individual’s attitude or behavior within it. In college impact research, these cultural properties are referred to as institutional characteristics that distinguish college environments and assess differentiation in effects on college students (Kuh et al., 2010; Museus, 2014).

While studies have looked at the impact of different types of college environments on different types of students, these cultural properties are difficult to change in urban settings. As Hurtado (2007) explains, most studies have provided insight into how the overall system of higher education is stratified in terms of structure, resources, and outcomes but never usually consider these cultural properties as relevant to daily practice or are times excluded from studies altogether. Thus, more study is needed to connect aspects of the normative structure in practice to its effects on students. One area where normative structures may be examined is in the changing racial composition of predominately White institutions. As Hurtado (2007) asserts, racialized experiences increase in environments where the numbers of students of color increase because different racial groups compete for resources or because the dominant ideology comes
into competition with others. With that in mind, it is imperative that higher education decisions be informed by these research insights because there will be a projected Asian American population growth by 2020 for K-12 as well as in higher education (Wang & Teranishi, 2012). In addition, the Asian American population is expected to more than double by 2050 (Ching & Agbayani, 2012).

**Campus Experiences of Asian Americans**

With the changing demographics in higher education, there is a need to examine how normative structures and changing student demographics will coexist or clash, with differential student outcomes. As Hurtado (2007) states, it remains to be seen if the normative structures of formerly predominantly White institutions have undergone changes so as to have contributed to the success of students of color, and with the changing student demographic norms, it is yet unknown how the increase of Asian American students will change dynamics with other students. Therefore, in order to gain a strong understanding of the campus experiences of Asian Americans, it is necessary for researchers to understand the complexity of race and its many intersections.

Specifically, it is important to understand how the racialization of Asian American students has influenced their campus experiences. First, it has added mental pressure that hinders the academic performance of Asian American students. As Wong and Halgin (2006) report, there is no scientific data to support the perception that Asian American students do better academically. They cite a number of studies (Lee, 1994; Toupin & Son, 1991; Wong et al., 1998; Ying et al., 2001) showing Asian American students performed worse academically than their non-Asian peers; had lower GPAs; were more likely to withdraw or be withdrawn for medical purposes; suffer from emotional problems, and were less likely to graduate.
Second, it has masked the mental health issues of Asian American students. With most Asian Americans raised with emotional discipline, avoidance of emotions of discomfort may feed the assumption that Asian Americans are “well-off” psychologically (Kodama et al., 2001). As Tang (2007) clarifies through a review of literature that Asian Americans actually experience more severe symptoms of depression than any other ethnic groups contrary to the widespread belief that Asian Americans are immune to mental health problems. The author argues that the public portrayal of Asian Americans as having a lower rate of mental disorders is a misconception and that Asian Americans experience similar mental health issues similar to other ethnic groups. However, Asian Americans typically do not seek mental health services due to cultural restraints like emotional discipline to minimize the threat to one’s character strength (Kodama et al., 2001) or do not seek academic assistance due to the internalization of the model minority stereotype (Takemoto & Hayashino, 2012; Tang, 2007).

Third, the racialization of Asian Americans has led to the assumption that this racial group should no longer be affirmative action protected beneficiaries in higher education. Lee (2006) notes how private Ivy League schools in the 1960s and 1970s once included Asian Americans in their admissions policies, but starting in the late 1970s, Asian Americans were phased out of affirmative action programs because they were no longer considered struggling minorities. For the example, the 1978 U.S. Supreme Court landmark case *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* resulted in the exclusion of Asian Americans in affirmative action policies, noting that Asian Americans did fine in the regular admissions process (Lee, 2006).

Fourth, the racialization of Asian Americans has led to the fear of overrepresentation on college campuses, resulting in resentment and fear of Asian Americans and causing unfair
admission requirements. As Wu (2011) explains, a number of allegations in the 1980s brought nationwide attention on some universities who had adopted policies to curtail the number of Asian Americans being admitted to institutions of higher learning through the imposition of quotas. For example, between 1987 and 1988, the University of California Berkeley’s treatment of Asian American admission policies generated a national controversy. Accusations against Berkeley claimed that the “supplemental criteria” category proposed by Assistant Vice Chancellor Travers and President Gardner was being manipulated to keep down the number of Asian American admissions. Travers and Gardner claimed that Asian Americans were “overrepresented” which undermined the diversity on campus. After five years of debate and media coverage, this incident resulted in two public apologies to Asian Americans and the creation of new admission policies and procedures that preserved affirmative action policy for minority students (Wang, 2007).

In 2009 the University of California Board of Regents implemented a new admissions policy by discontinuing the use of race as an admissions criterion. This resulted in more White students being admitted while students of color, especially low-income Asian Americans who were clustered in this band for guaranteed admissions, lost out on admission (Associated Press, 2009). Similar unfair practices were also revealed in Wong and Halgin’s (2006) study of Ivy League universities like Brown, Harvard, Stanford, and Princeton which showed that despite the similar amount of qualified Asian Americans and White Americans who had applied, fewer Asian Americans were admitted due to the policies and preferences of admission officers. A more recent controversy in 2015 led to more than 60 Asian American organizations filing a complaint with the federal government alleging that Harvard University discriminates against Asian Americans in the admission process (Strauss, 2015).
Despite the fear of overrepresentation by many university campuses, data shows that nearly half of Asian American students attend community colleges rather than Ivy League schools. In fact, despite the assumption that Asian Americans will outperform other students, disaggregated data have shown that Asian American students have among the lowest rates of high school graduation and college degree attainment in the United States (Wang & Teranishi, 2012).

Last, racialization of Asian Americans has contributed to their absence or exclusion in professional roles in higher education (Osajima, 1995; Wu, 2002). It is argued that this lack of professional roles in higher education stems from the strong emphasis on Asian Americans to enter the business, science, engineering, and health-related disciplines. This results in a lack of Asian American teachers and leaders in the K-12 sector where most Asian American students end up completing their education without having an Asian American role model to influence their academic experience and offer support for identity development. This creates a lack of a professional pipeline for Asian American graduates to serve in leadership roles such as teachers, faculty, and administrators (Kodama et al., 2001; Lagdameo et al., 2002; Wang & Teranishi, 2012).

For Asian Americans who do enter careers in higher education, they tend to cluster around certain minority function areas and have less supervisory and budgetary responsibilities (Wang & Teranishi, 2012). Asian Americans who did enter supervisory roles were a lower percentage than their White and Black counterparts and were often not promoted because of language deficiency and of Asian cultural characteristics, such as deference to authority that may communicate lack of assertiveness (Wong & Halgin, 2006). For Asian American faculty, the Model Minority Myth diverts resources from Asian Americans and bars their full inclusion in
higher education through potential quotas, which obscures the barriers for Asian American in certain academic disciplines in achieving faculty tenure (Lee, 2006).

**Chapter Summary**

The current scholarship on the racialized experiences of Asian American students presents opportunities for further research to those interested in the student success of this racial group. The limited studies on this topic reveal certain themes that are prominent in the literature. These themes are (1) marginalization of Asian Americans have occurred in American history and continue to occur in mainstream media and in educational settings, (2) racialization of Asian Americans have led to subtle and overt forms of discrimination in many settings including educational institutions, and (3) encounters and perceptions of racialized experiences on college campuses have detrimental effects on Asian American students.

Furthermore, the limited amount of existing literature reveals saturation and a need for further expansion to fill the gaps in educational research focusing on Asian Americans. First, the majority of past research conducted was located on campuses in the West Coast and East Coast regions while none focusing on Asian Americans took place in the Midwest. Second, there has been no real exploration on the direct relationship between racialized media images and their impact on Asian American students. Last, there is a plethora of quantitative research with statistical results, yet there exists a general lack of qualitative narrative studies that provide first-person perspectives on the racialized experiences of Asian American college students.

Given the limited amount of empirical work on this topic, there seems to be substantial room for new research. Some fresh thinking about institutions in relation to students and their development is needed—approaches that consider how macro social forces (academic and social environments; quality of interactions; student psychological sense of social integration;
subsequent outcomes) and institutions influence the microprocesses identified in student behavior (characterizations of the environment; social interactions; membership; perceived social cohesion) that result in both intended and unintended outcomes (Hurtado, 2007). As described in the latter chapters, part of this work will involve Asian American counterstories that reject mainstream narratives and reveal deeper layers usually concealed by popular notions of the Model Minority Myth (Hartlep, 2013). With this understanding, I hope my research will add to the current discussion in existing literature and fill the necessary gaps to truly understand the unique needs of Asian American students and the variables that have resulted in their racialized experiences.
CHAPTER III

STUDY DESIGN

If we are to seek new goals for our struggles, we must first reassess the worth of the racial assumptions on which, without careful thought, we have presumed too much and relied on too long. (Bell, 1992, pp. 13-14)

Before racial equality can be considered, one must not just assess the current status of racism, but one must reassess racial situations and move beyond what has already been said. With that, I have provided, in the first chapter, a contextual overview on my reasons for conducting this study, have introduced the research questions, and provided a conceptual framework to situate this study. In the second chapter, I provided a brief review of literature with themes that show the marginalization of Asian Americans in American history, the racialization of Asian Americans that have led to subtle and overt forms of discrimination, and the detrimental effects on Asian American students when encountering or perceiving racialized experiences on college campuses.

In this chapter, I introduce the design of the study that will assist in addressing the central research question: What racialized experiences (forms of racism), if any, do Asian American students encounter and perceive at UIC? and the three guiding issue subquestions: (1) How, if any, do encounters with or perceptions of racialized experiences affect Asian American student perspectives of the institution? (2) How, if any, do encounters with or perceptions of racialized experiences at UIC impact the students’ perception on their own academic success? (3) How, if any, are encounters with or perceptions of racialized experiences understood by UIC Asian American students? Are they addressed by the students? If so, how?

The follow sections include: the research method; the narrative inquiry, including
participant interviewing, storytelling, and counter-storytelling; the theoretical lens; consent and confidentiality; and the researcher’s positionality as an insider and outsider.

**Qualitative Method**

A qualitative method was used in this study to learn what racialized experiences some Asian American students encounter or perceive at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). As Creswell (2012) states, qualitative research suits well a research problem that needs exploration. With the goal of understanding the lived realities of Asian American college students, this method is best used to explore a problem or issue of a particular group or population in order to provide a detailed understanding of the issue and possible solutions (Creswell, 2007).

Although quantitative and qualitative characteristics tend to be seen as opposites, they need to be viewed as points on a continuum (Creswell, 2012). Therefore, the choice of research approach between the two is based on what may provide the best understanding on Asian American student experiences. Hence, for this study, a qualitative method was chosen instead of a quantitative one. As Creswell (2012) states, quantitative research is more deductive and qualitative research is more inductive. He explains that, in quantitative research, hypotheses often are used while in qualitative research questions are often used. Also, in quantitative research, multiple variables are identified and tested, while in qualitative research, information is gathered on one central occurrence. Furthermore, in quantitative research, the researcher often test theories that predict results from relating variables while in qualitative research, the investigator does not test theories, instead, the researcher asks research participants to share ideas and build general themes. In quantitative research, the researcher employs a close-ended stance by identifying variables and collecting data before the study begins. Quantitative research
questions and hypotheses do not change during the study. In qualitative research, the researcher takes an open-ended stance, allows the findings to emerge during the study, and modifies the research questions based on the responses of the participants. Finally, in quantitative research, the researcher collects numerical data from a large number or people, usually conducts statistical analysis, and interprets results by comparing them with prior predictions and past research. While in qualitative research, the researcher collects data based on narratives from a small amount of participants, analyzes for description and themes using text analysis, and interprets the larger meaning of the findings (Creswell, 2012).

A qualitative method can allow proper investigation of an ontological assumption—the nature of reality and truth and how they shape the world (Glesne, 2011) and can bring awareness, resistance, and transformation to the kinds of oppression encountered (Hatch, 2002). As Kawaguchi (2003) states, a qualitative method can help advance a study from a conceptual stage to the development and revision of conceptual frameworks and can assert the voices of research participants to become useful information for future research, policy-making, and practice. For this study, a qualitative method provided a strong method to identify the racialized experiences perceived and encountered by some UIC Asian American students; to see if racialized experiences change perceptions of the campus climate for Asian American students; to learn the impact of racialized experiences on their student success; and to understand how these Asian American students understand and address racialized experiences on campus.

**Theoretical Lens**

For this study, I used Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a theoretical lens to guide my research. CRT examines the ways racism is so embedded in society that it appears “normal” and looks at how social and political forms of power include and exclude people of color (Glesne,
Grounded in critical legal studies, CRT allows a deep questioning of the role of race and systemic racism in the American legal, cultural, and political systems (Hughes & Giles, 2010). Although CRT originated in legal studies, it has been adopted by many disciplines. It draws from and extends a broad literature base in law, sociology, history, ethnic studies, and gender studies (Yosso & Solorzano, 2005).

In education, CRT developed out of two responses: the need for a more militant race theory to unseat the pervasive racism in schools and the field of education and as a response to the limitations of a class-focused analysis of education in confronting the problem of racism (Leonardo, 2013). As Leonardo explains, CRT in education is a paradigmatic study of race in which the problem of the color line is made to speak within a particular discourse, community, and postulates; it unmask apparently nonracial phenomena as precisely racial in their nature and aims to halt racism by highlighting its pedagogical dimensions and affirming an equally pedagogical solution rooted in anti-racism.

Additionally, CRT permits a researcher to examine the current status of race with the intent of describing “what could be” and unmasking ideologies of racial inequalities (Glesne, 2011). Specifically, CRT rejects the assumption of a color-blind society where racism no longer exists, and instead, recognizes that racism, both structural and personal, is alive and that color-blind premises fail to recognize the historical and contemporary realities of race and racism in America (Hughes and Giles, 2010). As Chapman (2011) asserts, CRT challenges claims of colorblindness and displays existing mechanisms of power and privilege with the goal of dispelling myths of neutrality, fairness, and White racial superiority that go unquestioned.

These unquestioned ideologies according to Hatch (2002) stem from historically situated structures that impact individuals and lead to differential treatment based on race, gender, and
social class. For Asian American students, these inequalities present themselves in the field of education. Therefore, the CRT lens used in this study on the educational experiences of Asian Americans illustrated how this racial group was differently situated historically with respect to other disempowered groups (Chapman, 2011). As Hughes and Giles (2010) argue, American higher education promotes many norms and values worth examining under a CRT lens. Therefore, an in-depth understanding of the racialized experiences of Asian American students required a lens that acknowledged their unique racialized life experiences, as well as their social, political, and structural positions in society (Teranishi, 2007).

Thus, CRT suited this study well for five reasons. First, as Yosso and Solorzano (2005) explains, CRT acknowledges the intercentricity of racialized oppression -- the layers of subordination based on race, gender, class, immigration status, surname, phenotype, accent, and sexuality. It can be used to search for answers to the theoretical, conceptual, methodological, and pedagogical questions related to Asian American students. Second, CRT challenges dominant ideology and exposes deficit-informed research that silences, ignores, and distorts epistemologies of racial minorities. It can refute the claims that educational institutions make toward race neutrality and equal opportunity. Third, CRT commits to social justice and offers transformative response to racial inequalities. It can empower Asian American students to meet the multilayers of oppression and discrimination with multiple form of resistance. Fourth, CRT recognizes the centrality of the experiential knowledge of people of color as legitimate. It can draw from the lived experiences of Asian American students as sources of strength to expose deficit-informed research and policies that silence or distort them. Last, CRT insists on analyzing race and racism within both historical and contemporary contexts. It must consider the
unique history of Asian Americans in various contexts in order to better understand the effects of racism (Yosso & Solorzano, 2005).

Overall, CRT aids in expanding the needed dialogue to recognize the ways in which struggles for social justice are limited by discourses that omit and silence the multiple experiences of racial minorities (Yosso & Solorzano, 2005). Specifically in education, CRT allows proper examination on how better educational policies and practices can be developed and enacted to bring about significant change that re-centers the experiences and best-interests of Asian American students (Hughes & Giles, 2010).

**Narrative Inquiry**

While the qualitative method for this study frames the approach and CRT provides a lens for perspective, a narrative inquiry allows exploration of an educational research problem by understanding the experiences of individuals through stories that constitute data gathered through interviews or informal conversations. Typically, narrative research focuses on studying specific people, gathering data from stories, reporting on those individual experiences, and then discussing the meaning of those experiences for the individual (Creswell, 2012). The narrative research design, as Creswell explains, has a shorter history in the field of education and entered the field in 1990 through an article by D. Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly that cited many social science applications of narrative, elaborated on the process of collecting field notes, and discussed the writing and structure of a narrative design. Within the field of education, several trends influenced the expansion of narrative research. As Creswell describes, an increase on teacher reflection was first emphasized, then more emphasis was placed on teacher knowledge, and finally, the voices of teachers were brought to the forefront by empowering teachers to share their experiences.
Additionally, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explain that narrative research can take two forms---descriptive and explanatory. Descriptive narrative produces an accurate description of the interpretive narrative accounts individuals use to make sequences of events in their lives meaningful. Explanatory narrative accounts for the connection between events in a sense and provides necessary narrative accounts that supply the connections. By using a combination of the two, a narrative inquiry was appropriate for this study, providing opportunities for nine UIC Asian American students to share their stories. Because Asian American voices tend to be absent in research, this approach emphasized importance of their shared stories and ensured that their voices were heard. Thus, conducting this study using a narrative approach focused on the microanalytic picture--individual stories--rather than the broader picture of cultural norms, as in ethnography, or abstract theories, as in grounded theory research (Creswell, 2012).

**Participant interviewing.** One-on-one semi-structured interviews were the protocol used to pursue my research questions and to understand the racial reality of the nine Asian American participants. Interviews in qualitative research allow participants to provide useful information and to disclose detailed personal information (Creswell, 2012). Having participants tell their stories allows the researcher to link experiences and circumstances together to make meaning (Glesne, 2011). These stories, which Creswell (2012) classifies as field texts, constitute the data gathered through interviews or informal conversations. With my interest mostly on the racialized experiences of Asian American college students, conducting interviews was appropriate in capturing both personal and social lived experiences. As the researcher, an interview approach allowed me to steer the interview and ask established or emerging questions to elicit the stories from Asian American students. Unlike other methods, interviews can allow the realities of people of color to live, help make sense of the world, the past, and our present, all
through the eyes of others who may be on the surface drastically different, and create pathways to raising awareness of the oppressive forces and efforts that popular narratives hide (Knaus, 2006). This focus on experience draws from the philosophy of John Dewey, who believed that individual experiences were central in understanding a person, that experiences were to be viewed as continuous, and that one experience can lead to another (Creswell, 2012). For Dewey, experience is both personal and social and cannot be understood separately, especially in education:

People are individuals and need to be understood as such, but they cannot be understood only as individuals. They are always in relation, always in a social context. The term experience helps us think through such matters as an individual child’s learning while also understanding that learning takes place with other children, with a teacher, in a classroom, in a community. (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000)

**Storytelling.** Solorzano and Yosso (2002) assert that racism creates, maintains, and justifies a “master narrative” in storytelling through the lens of White privilege, resulting in “monovocal” stories about students of color, a legacy of stories in which racial privilege seems “natural,” and stories that privilege Whites (p. 27). In fact, the authors argue, people of color often buy into and even tell majoritarian stories because White narratives have become the norm and parts of everyday life. Because there is a need for a medium where Asian American students can share their stories and stories to be heard, the act of storytelling in this study can be a disruption to White narratives and can serve as a medium for marginalized groups to express their voices, communicate their unique experiences, and express their racial realities (Razack, 1998). Also, the act of storytelling connects the voices of victims with the documenting of
institutional, overt and covert, racism (Hughes and Giles, 2010) and uses stories to dispute myths and challenge norms based on White values (Chapman, 2011).

In this study, the questions asked to the nine Asian American students during the interviews to elicit stories were: Has there ever been a time on campus when you were treated differently because of your race? (Follow up question: Have you ever felt unwelcomed or uncomfortable because of your race?); With what Asian American stereotypes, good or bad, are you familiar? Have others expressed their stereotypical beliefs about you? From where do you think these racial stereotypes come?; and What are some of the ways you have addressed or dealt with these experiences with race you mentioned? To whom or where would you go, off or on-campus, to discuss any of these experiences?

Counter-storytelling. While one can argue storytelling is just a form of interviewing, storytelling goes deeper because it allows the telling of stories of people whose experiences are not often told that exposes, shatters, or challenges the dominant discourse on race (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). As Leonardo (2013) argues, if race is a social construction, then it takes the form of a narrative that can be examined through storytelling, which does not necessarily represent a position on truth or falsehood but a critical appreciation for the power of myths and their consequences. As Leonardo further explains, stories do not devolve the debate into a relativistic matter of opinions; rather stories affirm the power of storytelling as a mechanism that binds our understanding of social phenomena, like race.

Because critical race researchers view experiential knowledge as a strength, they draw closely from the lived experiences of people of color by including such opportunities for not just storytelling but also counter-storytelling, a methodological tool used by critical race scholars to reclaim, recover, and provide a space for voices of marginalized groups (Aleman & Aleman,
Counter-stories are political acts in direct opposition to normative beliefs about people of color that are used to justify racist practices (Chapman, 2011), and counter-storytelling acts both as a method for telling the story of those experiences not usually told and a tool for analyzing and challenging the stories of those in power and whose story is naturally part of the majoritarian discourse (Yosso & Solorzano, 2005). Counter-storytelling, as Leonardo (2013) explains, reframes the normative script, becomes an antidote to the majority’s line of thinking, provides recounting of how race affects minority lives, and begins the discussion from the lived experience of the people most affected by race. As Pendakur and Pendakur assert (2012), counter-storytelling repositions and shifts Asian American identity from the American racial discourse. Moreover, counter-stories can serve both creative and destructive functions. They can build community, nurture culture values, and strengthen resources for resistance, yet they can also deconstruct dominant discourse, expose systems of oppression, and challenge assumptions about people of color (Aleman & Aleman, 2010). In sum, counter-stories are narratives that derail stereotypes, expand people’s notions of certain groups, and bring racial groups out of the realm of oppression and into political action.

Furthermore, counter-stories can serve many pedagogical functions. Yosso and Solorzano (2005) state that counter-stories can build community amongst marginalized groups; can challenge the perceived dominant discourse; can show marginalized groups that possibilities exist beyond the margins; can combine story and reality to build a world that is richer than just the story or the reality alone; and can provide new context to understand and change established oppressive systems. In education, Knaus (2006) argues that counter-stories are ideal in shifting perspectives because, while education usually stems from White perspectives, counter-stories center voices of racial minorities to illustrate that not all invest in the property rights of
Whiteness, shifting from the status quo of Whiteness as the norm to schooling as having a democratic purpose of fostering all voices.

Solorzano and Yosso (2002) explain that counter-storytelling, as an act of storytelling, has a rich and continuing tradition in communities of color and is an essential tool to the survival and liberation of oppressed groups. The authors assert that critical race researchers continue in this tradition and have practiced counter-storytelling in at least three types. One type is a personal narrative, which recounts a person’s autobiographical experience with various forms of racism. Another type is other people’s narrative that tells another person’s experiences and responses to racism in a third person voice. The other type is composite narrative that draws on various forms of data to recount the racialized experiences of people of color. Solorzano and Yosso explain that such counter-stories can offer both biographical and autobiographical analyses because the storytellers create characters and place them in social, historical, and political situations to discuss racism and other forms of subordination.

For this study, I would argue that the design of this study allowed these forms of counter-storytelling. First, the nine Asian American students were able to tell about their racialized experiences from a personal perspective. Also, I was able to display their stories with racism and their responses in third person perspective. Furthermore, I was able to compose stories that drew from narrative data and offer analyses on their experiences as Asian Americans. Overall, counter-stories allowed the participating Asian American students to share their racialized experiences and their perceptions of the campus climate. Specifically, their counter-stories expanded the storytelling tradition and brought into light any existing racism on campus that populates their narrative data.
Consent and Confidentiality

Interviewing is one of the widely used approaches to data collection in qualitative studies for conducting social inquiry. Interviewing can generate data about the social world by asking participants to talk about their lives and can be a pipeline to transport knowledge (Miller & Glassner, 2011). Interviewing does not pose the same risks as biomedical research, but it is not risk free (Seidman, 2006). Therefore, consent and confidentiality must be ensured.

Through informed consent, potential research participants are made aware that participation is voluntary, are notified of any potential risks, and are informed that they may choose to cease participating in the study at any point (Glesne, 2011). For this study, participants were given a Student Consent Form (see Appendix C) that thoroughly explains all these elements and has all the information necessary to ethically gain student consent.

In addition to consent, the privacy of research participants needed to be guaranteed. Therefore, the interview was conducted in private to assure that respondents spoke freely and were not intimidated by the presence of others (Miller & Glassner, 2011). As Seidman (2006) explains, the interviewer and participants can develop a measure of intimacy where the participants can share aspects of their lives that may cause discomfort or emotional distress during the interview process, so if identities of participants were identifiable in the final report, the participants may be left vulnerable to embarrassment or loss of reputation. For this study, I protected the confidences and preserved the confidentiality of the research participants by assigning pseudonyms that will not lead to the discovery of their true identity. Additionally, student characteristics were amalgamated to further preserve confidentiality of the research participants and still allowing reporting of rich, detailed data (Hrynaszkiewicz, I., Norton, M. L.,
Recent decades have seen a drastic shift in scholarly mindset regarding how qualitative researchers should be in relationship to research participants. Once taking a “fly on the wall” approach, researchers remained distant to avoid influence on participant responses. The researcher and researched were viewed as separate entities with one being the inquirer and the other being the receptacle of knowledge (Glesne, 2011). However, as more research designs enter qualitative research, these former perspectives have evolved.

Today’s research approaches require a deeper investment. As Creswell (2012) reports, researchers must meet ethical standards and practices, gain access to and respect the research site, and establish rapport and trust with participants. Furthermore, the membership roles of the researcher within or outside the studied group and the dynamics of power within the relationship also need to be considered.

Positionality as an Insider

Dwyer and Buckle (2009) assert that an insider researcher conducts research with populations of which they are also members so that the researcher shares an identity, language, and experiential base with the study participants. As the researcher, my insider identity as Filipino American benefited my study. I was able to reflect on my own racialized experiences in order to relate to some of the life experiences of the research participants. As Glesne (2011) asserts, reflexivity involves critical reflection on how the researcher, the researched, setting, and procedures interact with and influence each other with the goal of ensuring the study is accurate, legitimate, or valid. As an employee at UIC, I already had insider access to the research site and
population, and I was already exposed to the Asian American culture on campus. This insider role status allowed faster access to and acceptance by participants, with some more open with me during the study.

Although having an insider status can be beneficial, it had the potential to impede the research process. One participant, who knew of my old role as a career advisor, led to a failed interview despite meeting screening requirements. Instead of providing any useful data during the interview, the participant superseded the interview questions with “no’s” and requested me to conduct a resume review, a service provided in my then-professional role. Also, my insider status could have clouded my perception as the researcher, resulting in an interview that was shaped and guided by the core aspects of my experience and not the participant’s. Best said by Schaafsma (2011), people might stereotype experience and events and not distinguish the life as told from the life as lived. To make sure my judgment was not clouded, I checked my biases, listened openly, and presented the stories of the participants as their own and not as mine.

**Positionality as an Outsider**

Some aspects of my identities however positioned me to be an outsider to the population of the study, which can be problematic. While I would fall under the Asian or Asian American federal racial category, my Filipino ethnicity puts me in a paradoxical situation. I am grouped with Asians or Asian Americans, which makes me an insider, but my Filipino background relates more to Spanish culture, and because I identify more as Filipino American than Asian American, I feel like an outsider as well. As Nadal (2004) explains, Filipino background stems from native roots combined with Spanish and American culture as a result of the Spanish and the U.S. colonial rule, differentiating Filipinos from other Asian ethnicities. Consequently, like most Filipinos, I do not relate to the label of “Asian American” because the term is socially
constructed by White Western culture and is externally imposed as a default identifier (Kodama & Ebreo, 2009). As discussed in the first chapter, racial labels for many Asian Americans can be problematic. New Asian immigrants may favor distinctive national origin groups over a pan-ethnic racial identity and not adhere to the categories imposed upon them (Junn & Masouka, 2008). Furthermore, if race is based on skin color and physical characteristics, it is important to understand that Filipinos identify as being “brown” and not “yellow” as would their Asian counterparts. Thus, if Filipinos are to be classified in the Asian American category, then Asians cannot be classified by skin color because Filipinos are physically and identifiably brown (Nadal, 2004). Nevertheless, Filipinos were part of the target population for this research because this ethnic group falls under the federal racial category and the UIC category of Asian American.

The unique histories of the various ethnicities under the Asian American category were considered and recognized during my research. While it is important to reflect on my own identities as a researcher and incorporate them into the narratives (Schaafsma, 2011), it is useful to consider alternative modes of explanation and of seeing by using different lenses to view the same phenomenon but still maintaining its original unique value (Tyack, 1976). For example, while a research participant and I may have had experienced similar racialized experiences, I could not impose my own experience and assume the same experience was encountered by the participant. This is a great example on how problematic grouping various ethnic identities can be under the Asian American label.

Another outsider identity I needed to consider is my role as an administrator at UIC. Through my involvement with AARCC and the CCSAA, I am aware of the institutional inequalities on campus. This awareness was integral in the research process because the knowledge I brought was mediated through my political positioning (Hatch, 2002). Therefore,
this insider advantage was shed and my biases or prejudice checked. I had to put my UIC administrator identity aside and assumed the researcher identity to dilute any possible power imbalance. When I conducted my research, I did not want the research participants to view me as an authority figure who works at UIC rather an investigator who was interested in their histories and experiences, so I introduced myself with just my first name and no association with my professional title. If interviews were meaningful and conducted well, then I had the opportunity to help participants better reflect on their racialized experiences and hopefully turn the interview session into future moments of empowerment. As mentioned, many of the advancements on campus and successes of Asian Americans were student-led. While participants might have viewed my role as researcher or as a UIC employee as an agent of change, I personally think student voices have stronger impact to bringing change on campus. However, for my study, I use the stories of Asian American students and my professional influence collaboratively to bring change at UIC. Through collaboration, power is shared more equally between both the researcher and the researched. As we worked together towards a common goal and come together to address issues of inequities and injustice, then both the researcher and participant become partners in a research struggle that takes the research relationship beyond the insider and outsider identities (Glesne, 2011).
CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

If society believes a certain population is successful and without problems, then the real problems of that population will never be addressed -- they will, in fact, remain invisible. (Hartlep, 2013, p. 15)

In this section, I will describe and explain the methods used in this study to address the central research question: What racialized experiences (forms of racism), if any, do Asian American students encounter and perceive at UIC? and the three guiding issue subquestions: (1) How, if any, do encounters with or perceptions of racialized experiences affect Asian American student perspectives of the institution? (2) How, if any, do encounters with or perceptions of racialized experiences at UIC impact the students’ perception on their own academic success? (3) How, if any, are encounters with or perceptions of racialized experiences understood by UIC Asian American students? Are they addressed by the students? If so, how? Specifically, I define the process I used to explore the racial realities of Asian American students at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). The follow sections include the research site and participants; trustworthiness; and data sources, collection, and analysis.

Campus

The majority of higher education research on Asian American students has occurred primarily in the West Coast and East Coast regions while research in the Midwest is almost nonexistent. This could be due to where prominent higher education researchers are located and where they primarily conduct their work. For example, the Higher Education Research Institute, the workplace of Sylvia Hurtado, is in Los Angeles and The Institute for Globalization and Education in Metropolitan Settings, the former workplace of Robert Teranishi (now of UCLA),
is in New York City. Thus, conducting this study in the Midwest adds diverse voices to existing research on Asian Americans in higher education.

For my study, I gathered data from Asian American students attending the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). The only Midwest university classified as a minority serving institution since 2010 through the U.S. Department of Education’s Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISI) grant, UIC is an urban research university located in the west side of Chicago with an undergraduate student population of approximately 17,000 students and a graduate and professional student population of approximately 11,000 students. The undergraduate student population is composed of 3,800 or 22.7% Asian American; 1,316 or 7.9% African American/Black; 18 or 0.1% American Indian/Alaskan Native; 4,410 or 26.4% Hispanic; 44 or .3% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; 5,982 or 35.8% White; 417 or 2.5% Two or More Races; 414 or 2.5% International; and 306 or 1.8% Race/Ethnicity Unknown (UIC Office of Institutional Research, 2014). In 2014, the campus received the Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award from INSIGHT Into Diversity magazine, which recognized UIC’s commitment to diversity and inclusion on university and college campuses and for UIC’s diversity and inclusion initiatives and broad definition of diversity on campus (UIC Office of Diversity, n. d.).

Like many college campuses, UIC initiated a campaign on student success. In 2012, the UIC Chancellor charged the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost and the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs to develop the UIC Student Success Plan. The offered definition of “student success” by campus administration is “the completion of the first year with a strong GPA that is consistent with students who graduate in 6 years, the retention of students from the first to the second year, and graduation within 6 years” (V. Paglione, personal communication,
January 30, 2013). The goal of this campus-wide initiative is to provide an initial conceptual framework that describes the issues affecting the success of undergraduate students and outlines the potential next steps in providing all the educational opportunities and support needed in increasing the success of all undergraduate students. The overarching shared campus goals are an 85% first-to-second-year retention rate and a 65% six-year graduation rate, with full parity (gap closure) among all ethnic/racial groups and genders. These goals were derived by reviewing graduation rates at peer institutions and by considering the history of success at UIC (UIC Undergraduate Student Success Plan, 2012). For the purpose of my research, this definition of student success is used broadly to include the student academic performance, personal and professional goals, and overall student satisfaction. Specifically, I expanded the definition to include the various indicators that lead to student attainment, specifically feeling comfortable, feeling a sense of belonging, and feeling culturally affirmed, as supported by Hokoana and Oliveria (2012) and Sima and Inman (2011). I wanted an inclusive definition that could be applied on many college campuses, and, most important, to capture the importance of the issues affecting Asian American students and to reflect the changing racial demographics of college campuses.

On an academic level, UIC has an Asian American (ASAM) Studies program that resulted from a student-led movement that occurred over a course of ten years. In November 1999, the student-led Coalition of Asian American Studies began to lobby for the Asian American Studies Program, and in March 2000, they rallied to express demand for Asian American courses. In August 2000, a visiting professor was hired to teach Asian American literature courses, and not until August 2010 did the campus officially begin the ASAM minor, in which participating students must complete 15 semester hours of interdisciplinary courses that
explore the histories, identities, cultural expressions, social and community formations, and politics of people of Asian ancestry in the United States. According to the UIC Asian American Studies website (n.d.), the mission of ASAM is to create opportunities in the classroom, in scholarship, and through campus and community advocacy for UIC students to comprehend Asian American experiences as fundamental to the fabric of U.S. society and as linked to the experiences of other communities of color in the United States as well as Asian diasporas globally.

For leadership involvement, UIC offers over 40 Asian and Asian American organizations for students and the Chancellor’s Committee on the Status of Asian Americans (CCSAA), which was spearheaded by a group of Asian American students who advocated for its creation in January 1999 (AARCC website, n.d.). An institutional program that brings together appointed faculty, staff, and students to advise the Chancellor on issues related to Asian Americans on campus, the CCSAA conducted a study in 2004 to examine Asian American student experiences and needs at UIC with the hope to educate the campus community about the Asian American undergraduate population and to provide data that can be used to develop appropriate services for this racial population. The results of the study revealed a wealth of information and raised a number of issues. In general, the results show that UIC’s Asian American undergraduate students were not all academically successful who needed targeted services and programs; they had a variety of concerns related to academic stress, racial identity, and a lack of institutional support for their concerns as Asian Americans. Specifically, the majority of the respondents found UIC supportive of ethnic diversity yet only to Latino and African American students. They found the campus having a strong Asian American community yet not enough campus resources specifically for this racial population. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents held negative
perceptions of UIC’s campus climate. Half of the Asian American respondents felt faculty/staff to be insensitive to their concerns; some reported experiencing racism on campus with no real resource pre- Asian American Resource Cultural Center (AARCC) to assist them with these racialized experiences. Consequently, the results showed the majority of Asian American students having to find external support systems like friends and family for academic, career, and personal advice, especially from someone of Asian ethnicity who can understand their specific concerns (CCSAA Undergraduate Survey Final Report, 2004).

For student support, UIC has the Asian American Resource Cultural Center, which opened in 2005 after 20 years of advocating by Asian American students. AARCC defines Asian Americans to include East Asians (e.g. Chinese, Japanese, Korean), South Asians (e.g. Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan), and Southeast Asians (e.g. Cambodian, Filipino, Vietnamese). While Arab Americans or Middle Easterners (e.g. Syrian, Iranian) or Pacific Islanders (e.g. Native Hawaiian, Samoan) are racially categorized outside of “Asian American” in federal terms, AARCC still serves them to acknowledge the fluidity of racial labels in American society (AARCC website, n.d.). Specifically, AARCC provides education and resources for and about Asian Americans; increases awareness of diverse Asian American issues, cultures, and communities; strengthens the Asian American campus community; promotes the growth of Asian American Studies through curricular and co-curricular partnerships; and guides Asian American students in reaching their academic, personal, and professional potential (AARCC website, n.d.).

Historically, Asian Americans at UIC have never been considered as an underrepresented minority group, like African Americans, Latinos, or Native Americans, which has led to their exemption from certain campus services and affiliations. On a student level, Asian Americans
are not considered underrepresented, so there is no official academic support unit for them, which feeds on the assumption that Asian Americans do not need academic support compared to their racial peers (Osajima, 1995). Such an exception also extends to the Under-Represented Faculty Recruitment Program, which provides funds toward salary and research for colleges, and departments that have selected underrepresented candidates for hire. African-American, Latino, or Native American faculty candidates are automatically qualified for funding support. However, for Asians, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander and women candidates, a special formula determines qualifications for funding. This is calculated using the formula $C < A < T$, where $C$ and $A$ respectively denote the current and available percentages of faculty members with the same racial or gender status in the discipline, and $T$ is the desired target percentage (defined as one half of the percentage of the student population at UIC with the same race or gender). In other words, current representation in the department must be less than the available pool, which must be less than the target goal of the student population (Under-Represented Faculty Recruitment Program, 2008). Recent efforts to increase diversity and interdisciplinary culture at UIC resulted in the Chancellor’s Cluster Initiative in 2011. The goals of the initiative were to diversify faculty and enhance the educational experience of students and the work of faculty by broadening the disciplines represented on campus (Chancellor’s Cluster Initiative, n.d.). However, due to what was pronounced as fiscal challenges, some of the cluster hires were abruptly cancelled, which led to student protests to reinstate the searches.

Further exclusion also extended to the former Under-Represented Faculty Mentoring Program (UFMP) where Asian or Asian American faculty did not qualify for membership in a minority scholar program open to other faculties of color. Historically, UFMP was a faculty-driven initiative to address poor retention among African American tenure-track faculty. It was
later expanded in 2005 to include Latino/a tenure-track faculty (WISEST, n.d.). While faculty can benefit from mentoring and networking, underrepresented groups, including Asian Americans, face unique challenges as they work to establish themselves as teachers, researchers, and members of the university community. Thus, this limitation may have been a disservice the retention of Asian American faculty and staff and the recruitment of future Asian American employees. Consequently, this contributes to the lack of Asian Americans in influential roles that can benefit the academic experience and identity development of Asian American students.

While UIC seems to have a focus on student retention and student success, there are still issues affecting Asian American students. Recently, Asian American students have raised concerns of racial insensitivity and discrimination experienced in a number of student service departments on campus. This was addressed by AARCC staff and with the support of the CCSAA through advocacy, outreach, and mandatory training sessions attended by student services staff, department heads, and directors (K. Su, personal communication, September 6, 2013). Additionally, a member of the CCSAA reported that a department was offering a workshop on accent reduction that had a racially insensitive title and targeted international Asian students with accents (personal communication, October 3, 2013). Furthermore, UIC does not offer an academic support unit specifically for Asian American students. The campus has recruitment services and academic resources like the African American Academic Network, Latin American Recruitment and Educational Services, and the Native American Support Program to assist historically underrepresented minority groups with retention and academic success.

UIC is a research site that can provide rich data on its Asian American student population. A recent demographic survey of 1700 Asian American undergraduates showed that
they come from diverse backgrounds. Survey results revealed more than 40% students’ parents do not have a bachelor’s degree or higher and 37% of the students reported that they or their siblings were the first person in their immediate family to attend college. Also, the results reported Asian Americans chose to attend UIC for its affordability and proximity to home (K. Su, personal communication, July 24, 2015).

With UIC having a rich, political history involving Asian Americans, with the campus being one of the most diverse universities in the nation, and with the institution being AANAPISI since 2010, this research site was ideal to conduct my study to bring Asian American student stories to the forefront, gain concrete details on their racialized experiences, and show how racism is a daily experience for Asian American students at UIC.

**Participants**

In qualitative research, the intent is to develop an in-depth exploration of a central phenomenon. Thus, a qualitative investigator purposefully selects individuals to best learn about a phenomenon and who can provide a voice to individuals who are not usually heard (Creswell, 2012). For this study, I chose *purposeful sampling*, the intentional selection of specific individuals and sites that provide the best understanding of the central phenomenon. Specifically, I implemented a sampling strategy called *homogeneous sampling*, which samples individuals based on membership in a subgroup that has defining characteristics (Creswell, 2012). Because of the narrow scope in my recruitment, the limitations of this sampling strategy resulted in 24 respondents with 9 participants fully meeting the research criteria, falling 3 short of my original target amount.

The target group for this study included undergraduate Asian American students who were born and raised in the United States, who entered UIC as freshmen, are in senior status, and
are approaching graduation. More established in their academic program and more engaged within the campus culture having started and stayed in the same school for four years (Kuh, 2013), these participants offered more thorough narratives. I decided not to solicit transfer students who arrived at UIC midway in their academic career because transfer students would not provide four or more years of content on their campus experience. Also, I preferred undergraduate students, not graduate students or professional students, for this study because this population was traditionally still in their early formative years in identity development and exploration of self (Kuh, 2013). While a graduate student or professional student could have completed their undergraduate degree at UIC, the time between their undergraduate years and graduate year could have possibly provided confusing context for the type of information I sought. Their transition from undergraduate to graduate status would have exposed them to new experiences, services, staff, and faculty that differed from my research criteria. Thus, I opted to interview undergraduate students to reflect the target population mostly represented in the literature review.

Also, targeting the U.S. born and raised Asian American student population provided the cultural context I needed because I wanted to investigate whether or not racialized stereotypes stemming from the Model Minority Myth is a product of U.S. society; therefore, international Asian students were not considered for this research. Furthermore, unlike international students, domestic born students could bring certain lenses of Asian Americans whose parents and siblings have already acculturated in American society and who have had longer experiences in the American education system, and therefore, may have a deeper understanding of the context of the study. As Hune (2002) asserts, most Asian Americans today are part of the second migration wave, whose experiences in Asia and the U.S. are distinct from the Americans born of the first
wave. Specifically for this study, as fully described in the following chapter, the student participants identified as 1st generation, 1.5 generation, or 2nd generation—self-identifiers reflecting whether or not the student counted their parental status or mixed identity.

The resulting participants of this study involved nine students who participated in one-on-one interviews. I successfully recruited four participants from East Asian ethnicities, three from South Asian ethnicities, one Southeast Asian, and one mixed ethnicity. While a small amount, nine participants was a manageable number to provide deep stories of rich experiences, unique histories, and identities.

Interviewing Asian American students from UIC was appropriate for this research because this racial group is not classified as full minorities or “traditionally under-represented” on campus (State of Asian American Studies in the Big Ten, 2000) because the percentage of Asian American undergraduate population on campus surpasses the total state percentage population of Asian Americans (Diversifying Higher Education Faculty in Illinois, n. d.). This “reclassification” of Asian American students leads to the popular conception that Asian Americans have overcome adversity due to their cultural values and hard work. They have become “model minorities” who no longer need assistance or minority services and policies like affirmative action. Because they are no longer defined as minorities, Asian Americans have been de-minoritized. This racialized assumption has predominated the discourse of Asian American college students and has caused policymakers, administrators, and the media to maintain the racial status quo in higher education (Lee, 2006).

UIC Asian Americans as research participants suited this study well to challenge this assumption. As a 2005 survey conducted through the AANAPISI program revealed, 39% of UIC Asian American students were first to attend college, 29% come from low-income
households, 45% received financial aid, and 60% worked while in school. These statistics reflect the “risk” factors many research argue play in student retention and student success: being a first-generation college student, coming from a low-income household, coming from an immigrant family, and/or living at home (Department of Education, n.d., p. 2). As a data source, I felt the UIC Asian American student population and its existing constituents for Asian Americans would provide rich information to understand Asian American student experiences.

While this research provides a snapshot of the college experiences of UIC Asian American students, it will have implications that need to be addressed through further research. This research was limited to just nine Asian American students; therefore, this group of students does not represent the entire racial group. Thus, I am hoping my research can be a jumping off point for future researchers to consider a larger pool, which would inform other campuses on racial realities of Asian American students.

**Student profiles.** Table 1 below provides an introduction to the Asian American students who participated in this study. The students are (pseudonyms): Alex, Sonny, Olivia, Tim, JZ, Ricky, Charlotte, Arjun, and Holly. The interviews for this study occurred once per student participant between the months of June and December of 2014. Each student was asked to provide a meeting time to conduct the interview, which usually occurred during breaks between classes, during their lunch hour, after their cluster of classes, or after 5 p.m. Also, each student was asked to provide a location on campus where they felt comfortable meeting for the interview and was also given the option to meet in my campus office; all but one student opted to meet in my office. Meeting in my office was ideal because it was centrally located between the two sides of campus, the building had little student traffic, and the front desk staff did not require them to reveal their name or purpose when meeting with me. Thus, meeting in my office allowed the
confidentiality of their responses, better accessibility to a meeting space, and a comfortable setting for conversations.

Table 1: Student Profile*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnic Region</th>
<th>Ethnic Descent**</th>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Minor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Chinese Irish</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Neuroscience, English</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonny</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Math, Chemistry</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Epidemiology</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Bioengineering</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JZ</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Computer Science</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ricky</td>
<td>Non-Conforming</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Gender and Women Studies</td>
<td>Asian American Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arjun</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Bioengineering</td>
<td>Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holly</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Studio Arts</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All students were senior class level.  **All students identify as Asian Americans.

Trustworthiness

To ensure the validity of my findings, I collaborated with the research participants and actively involved them as the study unfolded. As Creswell (2012) explains, collaboration involves negotiating relationships between the researcher and the participants to lessen the potential gap between the stories told and the stories reported. As the researcher, I shared in the
interpretive process with the research participants as a form of member-checking. After each interview was transcribed, I emailed a copy to the respective student to clarify their narrative and voice and to give each student an opportunity to suggest any modifications or additions.

Feedback from the students came, not when I shared their specific transcripts, but when I shared the first draft with them, which included narrated descriptions and intersecting analyses. Two of the students requested I change their majors while the rest felt my representation of their narratives was appropriate. One student even complimented my attention to detail in how I had captured his body language and non-verbal cues during his interview, and another student expressed determination to keep her disability as part of her narrative to show the diverse layers to her identity. Despite these changes, I felt the essence of each student and their narratives were still captured and affected the presentation of my data only minimally. While some may argue that presenting the individual summaries to participants for their reactions and input can be time-consuming, my collaboration with the participants was a way to verify that I properly captured their perspectives and to guarantee that the voices of the participants are not lost in the final manuscript (Creswell, 2012; Glesne, 2011).

Furthermore, I hope the trust developed between me and the participants validated some of my research hunches. Based on my personal and professional experiences at UIC, in conjunction to my literature review, I wanted to confirm a number of things: When UIC Asian American students seek help when dealing with racism, is their go-to place AARCC? When they need academic assistance, do they seek help from their peers or at any of the ethnic-specific academic centers? Most importantly, how is their student success affected? As Museus and Maramba (2011) argue, Asian American students who have no sense of belonging on their college campus commit “cultural suicide,” or the detachment from one’s culture in order to
succeed, and find alternative ways or resources.

**Data Sources and Collection**

The data sources for examining the research questions included (a) background information collected via the student information sheet and (b) face-to-face interviews with the participants. Data collection occurred in two stages. In stage one, participants were solicited using the Letter to Student script (see Appendix A) via email through campus listservs and student organizational listservs. For screening purposes, interested students were asked to complete a Student Information Sheet (see Appendix B) on the Qualtrics web based survey system, where they noted their ethnic identity and generation status. A total of twenty-four students responded to the solicitation and completed the information sheet; however, only nine students fully met the research criteria and were invited for one-on-one interviews. Table 2 illustrates my data collection timeline procedure.

**Table 2: Data Collection Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Data Collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>• Research opportunity sent out to listservs for the first time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Alex interviewed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>• Research opportunity sent out to listservs for the second time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>• Sonny, Tim, Olivia interviewed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>• JZ and Ricky interviewed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>• Charlotte and Arjun interviewed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>• Research opportunity sent out to listservs for the third time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Holly interviewed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In stage two, participants who agreed to interview received the Student Consent Form (see Appendix C), which they were asked to read and sign in order to give consent to the semi-structured interviews that lasted about thirty minutes to an hour. During the interviews, I used a digital audio recorder to record the interview with the participant’s consent. The questions asked during the formal interview consisted of open-ended questions that provided opportunities for the participant to oblige information based on their points of view. Open-ended questions are appropriate for this study because, as Seidman explains (2006), they establish the territory to be explored while allowing participants to take any direction and do not presume answers.

Specifically, there are at least two types of open-ended questions relevant to interviewing. The first one are “tour” questions in which the interviewer asks the participants to describe a significant segment or a limited time span of an experience, and the other type focuses more on the subjective experience of the participants. For this study, the Interview Protocol (see Appendix D) I used for the interviews contains these types of questions in the form of background, essential, probing, and extra questions (Hatch, 2002). The opening “background” statement (Tell me about yourself.) started the conversation and allowed the participant to voluntarily disclose personal information, like personal origin and high school attendance, not previously shared on the Student Profile Form. It prompted them to disclose additional information that may not have been needed to been asked through a question on the interview protocol.

The second group of questions comes from the Personal Goals set to learn of the participant’s self-expectations and future aspirations. These “probing” questions focused on the student’s personal, academic, and professional goals: “What is your major? minor? What made you decide on that focus of study?; What expectations do you have for yourself while you are in
college? Any personal goals?; What career paths are you considering? What made you consider these roles of profession?”

The third group of questions and the fourth group of questions come from the College Climate set and the College Culture set. These questions prompted the participant’s explanation for choosing this particular university, their impression of the campus, and their interaction within the environment. Examples of these “probing” questions are: “What attracted you to UIC?; What do you like about UIC? What would you change?; What do you think is the general campus attitude towards Asian Americans students?”

“Essential questions” that reflect the central focus of the study appeared in the fifth group of questions from the Experiences with Race set which examined the racialized experiences the student encountered or perceived on campus: “Has there ever been a time on campus when you were treated differently, felt unwelcomed, or uncomfortable because of your race? How did it feel? Have these instances all been blatant or subtle? How so?; How have these race-related experiences changed, if at all, your campus experience, the way you use campus resources, the places you go on campus, etc.?; How have these race-related experiences affected, if at all, your student success?”

The fifth group of questions from the Response and Understanding set demonstrated how participants organized their cultural knowledge and elicited counterstories from the participants. These “structural questions” like “From where do you think these racial stereotypes come?; What are some of the ways you have addressed or dealt with these instances?; What suggestions do you have for the faculty and staff administrators on campus in regards to working with Asian American students?” explored what relationships participants see in their racialized experiences and make sense of the social phenomena under investigation.
(Hatch, 2002). These questions also gave an opportunity for students to share organically any “positive” stereotypes, along with negative ones, and to provide context on their understanding of theses stereotypes.

To capture my thoughts on the student responses, I wrote analytic memos on the Interview Protocol sheet during interviews and as I further analyzed data. As Glesne (2011) asserts, recording only observations and interview notes in field journals will not be enough; memo writing and reflecting on field notes are needed to free a researcher’s mind for new thoughts and perspectives. Memos do not just note data, they can connect different pieces of data into recognizable cluster and are useful tools in effective sense-making (Miles and Huberman, 1994). With that in mind, I used the Interview Protocol sheet at each interview to write memos and marginal remarks. This tool helped me cycle back and forth between thinking about the existing data and generating approaches for gathering new data and make analysis an ongoing enterprise that contributes to the energizing process of fieldwork (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Additionally, analytic memos are sites of conversation with the researcher and the data and documents researcher reflections about the data (Saldana, 2015). In this study, analytic memos allowed me to note emerging concepts and possible networks among the codes, patterns, and categories. Furthermore, analytic memos allowed me to reflect on any problems with the interview protocol, write descriptive information of research participants, and note any personal relation to what the participant had shared (Saldana, 2015).

**Data Analysis**

Before I discuss the data analysis, I present Table 3 that shows a summary of my research procedures regarding my data sources and data analyses.
Table 3: *Summary of Research Procedures*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Data Collection Tools</th>
<th>Research Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listserv Call-outs</td>
<td>Appendix A</td>
<td>• None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Screening</td>
<td>Appendix B</td>
<td>• Screened based on student response to Student Information Sheet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews 1-9</td>
<td>Appendix C</td>
<td>• Received consent from student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appendix D</td>
<td>• Reviewed analytic memos on Interview Protocol sheet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Transcribed recorded interview using VoiceBase system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Coded transcriptions using Dedoose system and created coding scheme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data analysis involves organizing what has been seen, heard, and read by the qualitative researcher so that sense-making can occur. In data analysis, data from transcribed interviews get coded, patterns are developed from the codes, and summary statements are developed from the data collected (Kawaguchi, 2003). For this study, my data analysis approach included a mixture of narrative analysis and thematic analysis. With one of the goals of this study to gain understanding of the racialized experiences of Asian American students, a narrative analysis is appropriate to bring focus and meaning to their experiences. However, there is a need to go beyond the narrative transcript in order to truly understand the racial reality of Asian American students. According to Creswell (2012), after participants tell a story about their experiences, the researcher must retell the story in their own words and put into sequence a story that may have
been out of order: “Restorying is the process in which the researcher gathers stories, analyzes them for key elements . . . and then rewrites the story to place it in a chronological sequence” (p. 509). As the researcher, I “re-storied” by using a CRT lens in the analysis stage to “re-narrate” the dominant racial frame that writes Asian Americans into consistently negative images and pathological histories (Leonardo, 2013). This process allows narration of the student stories to be presented in a story format for the reader and captures the purpose of storytelling, to get the voices of the unheard finally heard. Specifically, I sought to organize and analyze the data that would allow me to find patterns, create categories, and develop themes. This early procedure involved data analysis done simultaneously with data collection, which enabled me to focus, shape the study as it proceeds, reflect on the data, organize them, and discover what is being said.

To accomplish this, the two phases of narrative analysis and thematic analysis were used in the study. To begin the narrative analysis phase, after each interview, I transcribed each one using the online system VoiceBase, which allowed uploading of the digital recordings and provided automatic drafts of transcriptions. I then updated the draft transcriptions by listening to each recording and fixing any transcription mistakes. This process allowed me to review the audio, look over any analytical memos written during the interviews, and organize the transcribed data in chronological sequences that made most sense for thematic analysis.

In thematic analysis, the researcher uses analytical techniques by searching through data for themes and patterns. As Glesne (2011) asserts, looking for pattern brings attention to the unifying aspects of the culture or setting, to the actions of the population, and to the interactions of the community members. Additionally, a thematic analysis allows identifying things beyond the norm and helps to reveal underlying complexities. Thus, a thematic analysis allows a deeper
illustration of the racialized experiences and racial reality of the nine Asian American students interviewed. Options for thematic analysis coding methods included In Vivo, Process, Emotion, Values, Versus, Dramaturgical, Causation, and Descriptive. I opted for the descriptive coding method because it was most appropriate for a qualitative study focusing on social environment and because the method assigned labels to summarized data using just a word or short phrase (Saldana, 2015).

For the thematic analysis phase, I used Dedoose, an online coding system, to manage, sort, and present the data for coding. I uploaded the edited transcriptions, read them, and highlighted phrases that fell into the themes that emerged from the literature review: experiences of marginalization in history, media, and in educational settings; subtle and overt forms of discrimination and racialization; and the effects of racialized experiences encountered and perceived on campus. Per marking on Dedoose, I had the ability to create the codes and assign them per phrase that I highlighted. In Table 4, I provide a sample of the highlighted data and assigned codes.

Table 4: Sample Data and Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Data</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Sometimes I’ll be studying, right, or like when a class first starts up, and someone will walk to me and say ‘You look like you’re good at math.’” (Alex)</td>
<td>Model Minority Myth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Which country are you from?” (Holly)</td>
<td>Perpetual Foreigner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“There is this assumption that Asians are only the East Asians.” (Arjun)</td>
<td>Homogenous Assumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Oh, you must be valedictorian material.”</td>
<td>Prescription of Intelligence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
*Dedoose* provided a number of options to identify patterns in coding and themes between assigned codes or categorical properties. This coding procedure involved meaningful synthesizing and dissecting of the data and the assignment of labels to units of information compiled during the study. I created connections with the data and transformed them to have meaning through the process of description, analysis, and interpretation. According to Glesne (2011), *description* involves staying close to data as originally recorded. The researcher draws heavily on field note and interview transcripts, allowing the data to speak for itself. *Analysis* identifies key factors in the study and the relationships among them. The researcher identifies essential features and how they interact. *Interpretation* occurs when the researcher moves beyond factual data and analysis and begins to explore what is to be made by them; the researcher can extend the analysis, use theory to provide structure, connect with personal experience, or explore alternative means of presenting the data. As Miles and Huberman (1994) explain, coding involves a system of categorization that allows the researcher to find, withdraw, and cluster the segments relating to a particular research question, construct, or theme.

Thus, I used *focused coding* to search for the most frequent or significant codes to develop the most salient categories in the data and to determine which initial categories resulted in the most thematic sense (Saldana, 2015). Once codes were identified, I looked for similarities and differences to determine how the codes could be categorized. From the categories, I was able to identify emerging themes. The identification of themes provides the complexity of a story and adds depth to the insight about understanding individual experiences (Creswell, 2012). In Table 5, I provide a sample of the interview data, codes, and Categories.
Table 5: Sample Data, Codes, and Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Data</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Sometimes I’ll be studying, right, or like when a class first starts up, and someone will walk to me and say ‘You look like you’re good at math.’” (Alex)</td>
<td>Model Minority Myth</td>
<td>Racialized Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Which country are you from?” (Holly)</td>
<td>Perpetual Foreigner</td>
<td>Racialized Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I’ve gotten a little numb to it like over my entire life just dealing with it happening.” (Tim)</td>
<td>Confusion</td>
<td>Impact of Racialized Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It’s almost I feel unwelcomed there, even though I am of a similar skin tone.” (Charlotte)</td>
<td>Uncomfortable</td>
<td>Impact of Racialized Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Maybe the media . . . Maybe the people they run into.” (Ricky)</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Origin of Stereotypes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“They come from people not liking or something that we do are different.” (Arjun)</td>
<td>Ignorance</td>
<td>Origin of Stereotypes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It brings awareness.” (JZ)</td>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Response to Racialized Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It’s like a fleeting moment, and you go about with your day. For every person that say that to you, there are five other people who are more compassionate.” (Olivia)</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>Response to Racialized Experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For my study, this coding system was useful, but I needed to be prepared to recode, reconfigure, or recategorize as the data shaped up (Saldana, 2015). Consequently, I re-read the interview transcriptions multiple times, reexamined the existing codes and deleted some, and reconfigured until I had a better understanding of the meanings and stories the participants shared. Specifically, I looked for common threads that tie together bits of data that emerged from the stories of the Asian American students. Also, I not only uncovered commonalities within the
data, but I also looked for differing, opposing, or missing content. As Glesne (2011) asserts, the researcher must be cognizant of what was not said or discussed:

There are many examples of poor student work--and published work--that . . . are simply organized as a description or summary of each of the main themes found in the data . . . You need to go beyond this. Re-examine the data and find phenomena that are not necessarily immediately obvious from what is being said or done. (p. 195)
CHAPTER V

THE STUDENTS

*I am an American, not an Asian-American. My rejection of hyphenation has been called race treachery, but it is really a demand that America deliver the promises of its dream to all its citizens equally.* (Mukherjee, 1997)

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to provide an understanding of the college experiences of UIC Asian American students and their experience with race. In the previous chapters, I provided the significance of my study, shared a literature review on the topic, and described the framework to my methods. This chapter provides a snapshot of the Asian American students who participated in this study. Before describing the themes generated from the interviews, student biographical information will be presented, their choices for majors, their personal goals, their reasons for attending UIC, their positive and negative perceptions of campus, and their connections to campus. Providing this introduction on the students allows a framework on the unique perspectives of each participant, and as the later chapters will show, how stereotypes, assumptions, and racialized experiences shape their life experiences as Asian Americans. The students are presented in the order of conducted interviews with Alex as the first and Holly as the last.

Alex

My meeting with Alex was scheduled for 5 p.m., but she arrived early. When I went to retrieve her, I noticed a young woman quietly sitting in the waiting area. She wore blue jeans and a white top and carried a backpack full of books. When I greeted her, she shook my hand and quietly apologized for coming early. I assured her it was fine and invited her into my office.
At first, Alex seemed a bit nervous as she hugged her backpack while sitting in the chair. However, as we casually chatted about the progress of our day, she became more comfortable and placed the backpack on the floor next to her. She kept a straight posture with both feet on the ground and her hands folded in her lap. Her body language looked attentive, so we started the interview.

Born and raised in Chicago, Alex is a Chinese American with a mixed ethnic background. Identifying as a 2nd generation Asian American, Alex’s mom emigrated from China at age three, and her father is of Irish descent. Her biracial features are evident in her light complexion, round eyes, and fine medium-length black hair. Currently studying neuroscience and English, Alex’s interest in those subjects began in high school, so she decided to pursue both majors in college out of enjoyment. When asked about her self-expectations and personal goals, Alex stated:

I think one large personal goal is to figure out a really solid career path or at least a couple of them. Another goal that I didn’t have when I came in, but I have had recently is getting involved with the Asian American student community here. That’s one involvement I’d like to continue after college as well.

(interview with Alex, June 26, 2014)

In the near future, Alex is considering careers possibly in research and teaching. She attributes these career paths to her involvement in research at UIC and her academic experience:

I think the reason I came to these is because, for teaching, I’ve had really good experiences with my teachers as a student. I feel it’s a valuable thing to pass along. And research, I enjoyed my personal experiences . . . I like learning. It’s good for both.

(interview with Alex, June 26, 2014)

Alex credits her reason to attending UIC due to her “poor planning.” She had applied to many colleges, which many she considered out of her reach, got accepted into half of the universities,
and chose UIC for its affordability and strong math and chemistry departments. When asked what she liked about UIC, Alex stated:

I like that the student body is really diverse. You meet a lot of different people that I feel I wouldn’t have met had I chosen some of the other colleges. Some of them were a little remote. A couple of were rural. That’s something I really appreciate about UIC.

(interview with Alex, June 26, 2014)

When asked what she would change about the campus, she wished the university, including the students had a better perception of UIC. She reported that some students compare UIC to top tier schools like Harvard and are not proud of the fact that they attend UIC:

I’m sure there are many people who are, but, yeah, I feel people don’t have enough pride in the achievements just because it’s not a namebrand university. What you can do to change it, I think, so this is kind of a complicated thing, right? But I think something what has helped me and has helped a lot of my friends is building a good community around themselves, so they feel better supported and they feel better about with what they’re doing. Also having teachers who are really responsive to student and challenge them, I think also helps them feel good about their school.

(interview with Alex, June 26, 2014)

Alex’s suggestion about building peer support and faculty relationships reflects Liu, Cuyjet, and Lee’s (2010) argument that student involvement can assist with issues of adjustment and faculty interaction can have an impact on self-efficacy and perceived academic success.

For Alex, she feels connected to campus through her academic involvement and extracurricular activities. Academically, she has encountered a number of professors who have supported her academic growth. As for peer connections, Alex met many of her friends in classes and in undergraduate student groups like the Asian American Student in Alliance and AARCC’s Asian American Mentor Program (AAMP), which have played a very large role in her personal life:

I think one thing that’s good about [AAMP] is that you see familiar faces. One thing that was hard for me to get used to coming to a new university is that people you meet and
become close with aren’t there the next semester, right? Some of my friends that I’ve become close to have graduated and moved out of state. It’s nice to have groups where you know a lot of people and you can make connections that last more than just a semester.

(interview with Alex, June 26, 2014)

Sonny

Sonny is a second generation, South Asian male. He opted to meet at a gazebo outside of one of the academic buildings on campus, but due to the chilly and rainy weather, we decided to conduct the interview at an empty student lounge nearby. Before sitting down for the interview, Sonny removed his tan raincoat, revealing his black shirt and blue jeans. He folded his yellow umbrella, which contrasted his dark features and thick black hair.

Comfortably seated, Sonny immediately listed his extracurricular activities at the start of the interview. For the four years he has been at UIC, he has been part of AAMP and a number of other student organizations. Outside of campus, he does Indian dance and music, something he has performed for the past fifteen years due to his dad being a singer and his mom a dance teacher. These musical talents have given him the opportunities to perform in India and across the United States.

Double-majoring in math and chemistry, Sonny wants to pursue something health related. Because he also plans on pursuing music and dance professionally, which he stated would be demanding, he did not consider medical school. Instead, he plans on going into occupational therapy because he was once a patient of occupational therapy and feels the occupation would be the right balance between health sciences and one-on-one patient interaction where he can make an impact. Specifically, Sonny is interested in incorporating dance into occupational therapy:

For me, honestly, what made me choose occupational therapy is because when I was dancing, I actually wear a prosthesis on my right leg as well. People would often be in
disbelief and awe that I could do these things. They would be very inspired. I know they mean it in a good way, but for me, I’d like to put out the point that it shouldn’t have to be a wonder that people can do this, so that’s why I want to, you know, if I can do it, then anyone can if they have the right attitude towards it. I guess occupational therapy kind of helps, because it’s showing how to adapt using your physical condition as you are.

(interview with Sonny, September 12, 2014)

Knowing graduate school will be demanding, Sonny wants to be able to explore as many things while as an undergraduate. He hopes to step outside his comfort zone by joining new organizations, volunteering at different places, or travelling abroad. Also, Sonny wishes to become more independent. He started out commuting from home, then living in a dorm, and now living in his own apartment: “Independence is another one, which I think I’ve been slowly progressing on because, I mean, even on the way where I lived . . . it’s been a gradient, so I’ve been able to slowly manage bills and everything myself.”

When choosing a university, Sonny had a number of options. He chose UIC because it was close to home, which allows him to go home on the weekends to teach dance classes with his mom. Also, UIC attracted him because of the health sciences programs, and, most importantly, the diversity of the campus:

For me, UIC being a public school is actually a blessing because I get to experience the amount of people. There are people working three jobs trying to pay for their college finances. I’m lucky to not to have to worry about other things while I’m in school, but seeing those people makes feel gratitude for the way I am right now and wants me work harder and see people at all different kinds of levels across the spectrum.

(interview with Sonny, September 12, 2014)

When asked what he liked about UIC, Sonny stated he appreciated the openness of the campus, physically and metaphorically. He likes the lack of a gate to the university that most campuses have, and he likes its close proximity to the city. On the other hand, Sonny feels some
of the campus facilities need updating, and like Alex, thinks the campus is viewed in a negative light:

There’s always a running joke around campus that like the bathrooms are never clean or the food is not sufficient. A lot of things about the dorm rooms not being apt to like living conditions, I mean they are standard living conditions, but it’s nothing great, which you can’t expect in college anyways. It seems sad that a university that has so much capability is constantly the root of all those jokes.

(interview with Sonny, September 12, 2014)

Nevertheless, Sonny attributes his connection to campus to AAMP, which he joined in his freshman year due to the coaxing of his father. The program was a channel for Sonny into the university, helping him to branch out to other organizations, making him feel at home, and turning him into a more open person:

The type of people that I’ve met through AAMP are very open, they’re very receptive and always there. I feel like it’s because I’ve learned to be open with those people, I’ve kind of reciprocated that with everyone else I meet on campus.

(interview with Sonny, September 12, 2014)

Olivia

“They call us ‘townies,’” joked Olivia. “That’s what the college kids call the people who lived in Urbana.” A biology major, Olivia identifies as a 2nd generation, Chinese American. She was dressed casually in black jeans and a white top, and she wore her brown hair loosely tied a bun. Her peppy personality beamed through her eyes and her smile as she introduced herself.

Having lived in a predominantly White neighborhood and attended a predominantly White high school, Olivia found UIC to be culturally refreshing and to be the perfect choice to distance her from a strict home life:
My parents believe that I should live at home, study at home . . . until I get married . . . I still have bedtimes. I’m 21, and I still have a 7 o’clock curfew and like 10 o’clock bedtime, so I don’t like to go home.

(interview with Olivia, September 22, 2014)

Growing up, Olivia enjoyed the sciences but was uncertain on whether to consider a major in the sciences or business. Due to this uncertainty, she went to the career center on campus and completed a career assessment. The results showed strong interests in the subjects of education and epidemiology, but, because her strict parents would not allow her to become a teacher, she considered a major in pharmacy. This parental pressure experienced by Olivia reflects Batra’s (2006) argument that parental expectations can often strongly affect Asian American identity, purpose, and development.

However, recently, she switched her major to epidemiology because the subject interested her more than just mixing chemicals to make medicine: “Pharmacy just seems boring. I’m not good with organic chemistry, which is, I think, is a big part of pharmacy. Chemistry doesn’t interest me too much. I like to look at statistics more.” Thus, one of Olivia’s goals is to do well on the GRE and get accepted into the epidemiology masters program of the UIC School of Public Health.

When asked what she liked about UIC, similar to Sonny, Olivia stated she enjoyed the diversity of the student population:

Like I said, I grew up in a White neighborhood, so everything was very, very different. Everybody did not understand people’s cultures. I was very sheltered. I didn’t talk to a lot of people because I felt like I didn’t fit in. It was probably me and this other girl, two or other girls that were Asian, and maybe one guy. I don’t remember much about high school anymore. I just remember it being predominantly White, not talking to the White people, hanging out with the Asian clique. It was terrible. But now I feel like I hang out with different diversity and people. It’s nicer.

(interview with Olivia, September 22, 2014)
However, Olivia was critical of the racial silos and wished the campus had less segregated social circles:

I feel like it’s still like high school. The Asian people hang out with the Asian people. The Whites hang out with the White people. Um, I want everybody to integrate into each other and learn about different people’s cultures, like, be Americanize or learn about Chinese or whatever. I still feel it’s very cliquey.

(interview with Olivia, September 22, 2014)

Nevertheless, Olivia feels connected to the campus through her student involvement. In her freshmen year, she had not socialized much because she felt new on campus. However, after joining the Vietnamese Student Association, she made many friends who included her in outings and hangouts. Also, her visits to AARCC and the staff there have helped her connect with others: “They were really nice. They helped me make friends. They helped me find a place to study. It’s pretty quiet in AARCC, but sometimes people are pretty rowdy because they play card games, and I like that atmosphere.” As Liu, Cuyjet, Lee (2010) state a cultural center can provide a physical location where Asian American students can find social support from both peers and staff.

Compared to living in Champaign where she had no experiences in Asian American culture, attending UIC has provided Olivia a sense of belonging and exposures to Asian American culture: “I’m in a lot of Asian American clubs. I’m the president this year. It’s been pretty fun . . . Everything is nice and fun. I feel I’ve learned more about Asian American culture while I was at UIC.”

Tim

Tim is male, East Asian, and considers himself 1.5 generation of Chinese descent. He seemed hurried when he arrived for the interview. He wore blue jeans and a black t-shirt with a professional hockey team logo. His black hair was closely cropped with faded sides, and the
slight bags under his dark brown eyes had a hint of tiredness. He let out a sigh when I asked him about his day, and through a forced smile, he stated that he had just recently returned from China and Korea and was stressed out from all his travelling. To calm him a little, I asked Tim about his trip, and in exchange, I shared about my past visit to China. I could see how our conversation made him comfortable and possibly developed trust because a genuine smile appeared on his face. We started the interview.

Tim’s original choice of pre-pharmacy for a major was driven by money. He thought it to be an easy field in which he can make money, but after discovering bioengineering in his junior year, Tim immediately knew this field was his true calling. Having always had an aptitude for engineering, Tim became more ambitious and more aggressive about his career goals. He plans on applying for a Ph.D. after graduation, specifically, to the neuroscience program at the University of California at San Francisco. Eventually, he would like to do a postdoc in research, maybe some consulting, and then come back to academia.

When asked why Tim chose to attend UIC, he stated he was “forced” and did not have much choice:

My dad gave me like an ultimatum in high school, which is ‘You can either go to an in-state college and we’ll help you pay for it, or you can go to an Ivy League and we’ll help you pay for it.’ My grades were nowhere near close enough to be Ivy League competitive, and I knew I wanted to be a biomedical engineer by the time I had to make that decision, so really, the choices that I had were UIC, Northwestern, and U of I. I never really liked the feel from Northwestern, and U of I’s bioengineering program was not accredited, so like reasonably, UIC was like my only choice.

(interview with Tim, September 22, 2014)

When asked what he liked about the campus, Tim in a very matter-of-fact tone stated “the close proximity to the city and the faculty in the Bioengineering department.” However, Tim
provided a lengthier criticism about student spaces and campus facilities when asked what he did not like:

The Quad is really depressing. The first thing that I noticed when I came here is like the first few days there was a ton of freshmen there that are like really excited and then within in a few days it just empties out. There’s just nothing there. It just like this giant concrete thing that exists that is usually just people walking around the edge of it. It doesn’t feel like people try to utilize it. It’s just like people, sometimes, have to walk through it. The facilities are not fantastic, especially the science ones. The Chem labs are disgusting. There’s like mold everywhere. Everything is rusted over. We don’t have like nearly enough space, especially in the Bioengineering department. Our lounge is tiny. Like I just don’t feel like our resources are being allocated very well here, I guess.

(interview with Tim, September 22, 2014)

As for his connection to campus, Tim explained he felt more connected during his freshman year. Back then, there were many forced interactions amongst freshmen, specifically through campus housing social opportunities. Unlike the three previous students, Tim is not involved in the AAMP program. Instead, Tim finds involvement in his academic department where he conducts student research:

[I]t’s just the people that I meet are in bioengineering or in neuroscience, and so they are constant reminder that I’m in UIC, but I’ve never felt that strong of a connection to this school necessarily. I did a little bit like in freshman year, but it kind of drowned out because, I felt like, I don’t know, there wasn’t a lot like that bound me to the school or that made me prideful that I was at UIC. It was just like this is where I am.

(interview with Tim, September 22, 2014)

JZ

JZ, a 1st generation male, Chinese American, entered my office with tensed body language. He kept his green jacket on; the zipper at his neckline hid a white t-shirt. He sat in the chair with his arms crossed in front of him, signaling a barrier between us. This was evident when I asked him to tell me about himself, and his response was “Well, what do you want to know?” JZ’s short retorts prompted me to ask follow-up questions to draw elaborations. As
Glesne (2011) states, a researcher must be patient in order to obtain deliberate responses and should use probing questions to elicit more explanation, clarification, or description. The more follow-up questions I asked, the more comfortable, I noticed, he became. He crossed his legs, pushed his black hair away from forehead, and leaned back into the chair. This signaled a more comfortable nonverbal cue from JZ, and the further down we got into the interview protocol, the lengthier answers he provided.

Studying computer science, JZ decided on this major after being introduced to it by a financially successful friend who was a UIC alumnus. This prompted JZ to plan a career in software development, knowing the prevalence of modern technology and knowing he would enjoy developing apps.

When asked why he chose UIC, JZ explained that, while growing up, he had heard that it was a good school. To him, UIC seemed to be the right choice because many of his friends went there, the campus was only ten minutes away from home, and the campus was reputable: “When you say ‘UIC,’ everybody knows in Chicago, what is UIC, and where is UIC.” From the way JZ emphasized “in,” “what is,” and “where is,” I could sense a hint of pride in his response.

However, when I asked what he did not like about UIC, he delivered three words monotonously with a hint of disdain: “the old buildings.” Not wanting to focus on the negative and risk returning to his original mood, I immediately followed up with the question asking JZ what he enjoyed about UIC. His energy returned to a more upbeat level, and like Alex, Sonny, and Olivia, he identified the diversity of campus as something that he appreciated and that made him feel connected:

I guess everything around me is influenced by different cultures such as the population at UIC. UIC has many different cultures and races, so it kind of connects how I by being able to make different kinds of friends and experiencing other cultures and races.
Likewise, his involvement in groups such as the Pyro Paddlers and the Vietnamese Student Association made him feel connected to the diversity on campus:

> It’s mainly Vietnamese people, but there are many other Asians and non-Asians as well. I think it’s fun. I get to hang out with other Asians and different personalities. If that club was non-Asian and still had the same personalities. I think it would still be the same. It’s not about the race . . . It gets me involved and make me feel like I belong.

JZ’s involvement in cultural organizations supports the argument that students exposed to diversity are more engaged, have a strong sense of belonging, and are overall successful (Hurtado, Griffin, Arellano, & Cuellar, 2009; Kuh, 2013; Reid & Radhakrishnan, 2003).

**Ricky**

Ricky, who identifies with the non-gender conforming pronoun “they,” is a first generation, East Asian. Short in stature, wearing blue jeans and a tan shirt, and sporting a spiky haircut, they self-described as “a super-super-super senior,” who started as a kinesiology major, but after finding the classes not engaging, switched to gender and women studies and minored in Asian American studies (ASAM):

> By chance, I took an ASAM class, and the prof was also a gender and women studies professor. It was cross-listed, and so she recommended it to me. I took another class, and then, I was like maybe I should just scratch this major.

Despite leaving kinesiology, Ricky still hopes to pursue a career in personal training because they do not enjoy sedentary work nor office settings. Instead, Ricky prefers being active and sociable: “I was a bartender, and I think being on my feet is something important for me . . . I can probably stand for like 8 hours. I definitely, I do better socializing with people.”
Despite identifying as sociable, Ricky avoided eye contact when delivering their answers. They were attentive when listening to my questions, but their gaze shifted when they started talking. I wondered if the avoidance of eye contact stemmed from respecting authority figures or from nervousness.

Ricky chose UIC after two friends recommended the campus. Like Tim, Ricky enjoys the different departments and resource centers, and like the previous three students, they complained about the unattractiveness of buildings and accessibility of specific centers:

The buildings could be a little prettier, but I think it would be really helpful if there were gender neutral bathrooms that specifically have a sign that say ‘gender neutral’ because people need it. And also maybe make the resource centers more accessible. I couldn’t find the Gender & Sexuality Center for the longest time.

(interview with Ricky, October 30, 2014)

As a commuter, Ricky finds it hard to feel engaged with people on campus. However, minoring in Asian American studies provided a welcoming space for interaction: “[It] kind of gave me a chance to interact with people, you know, whether I feel connected or not, at least it’s a good connection where I get to, I feel that my opinions are valued and stuff.” As Liu, Cuyjet, and Lee (2010) state, Asian American studies programs can assist in the intellectual and developmental needs of Asian American students by providing cultural knowledge, academic resources, and academic enrichment.

Charlotte

Charlotte has a vibrant personality. Before sitting down in my office, she greeted me with a firm handshake and a bright smile. She wore a red sweater and black jeans, and her long black hair was in a ponytail held up by a red scrunchie. Her crimson backpack was decorated with a number of pins, which she placed on the floor near her color-matching Converse shoes. She introduced herself as a 2nd generation, South Asian female majoring in English with a
membership in the Honors College and a future interest in medical school. After graduation, she wants to take a year and a half off before pursuing medical school to possibly do an internship or volunteer abroad.

Charlotte had always wanted to be a doctor since high school. Contrary to what most Asian parents do, her parents did not push her into any direction. Instead, they let her do whatever she wanted, and always encouraged her to do well in school. Charlotte had always enjoyed school, specifically her science classes, and liked volunteering at hospitals as a form of giving back, so becoming an emergency room medical doctor was ideal. She is also considering a doctorate in English but wonders if it will be fulfilling in the long run. Overall, she just wants to do her best:

Even if I tried my hardest, and I ended up doing poorly in class, that’s okay with me because I know I did everything that I could to achieve that. I think I just have very high expectations for myself, and I expect myself to uphold them. There’s no specification: ‘Oh, I need to have this GPA, or oh, I need this MCAT score.’ It’s just doing what I find to be the best that I can do.

(interview with Charlotte, November 10, 2014)

Charlotte chose UIC because of its affordability. Like Sonny, Charlotte also chose UIC because the campus was close to home which allows her to visit family often. When asked what she enjoys about the campus, she gives credit to the Honors College program, her advisors, and the English department:

I think if I wasn’t in the Honors College, I wouldn’t like it as much. I think being in the program has exposed me to . . . the career of medicine and that it involves more than what you think it does coming in from high school or coming in from undergrad. I think the advisors that I had in terms of the Honors College and in English, I’ve really enjoyed these experiences with those. The English department is really great too. Very encouraging!

(interview with Charlotte, November 10, 2014)

When I asked her what she did not like about UIC, the positive tone in her voice was substituted with a tone of disappointment:
I don’t think the caliber of students here is very high in terms of academic achievement in terms of goals, realistic goals, I mean everyone comes in Pre-Med, they’re Bio majors, and then they’re struggling in a 200 level chemistry class. It’s kind of like ‘Okay, well, when you get to graduate school it’s going to a lot harder than this.’ I’m in an upper level biology class. It’s Neuroscience. We had an exam last week, and I thought it was a very fair exam. It covered a lot of material. The teacher was excellent. She did a very good job of preparing us. If you went to class and you studied, I did well. The people that I’m friends with some of them did well, and other people who didn’t go to class, didn’t do anything, didn’t study, didn’t do well, they were complaining ‘Oh, it’s such a hard class’ but I’m like ‘If you’re going be a doctor, I don’t know what you’d expect.’ I just wish people would take school more seriously or I wish they come in a higher level in taking these things more seriously than they do.

(interview with Charlotte, November 10, 2014)

As for Charlotte’s connection to campus, most of her involvement occurred in her early student years when she was involved with the Indian Student Association, Alternative Spring Break, conducting research in the College of Medicine, and the Honors College. Now that she is in her senior year, her involvement declined:

Again, I don’t want to sound pretentious. It’s hard to make friends that have the same priorities as me; that are in the same level of maturity as me. I remember last year, I tried to be friends with some of the younger students like the freshmen and sophomores that I met through the Honors College . . . . but they were all just kind of like boring and not fun. They just wanted to talk about how to get straight A’s and how to like get the highest MCAT, where there are just so many other interesting things to talk about and interesting things to do.

(interview with Charlotte, November 10, 2014)

**Arjun**

Arjun arrived to my office dressed in a dark grey suit, a nicely pressed white button shirt, a purple tie, dark socks, and polished black shoes. His dapper attire, chiseled features, and dark pompadour made him look like he was going to a photo shoot, but he stated that he had an upcoming interview later in the day. A first generation, South Asian male, Arjun is bioengineering major with minors in electrical engineering and mechanical engineering. Currently, he is searching for engineering jobs, where he can be involved in medical device
production and is considering a graduate program in possibly engineering, business, or computer science. For Arjun, his college experience is a time for growth, self-discovery, and independence:

I’d say going further in life, especially in a college environment, you get to meet a whole wide variety of people, especially at UIC, there’s so many types of people. I really want to understand where people come from because I have my own personal background, but everybody else has their own story. It’s really interesting to find that out.

(interview with Arjun, November 17, 2014)

As a future engineer, Arjun considers this is a great approach to understand his audience or clients in the medical field and provide what is needed. He hopes to go into the healthcare and medical device industry because he is attracted to cutting edge technology and making an impact on people: “Knowing that, really, really empowers me.”

Like JZ, Arjun knows of alumni who had attended UIC about 20 to 30 years ago, so a sense of legacy was a reason for him to attend this university. Most importantly, similar to most of the interviewed students, the close proximity to home and the diversity on campus is what Arjun enjoys the most:

I guess one thing that I kind of like about UIC, it’s kinda called the University of Indians and Chinese. (laughs) I really do like that there’s a whole, I have a crowd of Indians around me. It’s easier to know that someone, and the people that you hang with, the people that you’re with all day, it’s easier to relate with them and all that. I spoke with one of my friends who are probably at some random city middle of nowhere. There are no Indians with them.

(interview with Arjun, November 17, 2014)

Arjun’s pride in having a strong Asian presence at UIC counters the fear of Asian American overrepresentation described in past literature. For this student, knowing Asian Americans are a major population on campus provides a sense of support, comradeship, and recognition of Asian American culture.
On the other hand, when asked what he did not like about UIC, Arjun shared Alex’s comment about school pride, specifically with the campus sports teams. For Arjun, having a football team would instill more campus pride:

There’s a lot of pride about going to football games or any games like that. That’s awesome. I wish, you know, UIC had that. I think we should have more pride about, you know, to be, you know, at UIC, but I mean, that’s how the program is, I guess. I mean, if we were Top Ten, then obviously, everybody would be going to every game. If we had a football team, that would be really awesome. Yeah, you see all these football games, college football going on, there’s a whole cool atmosphere about it. I think that would be definitely really cool.

(interview with Arjun, November 17, 2014)

However, he understood UIC’s challenges with campus space and outdated buildings. Most importantly, he understood how UIC being primarily a commuter campus could hinder campus pride and involvement:

It’s like 60% or 70% commuter school, and so I think that’s a huge part of it. Not too many people are on campus anyway, so they have to go back home or stuff like that. Yeah. Because we are a commuter campus, there’s not too many people. Towards night, everybody is gone. I guess, there’s not as much to do then. Just come here and go home. But, I mean, we’re right by the city downtown. There’s always something to do downtown, so I guess there’s always a tradeoff there.

(interview with Arjun, November 17, 2014)

For Arjun, he feels connected to campus through a youth group he originated on campus: “I really want that to do well, and I really want more people to come and to take part of that because the experiences that I get from there, I feel everybody should get that.” As Liu, Cuyjet, and Lee (2010) argue, Asian American students feel more empowered when taking leadership roles in specific groups or in the larger community.

Holly

Holly, a studio art major, promptly sat in the chair and threw her backpack and portfolio down beside her when she entered my office. She stated that she was exhausted from working
on her final art project all night, which was evident in her puffy eyelids. She wore a black top, blue jeans with some dry paint stains, and a grey sweater tied around her waist. Her long black hair looked disheveled, and her right wrist was ornamented by a number of beaded bracelets. Throughout the interview, she bounced her knee, either to keep awake or as nervous tick.

Despite the low energy in her voice, she kept a very comical tone throughout the interview. In her introduction, Holly stated that she was just a “boring housecat” who was a first generation, Vietnamese American who decided to major in fine arts because art provided a sense of belonging where she did not feel judged and a sense of enjoyment where she can draw until her hand hurts. She also stated that she grew up looking at pictures in books, comic books, and manga books, which influenced her career goal of going into illustration, but she fears people would rather hire a graphic designer than hire someone who still draws by hand. In the ended of her introduction, she joked, “I really hope I can find a job. If not, I’ll just build myself a lovely little house made of cardboard with my studio arts degree.”

Like most of the interviewed students, Holly chose UIC because of the close proximity to family, the recommendation of trusted teachers, the reputation of art program, and the number of resources on campus:

I really like the services and stuff here. If you really look for it, there’s a lot of support for the students. It’s like awesome. When I first got here, I was really confused on what to do. They recommended that I go to the Asian American Resource and Cultural Center. AARCC had a mentor for me to help me get around for the first semester, and I was like ‘Oh, I feel less freaked out.’ Counseling Center has also been helpful.

(interview with Holly, December 9, 2014)

This sense of support that Holly experienced through AARCC shows how cultural centers and mentorship programs can provide a place where students feel validated, safe, and supported and help new students adjust successfully (Lui, Cuyjet, & Lee, 2010).
When asked what she did not like about UIC, Holly mirrored the majority of the interviewed students and commented that the facilities, specifically the art building, looks forgotten, abandoned, and outdated. Additionally, because her academic building is separated from main campus, she does not have a strong connection to the campus and feels separated from the majority of the student population:

Even though I come here for school, I still kind of feel the Student Center East is still foreign to me because the art building is so separated from there. So when I do come to the main campus, I’m like ‘Where’s there?’ A lot of events and stuff, I can’t make it or go to because of class schedule and the way the art program is made.

(interview with Holly, December 9, 2014)

Chapter Summary

This chapter provides a snapshot of the nine Asian American students who participated in this study. As stated in their narratives, all the students had preconceived impressions of the campus diversity before arriving to campus, with one even labeling UIC as “the University of Indians and Chinese.” The majority of them appreciated the diversity of student population, which, for some, was the reason they chose to attend the university while others chose it because of the close proximity to home, the distance from strict family, the reputation of academic programs, or the recommendations of friends, teachers, family, or alumni. They saw college as a time to get involved in organizations and to prepare for their careers. Each made academic choices and had career goals that were self-directed or influenced by peers, teachers, or parents. Surprisingly, only one student expressed strong parental pressure on her career track, while the rest of the students chose majors and future plans of their own liking, however with the majority still concentrated in subjects like medicine, health sciences, and engineering, which stereotypically attract Asian Americans. Similarly, the students participate, or have participated,
in Asian American-centric programs or organizations that provide a sense of campus connection and belonging.

Despite the lack of campus pride and the outdated facilities, the university environment is a space in which these Asian American students navigate their day academic life. Based on the narratives they shared, the students understand the university’s uniqueness, challenges, and potential; and most importantly, the students know how their Asian American identities factor into their experience within campus. In the next chapter, the narratives of these students will further illuminate their experiences as Asian Americans at UIC. These students share their racialized experiences and how these contribute to the social construction of Asian Americans. Through their narratives, these Asian American students reveal their unique racialized experiences that shape how they perceive themselves and their place within the university.
CHAPTER VI

THE RACIALIZED EXPERIENCES OF

ASIAN AMERICAN STUDENTS

Prejudice, bigotry and discrimination all happen but it is when they occur together consistently for generations (systemically) to a whole race (a social construct) do we get the magical elixir of racism (Maxam, 2010).

With the reported increase in demographic change coming to higher education, there is a need for educational institutions to be prepared to meet the needs of students of color and provide a supporting campus environment. As stated earlier, the campus climate provides the overall normative feel of an institution or the current attitudes, behaviors, and standards and practices of employees and students of an institution, and the campus culture is more about the normative “beliefs” of an institution (Hurtado, 1992; Rankin & Reason, 2008). Both can have a positive or negative influence on college students, their experiences, and their academic success.

In the previous chapter, I introduced the nine Asian American student participants and provided a snapshot of each student’s general biographical information, aspirations, campus perceptions, and campus connection. In this chapter, I will recount the narratives of the nine students and their encounters with racialized experiences. By drawing from the one-on-one interviews conducted, I present a portrait of the students through the gathered data to reveal the stereotypes imposed upon them by student peers, faculty, staff, and random strangers and the racialized experiences they had encountered. The following section uncovers the students’ experiences on being Asian American and their treatment on campus. This study has uncovered that the stereotypical images of the model minority myth, the perpetual foreigner, and the homogenous race are thriving, that cultural assumptions are placed, and that Asian Americans are made to feel unwelcomed. The themes below describe the unique experiences of the Asian
American students interviewed when dealing with the social construction of race and provides answers to the central research question: What racialized experiences (forms of racism), if any, do Asian American students encounter and perceive on campus?

The Model Minority: “All Asians are supposed to be smart.”

The model minority stereotype, which assigns a certain status to Asian Americans as a model for success, places pressure on Asian American students to conform to a stereotype that they did not endorse, particularly if they were not good at a particular subject or did not enjoy it (Sue et al., 2007; Wing, 2007). In the study, the students were well aware of the “model minority” stereotype, either as a formal label or as the general stereotype of “Asians are smart.” The narratives they shared during the interviews revealed this stereotype to be a dominant and common theme, specifically with intelligence being prescribed upon them.

The thought of being perceived as “smart” appeared many times throughout the interviews. For these students, the model minority application was responded to with a range from annoyance to anger. They reported that the model minority stereotype has constructed them to be one-dimensional and solely about academics. Sonny shared:

I mean there is definitely the Model Minority Myth. We’re good at science, we’re good at math. I think aside from that we’re expected to be very studious. Especially, especially myself . . . I’ve had people tell me . . . ‘Oh, you must be valedictorian material.’ I think it’s something where, so for music and dance, I am relatively successful. It’s going well. I think people kind of translate intelligence or like ability of music and dance to my academic abilities. And, like, I’m doing average academic, like I’m not so far above other people. Um, but I think people assume that doing well in one area is doing well everywhere. So, a lot of people do assume that my life is very one dimensional as in only music, dance, and academics, and all of those are very vigorous, which they are, but it’s not like I have no life outside of class.

(interview with Sonny, September 12, 2014)

Connected to the assumption that Asian American students are limited to studying and academics, the model minority stereotype has led to the Asian American students being desirable
class partners. Alex recalls a time in class when a classmate sat next to her because he thought
Alex “looked” good at math. In group projects, Holly has found herself to be automatically
assigned as a leader expected to “magically” have all answers. Charlotte also recalled:

I know when I was taking science lab courses, if I didn’t know anyone in the class,
someone would randomly be ‘Do you want to be my lab partner?’ and I’m like ‘Oh,
because I’m the only Indian girl, and you think you’ll get an A?’

(interview with Charlotte, November 10, 2014)

The prescription of intelligence for Charlotte extended to her interactions with a teaching
assistant in an English course:

He had taught the course before and was like ‘I know you all want to get into med
school, don’t worry about the grade.’ There were a lot of Asians in that class. I don’t
know if that was stereotyping or he really just had past experience teaching that class. He
brought it up a couple of times throughout the semester too.

(interview with Charlotte, November 10, 2014)

The racial microaggressions described above support Ang’s (1996) argument that the
othering of Asian Americans has evolved from blatant exclusion to the subtle placement of Asian
American students as the model minority or pet people, symbolic representatives who are no
longer marginalized and no longer occupy the position of other (p. 37). From the student
narratives, it is apparent the model minority myth exists in their academic environment. The
extent of this can also be detrimental in how the students internalize such racialized comments.
For Tim, it was frustrating:

That’s actually something that really annoys me because there a lot of Asian kids who are
really, really dumb, but people think they’re smart because they’re Asian. It’s also really
annoying because I tend to hold myself to standards based off of my own performance, so
like if I don’t know something in math, somebody will always make a joke like ‘Oh,
you’re Asian, shouldn’t you know this?’ It’s so ridiculous.

(interview with Tim, September 22, 2014)
Olivia, Holly, Charlotte, and Ricky further expressed frustration on how the model minority stereotype has held them to a higher standard and led to the assumption that they need minimal support. They state that this stereotype has led other students to assume that Asian Americans are the reason the grading curve is so high, that Asian Americans do not have to study, that other student work are compared to theirs unfairly, and that Asian Americans do not need any academic resources. Specifically for Holly, this stereotype resulted in Asian American mental health issues to being ignored:

They always assume Asian people don’t have problems or anything . . . When I do talk about my depression or anything, people don’t register it in their brain. I think it’s ‘cause the stereotype for Asians is that we automatically succeed, we automatically have everything. We have the good life. No one has any bad idea about us. It’s not true. We struggle like everyone else. We have so much [sic] problems that you guys have no idea about it, and the media doesn’t talk about it or want to report it.

(interview with Holly, December 9, 2014)

For these students, the idea of being a model minority is a social construction related to being Asian American. Their experiences with this stereotype have reinforced the assumptions connected to academic success when associated with Asian Americans, no matter one’s ethnic background. The students report that this stereotype has been a source of offense that made them feel one-dimensional, an academic expert, a perfectionist, annoyed, frustrated, ignored, and uncomfortable.

Perpetual Foreigner: “Everybody from Asia is Chinese.”

The assumption that all Asian Americans are perpetual foreigners despite having citizenship in the United States has led to Asian American students feeling like an outsider in their own land. As stated in the review of literature, the placement of the perpetual foreigner stereotype on Asian Americans has led to internal cultural conflicts for those with dual cultural identities (Wong & Halgin, 2006) and to being marked as a foreigner because of their physical
features (Sue et al., 2007). Furthermore, the perpetual foreigner stereotype has led to the assumption that Asian Americans are a homogenous group that lack interethnic differences. This treatment of Asian Americans as a homogenous group has led to unfair admission requirements to Ivy League schools, where the admission of Asian American students were being curtailed. Scandals involving the alleged admission discriminatory practices occurred in the 1960s and 1970s and have resurfaced recently in the media. As past literature have described (Strauss, 2015; Wang, 2007; Wong and Halgin, 2006; Wu, 2011), this fear of an “Asian Invasion” is prominent on many campuses; however, from the interviews I conducted, this fear was not reported in any of the student narratives. Instead, students in this study primarily reported experiences with the perpetual foreigner stereotype. Rather than feeling a sense of belonging, the students stated they were seen as foreigners or different despite being born in the United States or they were assumed to be ethnically homogenous. For example, when someone asked Holly what the difference was between her culture and another, she stated that she was annoyed by the double standards of Asian culture being seen as “different” while White culture as the norm: “‘What’s the difference between your culture or what not?’ You don’t go up to somebody from Europe, and ask them ‘What’s the difference between from like France, Germany, or Italy, or something?’”

Similarly, when asked if there were ever a time on campus when she was treated differently, felt unwelcomed, or uncomfortable because of her race, Olivia stated:

Nope. I don’t think so, but not on campus. I was shopping downtown. I like to dress a certain way, and this girl, she walks by and I hear her saying ‘I hate it when they dress that way.’ I felt like she was saying that because I’m Asian and I dressed like an American person. There’s no way of dressing. I don’t understand what she was saying because Japan dresses really well, and America copies them sometimes, so I don’t understand what she was saying. I felt that she was wrong. I felt like she needed to be educated. I wanted to yell at her. I did not do it.
This incident shows that the perpetual foreigner stereotype is a common experience for these Asian American students and can occur in any setting. For Tim, his experiences occurred on campus, specifically in spaces for student services. He described a couple of incidents when he felt assumed to be of a specific ethnicity or assumed to be a non-English speaker:

First of all, Korean people come up to me and speak Korean to me all the time. That’s really interesting and bizarre. It’s really not negative. It’s just uncomfortable, I guess. There were a lot of times, where like, well, not a lot, at least like several, that I either didn’t understand what somebody was saying to me or I was speaking too softly and they asked me if I could speak English, and that was extremely offensive. I think this happened at Wendy’s like twice or three times, and I had no idea what they were asking me, and they were like “Do you speak English?”

Holly also shared an experience that frustrated her:

I am Chinese, but then, I hate it when they sometimes randomly greet you in like another Asian language. What if I’m not actually that [ethnicity]? How come you guys don’t do that to any other groups but us? You just assume we’re all just one group.

Further, she recounted an incident on her first day on campus that perpetuated the foreigner stereotype:

I was leaving Orientation. I was leaving campus with my friend, and we were walking by, and some guy just randomly started going ‘ching chong,’ making sounds. I was like, “What the Hell? I thought this was college and it was supposed to be different.” I guess people lied to me in high school. I was so shocked when I was walking, I was like “What am I supposed to say or do?” Do I turn around and curse him out or just go home and say “Screw it?”

While Holly’s experience came from a stranger, JZ’s encounter was received from a friend with whom he was playing basketball in the student recreation center:

This Indian person referred to me as “The Asian.” Then I asked him, ‘You know you’re Asian too, right?’ He said, ‘Oh, you know what I mean.’ I don’t know if he was joking,
or if he’s just ignorant, but I think more towards ignorant. Usually people think Asians are the ones with the small eyes and not the brown skin.

(interview with JZ, October 8, 2014)

Arjun and Sonny, who are of Indian descent, in their respective interviews stated how the common assumption of “All Asians are Chinese” make them feel not “real” Asians. Arjun commented, “When people say Asian, they refer more to the Eastern Side of Asia: China, Korea, Japan, Vietnam.” Likewise, Sonny stated, “When they say ‘Asians,’ they don’t really refer to Indians, so it’s like a separate sub-continent.”

For JZ, his experience of not being considered a “real” Asian surprisingly came from an international student from China:

I was in class, and this lady who came from China. I saw her name be prompted by the teacher. I asked her is she Chinese, and she said yes. I told that her I’m Chinese as well. She asked me if I spoke Mandarin. I said “No, I speak Cantonese.” Then she said with emphasis that “No, you’re not authentic Chinese. You’re not real.” I think she said it because I was born in the States. I guess American born Chinese people don’t fully get the full culture.

(interview with JZ, October 8, 2014)

While most of the students found the homogenous stereotype problematic, Lei (2003) shows the benefit of a collective front: protection from physical and verbal harassment. While this may be viewed as a positive, Tim found the collectiveness of Asian Americans exclusionary:

I find the Asian American community is just kind of strange because they’re like very cliquey. It makes sense kind of in the context of the organization if they’re just all Asian Americans, but even outside of it, I feel like people in those organizations, tend to not involve themselves with anyone else. They just completely seclude themselves. It’s just mini-Chinatown. They pretend the rest of the world just don’t exist.

(interview with Tim, September 22, 2014)

Sonny had a similar comment about the exclusiveness of Asian American students:

There’s an Indian Student Association . . . a lot of times people avoid it . . . just because, they, um, or some people specifically I’ve heard them say, including myself, “I
don’t want to be in a huge group of people of the same race because then drama begins or what not.”

(interview with Sonny, September 12, 2014)

Despite finding the homogenous stereotype challenging, Tim, out of all the students, took more of a diplomatic approach and attributes this assumption to people who do not understand geography:

There used to be this stereotype that everybody from Asia is Chinese, and then people realized that it was like not good to assume that everybody was Chinese, so they assume that everybody was Japanese or Korean which is not any better. I don’t know. It’s really strange that when somebody sees somebody who is Asian, they want to figure out what country they’re from in Asia. You never ever see somebody walk up to a Black guy and ask “What part of Africa do you come from?”

(interview with Tim, September 22, 2014)

**Unwelcomed: “I have places that I don’t go to and places that I do go to.”**

The student narratives also revealed racialized experiences that resulted in feeling unwelcomed or discriminated in certain spaces on campus. For Charlotte, she stated feeling unwelcomed in high-trafficked student areas like the Montgomery Ward Lounge and the Pier Room:

I tend to avoid those areas because that’s where a lot the Muslim students and the Middle Eastern student congregate and it’s almost I feel unwelcomed there, even though I am of a similar skin tone and if they didn’t know my name, they wouldn’t automatically assume I wasn’t Middle Eastern. That was especially my freshman and sophomore year I noticed, now I wouldn’t even try, like before, I would just sit there, it was weird. They would just stare. You just felt out of place. This is something that I talked about with my other friends, and they noticed that trend too.

(interview with Charlotte, November 10, 2014)

For JZ, his experience comes from his perception of the campus social environment that Asian women preferred other races to Asian men:
I see on campus that more and more nowadays is that a lot of Asian girls are going towards White males . . . I feel that Asian girls like to support a variation, I guess. They have a greater chance with other cultures than Asian males.

(interview with JZ, October 8, 2014)

For Sonny, his experience involves a professor whose giving a lower grade made him feel discriminated:

Sometimes I feel like it, maybe because the, especially the professors that I mentioned, I didn’t do so well in their class. I don’t, I mean, I was keeping up with the work, but, sometimes, I would get back, like in the English class, I would get back the assignment with nothing more than a ‘Oh, you should have added a comma here,’ and then I would get a 9 out of 10. Um, and it seems hard for me to kind of understand why that would be the case. Or there was a grade that was nowhere on the syllabus that on the final Blackboard grade, it said ‘Professionalism: 6 out of 10’ and I was like ‘She didn’t mention this was a grade at the beginning of the class and neither did she mention it anywhere on the syllabus, and somehow I got 6 out of 10.’ I asked someone else who was in the class, incidentally they weren’t Asian American, but they got a 9 out of 10.

(interview with Sonny, September 12, 2014)

When asked if he addressed it with the professor, Sonny stated that he had paired it with another question and the professor only answered one question and ignored the one about the grade. For Ricky, their experience was subtle and attributed their feeling of unwelcomed to their intersections of their race and gender appearance:

I don’t know if it’s just my race, but I think it’s more like my look and my race combined. Yeah, so I don’t really know if it’s just my race. I’ve been called out that I’ve been in the wrong bathroom. Also, in the type of events that I’ll go to, I’ve been asked why I was there, or people will look at you . . . And feeling like I couldn’t participate because . . . Sometimes, when I go to their events, I feel like I’m not the type of audience that they are speaking to . . . that’s the type of response I would get.

(interview with Ricky, October 30, 2014)

Cultural Assumptions: “People just have innate prejudices towards other people.”

The students disclosed a range of cultural assumptions they had experienced on campus. Tim reported being asked if he had ever eaten dog; Sonny found himself automatically assumed
to be a pre-med major; Ricky was asked why there was even a need for an Asian American
resource center or Asian American studies program; and Holly was assumed to be a martial arts expert. Specifically for Arjun, he had received inquiries regarding Indian culture:

I’ve been asked about arranged marriage and how people feel that I have to do that. They ask about how there is so many different gods in my religion. They ask me what’s curry. What people consider what curry is, I don’t think it is curry. They see me eating something, and they’re like “Oh, is that curry?” I’m like “No, it’s not curry.”

(interview with Arjun, November 17, 2014)

While the majority of these cultural assumptions were delivered by peers, Sonny reported encountering some from faculty. The first was when he was in his English class and the noise from the Asian American Awareness Month celebration could be heard from the Quad:

Our professor was extremely confused and she asked what the noise was. I said, ‘I think it was triple A month, the Asian American Awareness Month, they’re having their events in the Quad.’ Then she commented ‘Oh, aren’t Asians supposed to be the quiet ones?’ That took me aback, and the classroom went silent. Right then, I think she realized that she said something wrong, but she didn’t take any . . . she didn’t care or bother to apologize. That was unintentional, but I think an apology was due.

(interview with Sonny, September 12, 2014)

The second encounter was in his biology class where the professor, who was talking about the pollution in China, made a generalized statement about China’s One Child policy: “They would prevent women from having a second child because that’s the kind of people that the Chinese people are.’ He said it very much aware that half the class was Asian people, students.”

For Tim these cultural assumptions can be a source of frustration. Tim has witnessed some actions, which he considers socially inappropriate, of international Asian students that he feels are wrongly applied to Asian Americans. He has seen Chinese students cutting their hair in campus bathrooms, bathing themselves in the sinks, and smoking in the hallways of academic buildings. While these witnessed actions could stem from cultural ignorance, Tim stated that the
actions of international Asian students can place stereotypes and prejudice on Asian American students, and in result, affect him:

These cultural biases tend to create strong prejudices against Asian Americans. Just in general, I get a feeling that the majority of students when they are interacting with Asian students, tend to automatically put them in three different classes. One is like ‘Oh, this just a normal student except they’re Asian.’ And then one is ‘Oh, this is an Asian immigrant student.’ And then another is like ‘This is one of those of those Asian frat kids who only hangs out with other Asians.’ Personally, it’s kind of an issue because when I talk to somebody they immediately have these like archetypes that they’re waiting to throw me into.

(interview with Tim, September 22, 2014)

Tim’s statement reflects Lee’s (2015) assertion that Asian Americans are commonly seen through a simplistic and monolithic model minority lens. Whether coming from international or domestic origins, Asian Americans get cast into a foreigner archetype. In the case of these student participants, assumptions and stereotypes connected to the Model Minority Myth have made them academically superior, perpetual foreigners, and culturally inassimilable.

Chapter Summary

This chapter addresses the study’s central question: What racialized experiences (forms of racism), if any, do Asian American students encounter and perceive on campus? These nine undergraduate Asian American students had similar encounters that illustrated their daily-lived experiences dealing with race and that reflected the stereotypes described in the literature and the stereotypes permeated throughout time for Asian Americans in the United States. Their narratives described their experiences with the either the model minority stereotype, the assumption of being a foreigner or coming from a homogenous ethnic group, feeling unwelcomed, or encountering forms of cultural assumptions, which resulted in the themes presented above. In the following chapter, I will share how encounters with or perceptions of racialized experiences affect Asian American student perspectives of the institution and how
encounters with or perceptions of racialized experiences at UIC impact the students’ perception on their own academic success.
CHAPTER VII
HOW RACIALIZED EXPERIENCES AFFECT THE
PERCEPTIONS AND STUDENT SUCCESS
OF ASIAN AMERICAN STUDENTS

My potential is more than can be expressed within the bounds of my race or ethnic identity. (Ashe, n.d.)

The main purpose of this study is to expand the existing research on the racialized experiences of Asian American students and to learn if encounters with and perceptions of racialized experiences impact student success. In this chapter, I explore how race may impact various elements of student life, their perceptions of the educational institution, and their perception on their own academic success. Specifically, I address the first two guiding issue subquestion: (1) How, if any, do encounters with or perceptions of racialized experiences affect Asian American student perspectives of the institution? and (2) How, if any, do encounters with or perceptions of racialized experiences at UIC impact the students’ perception on their own academic success? To elicit responses, the students were asked the following questions from the interview protocol: How have these race-related experiences changed, if at all, your campus experience, the way you use campus resources, the places you go on campus, etc.? and How have these race-related experiences affected, if at all, your student success?

Campus Perceptions and Student Success:

“It’s hard to tell exactly what effects this has on Asian American students.”

As described earlier, the perception of the campus environment by students of color can impact their student success. As Rankin and Reason (2008) explain, the campus climate can be experienced in dramatically different ways by students of color, ranging from how inclusive is the campus environment to how diverse is the student body demographics. Similarly, the
campus culture, or the normative beliefs of an institution, can also have a positive or negative influence on college students, their experiences, and their student success (Kuh et al., 2010). For the purpose of this study, I expanded the definition of student success to include the various indicators that lead to student success, specifically feeling comfortable and culturally affirmed in the campus environment (Ho hoana & Oliveria, 2012; Sima & Inman 2011). The student narratives revealed a mixture of responses.

Out of all the students, only Ricky and Tim were confident to state that their encounters with and perceptions of racialized experiences affected their campus experiences and their student success. Ricky shared how their gender plays a factor on spaces visited on campus:

Definitely, I have place that I don’t go to, and places that I do go to. I definitely avoid Student Center East because there is a high volume of people, and I especially never use the bathroom there. I think how I categorize spaces is based on my gender.

Where Ricky did feel comfortable is at the tenth floor of University Hall, but even there, they is sometimes made uncomfortable and encounter the model minority stereotype:

I definitely feel welcome at the tenth floor of UH. Somewhere I usually go, but then I don’t try to engage in conversations on politics, ideologies, or academics, or whatever with a new student organization focused on social justice. That’s where I get lots of questions like “Why do you need a resource center?” even though it’s a social justice thing. That’s where people will look at you think you’re smart.

(interview with Ricky, October 30, 2014)

When asked whether or not racialized experiences affect their student success, Ricky stated that they find themselves not interacting with others:

I hope not. I do think that I’ve been a little affected by, I don’t know what to call it, maybe defense mechanism or whatever, how I relate to people. I’ve definitely have lost interest in networking, which I know is kind of important with like career building, but maybe once I leave UIC it may be a little better. I don’t know.

(interview with Ricky, October 30, 2014)
For Tim, he stated that how he uses campus resources is shaped by his personality rather than racialized experiences: “I think that has been shaped more with my personality. I don’t think it has affected how I use campus resources. I also haven’t used a lot of campus resources. Primarily, I’m in the engineering department.” Like Ricky, Tim argued that racialized experiences do affect his student success and professional goals:

It does actually. Personally, it’s kind of an issue because when I talk to somebody they immediately have these like archetypes that they’re waiting to throw me into. It’s kind of annoying that they exist. If somebody doesn’t interact with me, they don’t know like anything about me, which is totally okay. But like if you talk to somebody who’s White, you would never say like “Oh, he’s like one of these three types of people.” I understand why it happens but it’s still offensive that it does. Careerwise, it’s really silly because there are these transfer students that have like perfect GPAs, with perfect GRE scores, but they have like no lab experience. They’re not very useful otherwise. That actually creates the tendency I think for graduate students to overlook Asian students that have high GPAs because they’re like “Oh, this is just another archetype Asian kid who’s been studying hard his entire life and can’t do anything outside of that.” It’s kind of desensitizing where they’re like “This metric just doesn’t matter when we’re considering this category of people because they all have high GPAs.”

(interview with Tim, September 22, 2014)

For the other seven students, how encounters with or perceptions of racialized experiences affect their perspectives of the institution and how encounters with or perceptions of racialized experiences impact the perception of their own academic success differed in varying degrees. As reported earlier the model minority stereotype leads to the masking of the mental health issues of Asian Americans. For Holly, her experience with her non-Asian peers dismissing her depression has caused her to not engage with her non-Asian peers:

I think I don’t want to make friends half the time. I don’t want to even bother. I really hate that . . . Sometimes, I feel closer to my Asian friends because at least when I complain about my problem or my depression, they understand, but when it’s not Asians, people don’t seems to like not get it as much.

(interview with Holly, December 9, 2014)
Additional, Holly stated that because some of her peers do not understand her mental health issues, she would prefer to avoid coming to class than to have to explain her mental state:

I kind of want to avoid some of my academic classes. I don’t want to sit in class and have people assuming stuff half the time. It’s like, “Why do I even bother explaining? I don’t know if you guys are seriously even listening to me right now, or are you just going to forget it in like two seconds, and I’ll have to start all over again.”

(interview with Holly, December 9, 2014)

When asked how these racialized experiences affect her student success, Holly jokingly responded with “No, because I’m awesome,” but she continued with response that showed preference to avoidance: “I think that’s another reason why I draw because it’s so meditative. I feel like I’m in my own little world, and I won’t have to care.”

For Sonny, when asked whether these racialized experiences changed his campus experience, he stated, “Not really. I may be too patient of a subject to be interviewing.” and after a small laugh, he explains:

I think, for me, specifically, because that’s the only viewpoint that I would know of, I’m fine of going anywhere. I do always tend to go to the Asian American Resource and Cultural Center. Maybe it’s because people who are like-minded or people whom I’ve known are there since my fourth year. I mean, I’ve gone to Science Center, Math Center, things like that.

(interview with Sonny, September 12, 2014)

When asked if racial experiences affected student success, he let out a sigh and referred back to his course when he felt treated unfairly: “Sometimes I feel like it, maybe because the, especially the professors that I mentioned, I didn’t do so well in their class.”

For Alex, the racialized experiences she has perceived or encountered did not change her campus experience, rather they have made her more aware that insensitive comments from guest speakers or peers could still occur:
I think it doesn’t change the way I function on campus so much, but it does change kind of the expectations, you know? Now in my classes it’s kind of rare, but if someone gets brought in to speak, I’m aware that this could happen, right? If I’m sitting in my math lab doing work, I aware that someone could come and say this. I think I’m more conscious that it could happen, but I don’t think I would allow it to change my daily habits.

(interview with Alex, June 26, 2014)

When asked if her encounters with or perceptions of racialized experiences affect her student success, she aligned her response to the lack of Asian American staff members in administrative positions at UIC, which she asserted has some sort of effect on Asian American students:

I do feel like that I’m sure on some level they are. With my time here, and with getting closer to the Asian American community, I’ve kind of realized that there aren’t a lot Asian American, like, staff members on campus, especially, like, in administrative positions. It’s hard to tell exactly what effects this has on Asian American students, but I’m sure there has some.

(interview with Alex, June 26, 2014)

Likewise, Olivia commented that race-related experiences did not change her campus experience, but she did state that the model minority stereotype places pressure on her to succeed:

Only personally. I feel like there’s still that stigma that school expects Asian American students to do well, and some of us don’t do well. We can’t expect everybody to be smart, you know. I do try to work hard personally. I don’t know. I feel like I should be working a lot harder though because my parent immigrated here, so they had to like risk their life on a boat to go to America, so I can have a better life, so I don’t understand why I can’t work any harder because they were risking their life. It’s not like I’m risking my life for school, I should be able to work harder.

(interview with Olivia, September 22, 2014)

Arjun, who appreciated the strong Asian Americans presence at UIC, stated that his encounters with or perceptions of racialized experiences did not affect his student success. However, whether or not racialized experiences changed his campus experience, he commented that how he navigates campus would change, but not because of racialized experiences, rather it
was because he preferred not to be the alone when using campus resources or going somewhere on campus:

If I go somewhere, I don’t really want to be the only one there. It’s not a race thing, it’s more just being alone. If I wanted to go to a UIC basketball, I would be less likely to go alone. I’d rather go with someone. I don’t think there’s a race factor there.

(interview with Arjun, November 17, 2014)

Similarly, Charlotte stated her student success was not affected by racialized experiences; however, she commented that because she found the students who frequent student lounges to be unwelcoming, she preferred to avoid those student spaces:

No, not really. I don’t know if this relates or not, but the Montgomery Ward Lounge and the Pier Room, I tend to avoid those areas because that’s where a lot the Muslim students and the Middle Eastern student congregate and it’s almost I feel unwelcomed there, even though I am of a similar skin tone and if they didn’t know my name, they wouldn’t automatically assume I wasn’t Middle Eastern. That was especially my freshman and sophomore year I noticed, now I wouldn’t even try, like before, I would just sit there, it was weird. They would just stare. You just felt out of place. This is something that I talked about with my other friends, and they noticed that trend too.

(interview with Charlotte, November 10, 2014)

Out of all the students, only JZ reported that his encounters with and perceptions of racialized experiences did not affect his campus experience or his student success in any way, but racialized experiences have made him more aware: “No, it just makes me think about how Asians in America are interacting or behaving. It brings awareness. It wouldn’t affect me successfully or academically.”

Chapter Summary

These nine Asian Americans who have encountered racialized experiences were able to explain how encounters with or perceptions of racialized experiences affect Asian American student perspectives of the institution and how encounters with or perceptions of racialized experiences at UIC impact their perception on their own academic success. Two students, Ricky
and Tim, were confident in stating that these racialized experiences have affected their campus experiences, specifically where they go on campus or the services they use, and were sure past racialized experiences have affected their student success. For most of the other students, they reported not having their campus experience or student success affected by racialized experiences; however, the students also shared moments of feeling uncomfortable or unwelcomed within the campus environment with some of them reporting they prefer to avoid certain student spaces or connecting with others, some were pressured in doing well in class or meeting the model minority stereotype, and some said they have grown aware of racialized experiences or their own racial identity. Only one, JZ, reported that his encounters with and perceptions of racialized experiences did not affect his campus experience or his student success.

In the next chapter, I describe the stereotypes with which the nine Asian American students were familiar, provide an explanation about from where they think these stereotypes come, explain how they respond to racialized experiences, and share to whom they go in seeking support.
CHAPTER VIII

ASIAN AMERICAN STUDENTS’ UNDERSTANDING OF RACIALIZED EXPERIENCES

Consequently, nonwhite identities and experiences gain cultural value as commodities in the marketplace through the reductive terms of postindustrial capitalism and a white middle class that sees itself as culturally bankrupt and lacking a legitimate history (Park, 2010).

In this chapter, I explore the Asian American students’ understanding of and responses to racialized experiences and to whom they go seeking support when encountering or perceiving racialized experiences. Specifically, I address the third guiding issue subquestion: (3) How, if any, are encounters with or perceptions of racialized experiences understood by UIC Asian American students? Are they addressed by the students? If so, how?

Understanding of Racialized Reputation: “The University of Indians and Chinese.”

As stated earlier by one of the students, the university is jokingly known as “The University of Indians and Chinese.” This reputation, coupled with the large population of international Asian students and Asian American students, have given the university a racialized reputation. As described in Chapter 4, most of the students chose this university because of its diversity, so there was a preconceived notion that Asians would be a prominent racial population. As Alex explained, “there are a lot of people of Asian descent here, and I feel like this is kind of an underlying theme that a lot of people are noticing.”

With this known reputation, the students acknowledge how the campus environment can be both a benefit and disadvantage for Asian Americans. For both Alex and JZ, having a large Asian American population is a form of acknowledgement. As JZ explained: “I feel that the campus accepts and really likes Asian people because there are a lot. There’s many different
community clubs, many Asian professors, so there isn’t anything against Asians. That’s for sure.” For Arjun, a large Asian American provides a network of friends and a sense of community: “There is so many Asian Americans, you’re bound to know someone. It’s easier to get to know people. I feel that helps you provide a more comfortable environment for someone who goes here.”

However, the rest of the students felt a strong Asian American presence on campus created an ironic imbalance. Despite the large amount of Asian American students, some of the interview participants felt there was an Asian American deficit on campus when it comes to activities, professional representations, and student support. Olivia commented:

I think the campus does support the Asian American students, but I feel like a lot of the campus programs are more targeted more towards more a general audience. With like UIC being about 30% Asian, I feel like they need a little bit more towards Asians, but that’s okay because we’re in America. It was predominantly White in most areas, so that’s what UIC is bases it off of, so that’s understandable.

(interview with Olivia, September 22, 2014)

For Ricky, this lack of focus on Asian Americans equated a lack of events that would draw an Asian American audience:

From my experience just from being here, there are a lot of Asian students. As somebody who isn’t active in student orgs, like student activities or stuff like that, I feel there could be more events that aren’t geared towards people who kind of fall outside of the main attractions . . . I feel there is a lack of awareness about the presence of Asian Americans or Asians, I don’t know, however they are defined. Like their presence on campus . . . Me, going to like mostly non-Asian things, you know.

(interview with Ricky, October 30, 2014)

Similarly, Alex noticed a deficit of Asian Americans in administrative or student support roles:

I’ve kind of realized that there aren’t a lot Asian American staff members on campus, especially, in administrative positions. There is a lot of Asian American students, they’ll tend to make friends with Asian American groups. When possible, it’s not so much with teachers, because I think there’s not a whole much of choice there, but when looking for services, they’ll like, for example, advising, for academic advising, they’ll look for advisors who have like similar heritage and stuff because they feel more comfortable that
way. I think the advisors with that heritage should be available because there is a large body of Asian American students on campus, so I think it does indirectly impact the decisions we can make.

(interview with Alex, June 26, 2014)

Alex’s statement reflects the concerning lack of Asian Americans in educational professional roles particularly as teachers and leaders in the K-12 sector and a poor representation as senior faculty, senior staff, and senior administrators in higher education (Ching & Agbayani, 2012; Wang & Teranishi, 2012). This may result in students not being able to envision themselves in particular careers and may not see the full range of options available for their future (Kodama et al., 2002).

**Stereotypes Identified: “Asian time, where it is acceptable to be late to things.”**

Stereotypes are defined as “beliefs about the attributes of a group of people” (Devos, 2014) and are sometimes linked to prejudices based on a number of social categories like gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, or nationality (Jussim, Cain, Crawford, Harber, & Cohen, 2009). Further, stereotypes are impressions that members of one group have about members of another group that tend to perpetuate myths containing distortions yet an element of truth (Wong, Lai, Nagasawa, & Lin, 1998). In this study, I wanted to gauge the students’ familiarity of Asian American stereotypes. To elicit this, I asked the students the question from the interview protocol: *With what Asian American stereotypes are you familiar?* Their responses reflected some of the common Asian American stereotypes described in the literature review section; however, the interviews identified additional ones not described in the literature. The most common stereotype identified was the model minority, which Sonny described as “We’re good at science, we’re good at math. I think aside from that we’re expected to be very studious.” Other stereotypes identified were ones those familiar with Asian American history could possibly
Because Olivia had taken an Asian American Studies course, she listed the dragonlady, prostitute, yellow peril, and coolie stereotypes.

The other stereotypes mentioned were less “textbook” and more socially known. Charlotte said Asian Americans are stereotyped as stingy because “they don’t want to spend money on things.” Alex stated Asian Americans are known for being family-oriented and are known for “Asian time, where it is acceptable to be late to things.” JZ shared the commonly known stereotype of Asians being bad drivers, specifically a gendered stereotype of “Asian women are not the best drivers.” He also listed physical stereotypes of Asians being “usually short” or “skinny” and sexually inadequate: “sexual parts tend to be small.”

Out of all the students, Ricky shared a stereotype with which I was unfamiliar about Asian Americans being rich:

People will think that Asians are rich when you’re talking to people of different circles or categories. They’re like “Asian communities in Chicago don’t need help because they have money. They buy off who’s in charge with policies” . . . I don’t know if it’s because they see that in Chicago. Maybe in Uptown it’s different. Mainly for people who live south, they see Chinatown, they see successful business and touristy spots. All the housing that kind of look nice or nice parks.

(interview with Ricky, October 30, 2014)

Ricky’s statement reflects how the model minority image places Asian Americans as the only racial minority group that has “made it” in America through effort and education and therefore can serve as a model for other racial minorities to emulate (Wing, 2007). Also, Ricky’s statement conjures Lee’s (2015) assertion that the socioeconomic success of Asians abroad are being applied to Asian Americans, which masks the poverty of some Asian American communities in the United States.
**Origins of Stereotypes: “Some stereotypes are somewhat based in truth.”**

To learn how Asian American students understand from where these racialized experiences stem and their understanding of Asian American stereotypes, I asked the students the interview protocol question: *From where do you think these racial stereotypes come?* Their responses suggested that stereotypes originate from history, the media, ignorance, or a combination of these sources.

In their respective interviews, Tim, Sonny, and Alex stated that stereotypes stem from history. Tim explained:

> A lot of the stereotypes have been grown over generations of immigrants. It’s a combination of the Cantonese immigrants that came over a long time ago. They build up a lot these stereotypes, especially with accents and things, and those are really offensive. I don’t know. Some stereotypes are somewhat based in truth.

(interview with Tim, September 22, 2014)

For Sonny, he explained that stereotypes could be historically passed down through family.

> Honestly, it could go all the way back to when people from Asia started immigrating here. To the fact that we kind of had to, I say ‘we,’ but like people back then had to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps per se. I know my parents always have the mentality that ‘You know, when we came here, we had to, you know, find a place by ourselves, pay for ourselves.’ Everything. Everything was their own responsibility, so that way, there is a lot of respect we have to pay for them. I think they expect that kind of effort in return. Which is true, and I can understand that, so I think that’s where being rigorous, diligent in our work comes from. Kind of investing in your future self before investing in yourself in the moment itself. But so I think mainly that’s maybe where it mainly came from, not pointing fingers at parents or what not, but I think the expectations kind of seeped into our own value systems.

(interview with Sonny, September 12, 2014)

Alex commented that stereotypes have historical contexts but the media plays a strong influence:

> I know some of them have historical contexts. Definitely Model Minority Myth and it’s kind of family values. That’s where they originally came from, but where do they come from now? A lot mostly from the media. You’ll go on some news website, and it’ll be like “Asian Americans are the most successful minority population in the United
States.” I feel like these stories are easy to spread because people are already used to them. So, yeah, I think mostly these stereotypes come from the media.

(interview with Alex, June 26, 2014)

For two students, the media played a big role in perpetuating stereotypes of Asian Americans. Ricky stated, “Maybe the media, but that’s like really broad.” Likewise, JZ explained: “If there is a movie or a book that portrays the Asian person in some way, then another person will believe that, and then, start making jokes or spreading rumors that isn’t exactly real.”

For Charlotte Arjun, and Olivia, they attributed ignorance or limited exposure to the creation of stereotypes. Charlotte commented that stereotypes originate from limited exposures to Asian Americans:

They see that “Well, this Asian is stingy, and that other Asian is also stingy.” and now they’re like “Well, now all Asians are stingy” just based on their limited perception of a group of people. They might know that the three physicians they’ve had in the past 10 years are Asians, so they may think “All Asians are doctors” or “All Asian parents force their kids to become doctors” that kind of things.

(interview with Charlotte, November 10, 2014)

Likewise, Arjun pointed to ignorance when it comes to creation of stereotypes:

They come from people not liking or some things that we do are different. For example, a lot of religious things, a lot of Indians are stereotyped about. It stems from that. There’s a disagreement on what people see and believe and what they see us doing, and they don’t understand, we don’t understand what we’re doing sometimes like religiously, so they just make fun of it: “You have a dot on your head. You do this, that.”

(interview with Arjun, November 17, 2014)

When asked, Olivia’s answer included ignorance from her own racial group:

I think they came from other Asian Americans and some White people, but usually Asian Americans. I hear these from other Asian Americans than like different races. I don’t go around campus somebody calls me “dragonlady.” Also, I feel like it’s rumors. More rumors. Maybe they met somebody with that characteristic, so they stereotype the entire race with that, but I don’t know where they came from.
For Holly, stereotypes originate from a mixture of sources:

I guess maybe partially from the media. When you look at history books, they really don’t talk much about it or anything. You always have to take a separate class to learn about it. I’m guessing it’s mostly from that, and possibly, parents passing it down to the child.

Addressing Racialized Experiences: “I actually don’t mind telling people right then and there.”

To determine whether or not the Asian American students addressed these racialized experiences in any way and if they went anywhere to discuss these experiences, the questions from the interview protocol were asked: What are some of the ways you have addressed or dealt with these experiences with race you mentioned? To whom or where would you go, off or on-campus, to discuss any of these experiences? Their responses ranged from addressing racialized experiences to avoiding them and included a number of options for students to go for support.

Two students, Sonny and Alex, stated they responded in assertive, empathetic, and educational ways when addressing racialized experiences. Specifically for Sonny, he preferred to take an educational approach:

I actually don’t mind telling people right then and there. I’ve told people I do classical Indian dancing, and they were like ‘Oh, you mean, like the Slumdog Millionaire kind?’ And they said out-rightly that they were probably ignorant or they weren’t sure, and I told them, ‘You know, it’s no where near that.’ And I explain that it’s much more ancient that, it’s a 2000 year old art or what not.

Even when people try to shorten his name, Sonny addresses it:

One thing that has happened to me a lot is people trying to shorten my name. And when that happens, I’m actually pretty adamant in a patient way, I try to get them to say my full name. It’s difficult for them, but I have them, I work until they can say it because it’s not that hard. I don’t think it’s should be something that they feel, ‘Oh, it’s just because it’s an Asian American name, and I can’t pronounce it, and I’m just going to change it for my own conveniences.’
Similarly, Alex challenges people who express stereotypical beliefs on her. For example, when Alex mentioned the time when her peers assumed she was good at math, she addressed it:

> Usually when it happens, I generally ask them about it ‘Why did you say that? Where did this idea come from? That Asian American students are all good at math.’ I try and talk about it with whoever is around when it happens usually.

(interview with Alex, June 26, 2014)

Similarly, Arjun commented:

> If I’m put in a situation, I don’t think I’d have too much trouble dealing with it. I really try to explain. Like if someone asks me why I don’t eat meat, I really try to explain to them the reasoning behind it. People usually think our parents forced us to not eat. One way I do it is to explain stereotypes.

(interview with Arjun, November 17, 2014)

Likewise, JZ does not avoid addressing situations, especially when encountering racialized experiences from friends: “Because I know they were joking, I throw it back at them.” The other students stated they preferred to avoid dealing with encounters of racialized experiences. For Holly, she finds it tiring to address racialized experiences: “Sometimes, I do . . . It gets tiring to address. I’ll just have a sign on my face next time.”

For Ricky and Tim, the two took the route of avoidance. As Ricky explained: “I usually act really distant . . . I just let them slide. I don’t get super aggravated anymore. I would just go away.” Similarly, Tim stated, “I don’t really address it because I don’t like starting conflict over things like that. If somebody says something really offensive, I’ll tell them it was offensive, but I won’t get up in their face about it.”

Unfortunately, for Tim, this avoidance extends to the level of separating himself from other Asian Americans, just to distance himself from Asian American stereotypes:
I’ve been shaped a lot against like Asian culture, like the Asian stereotypes have pushed me away from interacting with a lot of the Asian societies. A lot of them tend to fall into these stereotypes or tend to like exaggerate these stereotypes or continue to push them forward, and it just really bothers me.

(interview with Tim, September 22, 2014)

Likewise, Charlotte preferred to avoid locations on campus where she felt unwelcomed by other students: “Oh, we can’t go to the [Student Lounge] . . . I didn’t feel so strongly welcomed . . . It was just like ‘Maybe next time, I’ll just go sit somewhere else.”

In regards to the question: To whom or where would you go, off or on-campus, to discuss any of these experiences?, the students reported varying sources for support. Both Arjun and Holly stated they did not know what to do and where they would go. Ricky stated faculty in Asian American studies would be a resource while JZ would speak to family and Tim and Charlotte with friends.

For three students, the Asian American Resource and Cultural Center is their ideal source of support to discuss encounters with racialized experiences. For Sonny, he gets support from his peers and staff at AARCC:

A lot of my friends are in AAMP, and one of my friends in AAMP is actually my roommate as well, and so I talk to her a lot with a lot of these things. Jeffrey Alton [of AARCC], I talk to him if I have any problems if I have some problems that come up with school or what not. He’s always a great resource.

(interview with Sonny, September 12, 2014)

Likewise, Alex stated:

Two places I found that are really good for discussions like this are the Asian American Mentor Program. I talk about it to them. I think a lot of the people who go through AARCC I could talk to about these things.

(interview with Alex, June 26, 2014)

Sharing the same opinion, Olivia commented, “I’d definitely talk with AARCC.”
Chapter Summary

These nine Asian Americans who have encountered racialized experiences were able to draw from their experience and explain their understanding of these encounters. Also, they were able to identify stereotypes with which they were familiar and provide an explanation about from where they think these stereotypes come. Lastly, they shared how they respond to racialized experiences and to whom they go when seeking support. In the following chapter, I will discuss my analysis of these findings, share student suggestions on how faculty and staff can better work with Asian American students, and provide research implications.
CHAPTER IX

DISCUSSION

The stories of the future of American higher education and the nation as a whole cannot be told without regard to their changing demographic landscapes. (CARE, n.d., p. 4)

In the previous chapters, I presented my findings from a narrative study of nine Asian American students and their encounters with racialized experiences. By collecting their stories over the span of a semester, I have attempted to answer the central research question: What racialized experiences (forms of racism), if any, do Asian American students encounter and perceive on campus? and the three guiding issue subquestions: (1) How, if any, do encounters with or perceptions of racialized experiences change Asian American student perspectives of the campus? (2) How, if any, do encounters with or perceptions of racialized experiences on campus impact the student success of Asian Americans? (3) How, if any, are encounters with or perceptions of racialized experiences understood by Asian American students? Are they addressed by the students? If so, how?

This chapter revisits the themes that emerged from the student narratives, provides the analysis to the findings of the study, reviews the research questions that guided this study, lists student suggestions on better serving Asian American students, considers the implications and the limitations of the study, and introduces potential areas for further research and practice.

Revisiting the Themes

The racialization of Asian American students at UIC brings up concerns for the student participants. The previous chapters describe how racialized experiences, whether subtle or blatant, affect Asian American students. Through my collection and review of data, I uncovered four themes during my coding process: the Model Minority, Perpetual Foreigner, Feeling
Unwelcomed, and Cultural Assumptions. Uncovering the factors that contribute to the racialized experiences of Asian American students allows a more comprehensive examination of the systemic effects that impact members of this racial group (Choi, 2011). In this section, I will explain how each theme emerged and looked across the student narratives.

The Model Minority

The model minority stereotype was prominent in the student experience of the Asian American interviewees, no matter their ethnic background. For these students, the idea of being a model minority is a social construction related to being Asian American. Whether or not they were familiar with the formal term “model minority,” they reported being seen as one-dimensional beings with higher intelligence, which has caused them to be overlooked as people with lives beyond academics. However, even then, a racialized assumption is assigned to what these Asian Americans students do outside of the classroom. For example, Sonny was viewed as successful in his extracurricular activities in music and dance even though he is performing just average academically.

Also, all the students found the model minority stereotype to be negative. Its application on them has placed Asian American students on a level of “othering” that Ang (1996) states has evolved from blatant exclusion to the subtle placement of Asian American students as the model minority or pet people, symbolic representatives who are no longer marginalized and no longer occupy the position of other (p. 37). For example, Alex, Holly, Tim, and Charlotte found themselves desired by peers to be ideal class partners with the assumption that they were subject experts. Even more, Charlotte had a professor assume her only priorities were good grades and getting into medical school. With Olivia and Ricky added to the mix, the students stated that the model minority stereotype has resulted in them being held to different standards. Academically,
the students felt they were the cause of the high grading curve and for the unfair comparison to other student works. Socially, the students found their needs for academic assistance and student support to be overshadowed by the model minority stereotype.

**Perpetual Foreigner**

The perpetual foreigner assumption also permeated the student experience of the Asian American study participants. The students reported this stereotype being imposed on them by individuals both from outside and inside the Asian American community. They stated that non-Asian Americans assumed them to be foreigners while other Asians or Asian Americans ignored their interethnic differences. Whether from insiders or outsiders, this stereotype creates a lack of sense of belonging for the students where they are made to like strangers in their own land and community.

The students reported being assumed to be either an English language learner, of a different ethnicity, a native speaker of a specific foreign language, or not a “real Asian.” From their narratives, their encounters with the perpetual foreigner assumption were delivered in covert and overt ways. For example, Tim and Holly recount incidents of when other Asian Americans spoke to them in foreign languages as if they were of that ethnicity or, at the very least, bilingual. While these incidents could be innocent mistakes, Tim and Holly were made uncomfortable and their ethnic identities ignored. Likewise, some of the students shared encounters with the perpetual foreigner assumption where others blatantly made them to feel like foreigners or did not belong. For example, Holly was accosted by a passing stranger who made racist “ching chong” remarks while JZ was told he was not a “real” Chinese because he was American born and did not speak Mandarin yet found himself to be “the” only Asian when with his Indian peers. Supporting this were Arjun and Sonny who stated Asian Americans from
Indian descent tend to feel excluded from the Asian category due to assumption that Asians are the ones only with small eyes and not brown skin. This assumption that Indians are excluded from the Asian category reflects the pre-1965 history of citizenship for South Asians when this ethnic group excluded themselves from the racial identity of Asian in order to be counted as White (Visweswaran, 1997).

Unwelcomed

Experiences that caused feelings of not feeling welcomed or feeling discriminated were also reported by the Asian American students. From their narratives, the students’ feelings of not belonging were caused by perceptions of their environment or by direct encounters with others. For example, JZ admitted feeling out of place compared to his White male peers because he has observed Asian women preferring White romantic partners. Likewise, Sonny found himself treated unfairly after a professor gave him an unfair grade for things not noted on the class syllabus, causing him to not want to class anymore. For Ricky, feeling unwelcomed in social spaces was attributed to how their race and gender display are perceived by others. They reported being made feel unwelcomed in certain spaces and having to justify their attendance at certain events. Whether or not these encounters were meant to intentionally offend the students, the level of concern expressed by these student supports the importance of sense of belonging for students to succeed in college (Hurtado, 2007; Kuh, 2010). The more students feels they belong, the more they persist. The less students feel they belong, the less chance of academic success.

Cultural Assumptions

The Asian American students also shared instances of cultural assumptions placed upon them. They reported that these cultural assumptions came from non-Asian Americans and ranged from specific cultural inquiries to generalized blanket statements about a certain
group. For example, Arjun stated how people have assumed he would participate in an arranged marriage and have assumed every cuisine he eats has curry. For Sonny, he shared instances with two different professors who made cultural assumptions in the classroom. One professor made a statement about Asians being “the quiet ones,” and another professor generalized all Chinese people as supportive of China’s One Child policy because “that’s the kind of people that the Chinese people are.” Whether or not these cultural assumptions were delivered from a place of innocent curiosity or from a place of insult, Arjun and Sonny were jarred by these encounters, especially when they come from faculty and in front of other students. No matter the agency, cultural assumptions, positive or negative, perpetuate stereotypes that affect Asian Americans.

Analysis of Findings

The purpose of this study is to examine the racialized experiences Asian American students may encounter or perceive at the University of Illinois at Chicago. By conducting my research, I hoped to learn whether or not stereotypes were imposed on Asian American students, understand their Asian American student experience, and gain insight about how race may impact various elements of student life and their perceptions of the educational institution. Lastly, I wished to learn if encounters with and perceptions of racialized experiences impact the student success of Asian American students. In short, I would declare that the findings in this study have met its original purpose. However, I would also express caution in simplifying the findings in this study because as past research, and now mine, have shown, the topic of race is not a subject easily explained.

Through my collection of data and analysis, I have found the Asian American students who participated in this research to be complex individuals who come from diverse backgrounds. With four males, four females, and one gender non-conforming, the students all identified being
between first generation and second generation Asian Americans. The majority identified as South Asians and East Asians while only one student identified as Southeast Asian and another of mixed background. Overall, their demographic information reflected well the Asian American diversity on campus.

The findings in this study illustrate the racialized experiences encountered and perceived by nine Asian American students on campus and how these stereotypes are imposed on them. The two prominent themes these students discussed focused on the model minority stereotype and perpetual foreigner assumption. Through their stories, I can see how these Asian American students are already socially constructed as model minorities or assumed as foreigners. They come from immigrant families whose histories reflect most immigrant stories of coming to the United States for a better life. Most of them had chosen majors in the STEM field, subjects that normally require academic rigor. They expressed interest in career paths in academia, research, medicine, engineering, or computer science---professions that require advanced degrees. From these tropes, one can see how easily racial stereotypes can be applied to these Asian American students.

With existing racial stereotypes permeating American society through history and mainstream media, it is not surprising that the Asian American students interviewed for this study encounter these stereotypes. The narratives of the nine students show how the historicity and pervasiveness of racial hierarchies of the past still frame Asian Americans as the model minority or perpetual foreigner. As Katrak (2000) asserts, Asian American identity is viewed within the context of the United States through filters of the prevalent racial climates, the current images in popular media, and the remnants of anti-Asian legislations, whether the setting be the exclusionary eras or present day. These students are not just entering a racialized campus and
bringing their racial identities, but they are also navigating through societal legacies of exclusionary practices or beliefs that have placed Asian Americans in a disadvantage positioning in the contemporary American stratification racial order (Baldoz, 2004). On the other hand, these students are also experiencing the historicity of privileged and affluent Asian immigrants, which places them in a model minority status, resulting in their personal and academic needs to be ignored on campus. Thus, these students, as Lee (2015) asserts, are benefiting from new positions of power and privilege when valorized as a model minority while still being victims of racial microaggressions. Additionally, the international context of Asia and the United States’ shifting relationships with various countries cause Asian Americans to be seen as Asians, not Americans, and come to embody whatever threat the land of their ancestry allegedly poses to the United States (Lee, 2015), perpetuating the venomous racial discourse of the past of Asian Americans being inassimilable foreigners. In other words, no matter the country of origin of these nine students, they have qualities that they could not dismiss---the shape of their eyes, their hair color, and their skin color---or what Takaki (1993) terms as a “racial uniform,” which regardless of the students’ personal merits, they cannot gain acceptance beyond being viewed as perpetual foreigners (p. 12).

As I interacted with these participants and dissected their stories, I began to understand the full range of their racial realities as Asian Americans in higher education. Their narratives have challenged and affirmed my own assumptions about what it means to be Asian Americans in today’s increasingly diverse campus environments and revealed one important fact: racialized experiences are encountered by these students, including at their place of higher learning. This unfortunately reflects Museus’ (2014) argument that Asian American students in higher education are less likely to be satisfied with the environments on their respective campuses and
with their overall college experience compared to their White peers. For these nine Asian American students, their dissatisfaction stems from experiencing the model minority stereotype, the perpetual foreigner stereotype, and other forms of racial discrimination on a campus that only succeeds in structural diversity rather than an authentic diverse environment despite being one of the top 25 most diverse universities in the nation.

Further examination of their narratives reveals that the services and support available for Asian American students at UIC are inadequate. Because Asian Americans are not considered a historically underrepresented group on campus, the institutional response to the needs of Asian Americans is not a priority. With 22.7% of the undergraduate population identifying as Asian Americans (UIC Office of Institutional Research, 2014), the university is causing disservice to one of the largest racial minority groups on campus. The campus lacks an academic support unit for Asian American students, only a minor exists for Asian American studies, and as the narratives of the nine Asian American students have described, they have encountered experiences with racial microaggressions that have made these students feel frustrated, unwelcomed, and strange. While the prefix “micro” may equate something small, racial microaggressions are as impactful as overt racism (Choi, 2011). If the university truly prides itself on its diversity, then they will need to address these challenges and provide equitable programs and services for their Asian American students.

Additionally, from their narratives, I noticed the complexity of their racialized experiences and how these experiences are not easily explained. An example of this is how the students have a love-hate stance with the collectiveness of Asian American students on campus and how this collectiveness can contribute to the perpetual foreigner stereotype. For some of the students, this collectiveness is a way for Asian Americans to show comradely encouragement,
cultural support, shared interests, and a united front. Also, the offerings of Asian-interest activities, organizations, and a cultural center are affirmations of their racial identities, which provide a sense of belonging for these students on some level. However, at the same time, they found the collectiveness of Asian American students on campus to be counterproductive. It perpetuates the foreigner stereotype or homogenous assumption that all Asians are from China, causing the nine Asian American students to experience a form of “othering,” through which, despite having citizenship in the United States, they are made to feel like an outsider in their own land, or in the case of this study, like they do not belong on campus.

Furthermore, I noticed that, despite these encounters with racialized experiences, the students, overall, seemed to enjoy UIC, but they also felt that there is a need to address Asian American issues on campus. As I described earlier, these Asian American students come to campus with racialized histories and enter an already racialized environment with a prominent Asian American and diverse population. With their own racial histories, these students know of the advantages and disadvantages of such environments and most know how to navigate the racial campus climate. Some of the students draw from their academic or personal knowledge of existing stereotypes and use this awareness as an asset when navigating a racialized environment. As described in their narratives, the students know of UIC’s racialized reputation, so it is no surprise that the nine Asian American students was able to successfully navigate its racial campus climate. This could be due to the offering of Asian American Studies courses, the existence of AARCC, the plethora of Asian American student organizations, and the large and visible Asian American population on campus. For some of these Asian American participants, this structural diversity is a form of security on some level. However, also from their narratives, it is apparent that UIC’s structural diversity is not enough because the lack of appropriate
campus services, resources, and staff representations influences how these Asian American students truly navigate campus and its racial climate.

Nevertheless, despite the campus’ inability to provide an authentic racial climate, the nine Asian American students were resilient. On some level, their racial identity operated in an almost protective-reactive way that moderated the effects of racialized experiences to their social connectedness on campus. They participated in Asian American student organizations or in a mentorship program, took an Asian American studies course, or visited a culturally inclusive safe space on campus. Their involvement in these activities showed how they flourished in their academic experience despite possessing a stigmatized identity. They were able to access the limited resources on campus that affirmed their racial identity, which resulted in forms of self-empowerment that contributed to their resilience when dealing with racialized experiences. In other words, these nine Asian American students were successful in overcoming the adversities associated with stigma as an empowering process, as opposed to a depleting process (Lee, R. M., 2005; Ngo, B., & Lee, S. J., 2007; Romero, A. J., Edwards, L. M., Fryberg, S. A. & Orduña, M., 2014; Shih, 2004).

As stated earlier, these Asian American students come with racialized histories, so they are either aware of stereotypes before arriving on campus or they learn about them formally in courses. They expressed having a clear understanding from where Asian American stereotypes may have originated, the existence of these stereotypes, and how these stereotypes permeate society. Their understanding provided counterstories to the stereotypes that afflict them. Most importantly, they reported being aware of stereotypes that have afflicted them and shared how they responded to these encounters with racialized experiences accordingly. Some of the students address their racialized experiences with some understanding. As Sonny explains, “I
tend to be very patient. I have a lot of like emotional buffering.” Likewise, Alex justifies her encounters by excusing the actions of the offender:

I can’t really blame the speaker too much . . . they weren’t trying to be offensive . . . it’s like a fleeting moment, and you go about with your day. For every person that says that to you, there are five other people who are more compassionate.

(interview with Alex, June 26, 2014)

For others, they practice acceptance when encountering racialized experiences. As Arjun explained, “I kind of just laugh it off . . . There’s nothing you can do about it.” For Olivia, her acceptance takes on a deeper contextualization: “That’s okay because we’re in America. It was predominantly White in most areas, so that’s what UIC is bases it off of, so that’s understandable.”

Whichever their approach, the narratives of these Asian American students posit that race is an element that is lived daily and that the idea of encountering racialized experiences is tiring enough that the experience adds stress to one’s mental health, causes one to avoid other Asian Americans in fear of getting stereotyped, and results in circumventing areas of campus because of not feeling welcomed. Addressed or not, encounters of racialized experiences have detrimental effects on Asian American students and their student success. If we consider the framework of my study, how the students respond to racialized experiences can threaten the factors that contribute to student success: sense of belonging, student engagement, and campus support (Hurtado, 2007, Kuh, 2010; Museus, 2014).

Thankfully, all of the students, except for Holly due to her academic program proximity and restrictions, participate in social or academic activities that engage them, support them, and provide a sense of belonging. Some visit the Asian American Resource and Cultural Center, some participate in mentorship programs, and some are members of student organizations. Their
levels of engagement show the importance of a cultural center on campus, mentorship opportunities, and leadership involvement. The cultural center provides a physical space where students can find social support from both peers and staff; mentor roles promote leadership in a cultural context for Asian Americans while those in mentee roles get help with adjusting to campus; and leadership involvements allow Asian American students to feel more empowered to take on more leadership roles in the larger campus community or beyond (Liu, Cuyjet, & Lee, 2010). I would argue that, despite the racialized experiences of these nine Asian American students, they found ways to persist in their academic experience.

Finally, from their narratives, the students seemed to have had a different understanding, than I, about how these encounters with racialized experiences on campus could impact their student success. Not all necessarily made a direct connection, but all of the students agreed that these encounters were not appropriate and affected them on some level. Taking the UIC definition of student success into consideration, I would argue that the student success of these nine Asian American students remained intact as they were retained from the first to the second year of school and will have graduated within 6 years (V. Paglione, personal communication, January 30, 2013) despite their encounters with or perceptions of racialized experiences on campus. However, if the expanded definition of student success introduced in this study is considered, which includes feeling comfortable, feeling a sense of belonging, and feeling culturally affirmed, then I would argue that the academic success of these students were threatened more than the students could have communicated. It is my assumption that their lack of connection on how racialized experiences could impact their student success could be contributed to factors of resilience as mentioned above or could be contributed to their lack of
familiarity with the institutional definition of “student success,” which is better understood by practitioners on campus.

**Review of Research Questions**

In order to understand student experiences, I used a conceptual framework consisting of perceived or encountered racial microaggressions in a campus racial climate. Using a Critical Race Theory lens, this allowed an in-depth understanding of the perspectives of Asian American students and their perceived or encountered racialized experiences. Specifically, this conceptual lens was ideal to guide the main research question of the study and its subquestions. It allowed thorough responses to the interview protocol conducted with the nine participants and provided an insight to their life experiences, personal goals, perceptions of the college climate and culture, and experiences with race.

The main research question that guided this study was: *What racialized experiences (forms of racism), if any, do Asian American students encounter and perceive at UIC?* This central question was a narrative inquiry into nine Asian American students’ lives, which revealed salient themes as they provided an understanding of what racialized experiences they encountered and perceived on campus.

The first guiding issue subquestion: *How, if any, do encounters with or perceptions of racialized experiences affect Asian American student perspectives of UIC?* This subquestion provided an explanation on how and if the perceptions of the campus climate changed for the nine Asian American students if or when they encountered or perceived racialized experiences on campus. The findings of my study support Hurtado’s (2007) and Kuh’s (2010) emphasis on the importance of sense of belonging. The students reported feeling unwelcomed or uncomfortable on campus due to racialized experiences.
The second guiding issue subquestion: *How, if any, do encounters with or perceptions of racialized experiences at UIC impact the student success of Asian Americans?* This subquestion examined any possible impact on their student success due to racialized experiences. The findings of my study showed how the nine Asian American students experience forms of stereotypes stemming from the Model Minority Myth, which resulted in the students reporting feeling frustrated, feeling unwelcomed, and feeling stressed---all threats to their student success.

The last guiding issue subquestion: *How, if any, are encounters with or perceptions of racialized experiences understood by UIC Asian American students? Are they addressed by the students? If so, how?* This subquestion revealed how the nine Asian American students understand from where these racialized experiences stem and whether or not they addressed them in any way. The findings of my study described how the students knew about Asian American stereotypes and how they understood these racialized experiences when applied to them. Most importantly, unlike previous studies, the findings of my study uncovered how they processed encounters with racialized experiences and whether or not they were addressed.

**Limitations**

The main purpose of this study is to expand the existing research on the racialized experiences of Asian American students and to learn if encounters with and perceptions of racialized experiences impact student success. One limitation I encountered in this study is my recruitment criteria, which I believe provided me a narrow scope in gaining participants. While my recruitment fell short of my participant target of twelve, it was never intended for my research to lead to large-scale generalizations. Another limitation is that study was conducted on one campus only. If multiple campuses were considered, multiple perspectives would have
added more diversity on how other Asian American students possibly experience race on their campuses.

**Student Suggestions**

Research focusing on racialized experiences of Asian American in higher education is important because racism exists in all levels of education, even in higher education. I find this ironic, because, while most universities with inclusive mission statements or structural diversity would indicate that the campus would have authentically diverse environments, there is evidence that a dissonance exists. As my study suggests more than has shown, Asian American students at UIC are not fully supported. As Kawaguchi (2003) states, researchers, policy makers, and practitioners have not responded to the needs of Asian American students in a timely manner to meet the rapid growth of this student population.

The personal narratives of Alex, Sonny, Olivia, Tim, JZ, Ricky, Charlotte, Arjun, and Holly reflect the diversity, as well as the complex racial realities, of Asian American students in higher education. Their narratives reveal how Asian Americans deal with race in unique ways and how their stories and counterstories complicate how we view race. In this study, I argue that Asian Americans in higher education have never had much opportunity for their stories to be heard, have been underserved due to the Model Minority Myth, and historically been overlooked in educational research. While the primary focus of this study is to determine what racialized experiences Asian Americans encounter and perceive at UIC, it is equally important to know the implications. In this section, I share suggestions from the nine Asian American students on best practices for campus leaders, faculty, and staff and information on how the campus can better serve Asian American students.
For Campus Leaders

While only Arjun and Holly stated they did not know what to do or where to go to discuss racialized experiences, the rest of the students provided varying sources for support ranging from faculty to their family and friends. Specifically, for Sonny, Alex, and Olivia, the Asian American Resource and Cultural Center (AARCC) and its staff have been helpful. For these students, AARCC provides a place where they can learn about themselves in relation to others, actively engage across differences, and have their lived experiences validated, and receive institutional support to ensure their overall success (Mena, 2010). For these students, having a space that reflects their identity and having staff who can understand their issues is important. However, not all the students in this study participate in programs of AARCC or go there. Nevertheless, as the data of this research shows, the majority of the students found specific affinity resources to be assets to their sense of belonging on campus. Hence, campus leaders need to recognize the importance of cultural centers and consider investing more resources in them. With the recent up rise of racial tensions on some campuses and increasing demands of students of color, campus leaders at UIC should follow suit and respond to the needs of students of color like on other campuses. Yale University doubled the funding of their Asian American Cultural Center and other affinity centers, Princeton University set aside dedicated space on their campus for cultural affinity groups, and Brown University committed to add staff to their centers as part of a $100 million plan to promote diversity (Scott, 2015).

To understand ways UIC and its faculty and staff can better serve Asian American students, the nine students who participated in this study were asked: What suggestions do you have for the faculty and staff administrators on campus in regards to working with Asian
American students?  The suggestions they provided were realistic and could easily be implemented through campus policy and practiced in campus culture.

Mandatory courses. At UIC, all students are required to complete 24 credit hours as part of their general education program with at least one course from each of the six categories in the general education program: Analyzing the Natural World; Understanding the Individual and Society; Understanding the Past; Understanding the Creative Arts; Exploring World Cultures; Understanding U.S. Society. Of the six, only two categories (Understanding the Individual and Society; Understanding U.S. Society) expose students to Asian American (ASAM) courses or content. For Olivia, she suggested all students, even non-Asian Americans, to be exposed to ASAM courses:

Everybody should be able to learn this. If we can, why can’t everyone else. It’s only if they’re interested though, but I feel like Asian American students should know about their history more . . . I felt that the ASAM program is really good, and I feel like it should be more, pushed more. I know there’s the minor, and I know students can take the class if they want, but I really feel like it should be pushed more to take one of the 100 level ASAM courses for Asian American students because I learned a lot. I felt like I had more information that I could learn from other than history class in like high school or something because I’ve never heard of this before that class.

(interview with Oliva, September 22, 2014)

Olivia’s suggestion reflects the recommendation of students given in S. J. Lee’s (2015) past study at UIC. Because taking ASAM courses is optional and students can choose from other courses to fulfill requirements, the student exposure to the Asian American curriculum is limited. I propose that campus leaders modify academic policy to incorporate more ASAM courses within the six categories under the General Education program, expand the Asian American minor into a full academic major, or make courses in ethnic studies a graduation requirement. As Hurtado (2007) asserts, taking more courses as part of a curriculum of inclusion, an ethnic studies course, or a women’s studies course can help cultivate interpersonal and academic
validation of students. Thus, these ideas would create awareness of, foster knowledge of, and elicit exposure to Asian American histories, culture, and people. Considering these changes to the curriculum policy would also be first steps to what high schools in the Sacramento City district, at Sarah Lawrence College, and what all 23 campuses in the California State University system are enacting by making ethnic studies courses mandatory in order to graduate (Desanctis, 2014; Hmong Innovating Politics, 2015; Libresco, 2015).

**Academic support network.** With many campuses focusing on student success, a suggestion provided by Alex is to open an academic support network center for Asian American students:

One big thing that I think a lot of people are missing is that there isn’t an academic support group that’s by the university for Asian American students. I’ll see some of my peers struggling in academics. They are really reluctant to ask for help, understandably.

(interview with Alex, June 26, 2014)

Alex’s sentiment reflects the gap on campus on properly supporting Asian American students. While there is no policy on campus that prevents opening an academic support network center for Asian Americans, the campus historically does not have one, which implies that Asian American students do not need academic help and further perpetuates the Model Minority Myth. With the campus earning the status as an Asian American, Native American, and Pacific Islander Serving Institution since 2010, one can assert that this earned title reflects the needed attention on specific student racial groups that need institutional support at UIC. Thus, if the university supports the success of all students, then I encourage campus leaders to consider providing an academic support network center for Asian Americans. As Alex explained:

I feel having an academic support service would be helpful because I feel there is a group of people missing out on it. There are students who need help, and like the university is a very natural place to have a support network for university classes, so yeah, I would say people’s success are affected.
Increased visibility. It is already stated that the campus lacks certain Asian American services, so Sonny suggested increasing visibility for existing services:

For the amount of people who are Asian Americans coming into UIC, I don’t think so many people know about the opportunities that are available to them. I’ve told many people about AARCC. I’ve told them about AAMP, and a lot of times, they say ‘Oh, really? I haven’t heard of it. What is it?’ I have to explain it. But honestly, I mean, obviously, you know, you can tell from me, it’s a huge part of who I am, and with what I feel it’s what has made me successful in college.

For Sonny, increasing visibility of existing services for Asian Americans contributed to his student success. Further, he states that an increased visibility would also engage incoming students and provide channels for existing students to find support and similar interests that can assist in their personal and academic growth.

For Alex, increasing visibility extends to Asian American representation in staff and faculty, which could be a preventive measure in inviting racial microaggressions in classrooms:

Maybe it wouldn’t have happened if there was an Asian American teacher there or someone who was more conscious of such things. It was kind of offensive, so I guess it kind of affects your learning experience that way, right? Some things were said that a sensitive teacher would not have said.

Cross-programming. Another suggestion, provided by Ricky, is to coordinate cross-programming for existing Asian American resources to create awareness of resources and on how to access them and to build connections for students:

I think just maybe have more events across AARCC and ASAM because people may not necessarily be connected because I feel like if there are like more events that involve more groups or centers or whatever, it provides like an opportunity for people to become more familiar with these different resources that are already available but not as accessible and stuff, you know, to make personal connections with them.
For Faculty and Staff

The nine students also offered suggestions for faculty and staff that do not require any policy changes but just simple consideration and some professional training.

**Cultural sensitivity.** With such a diverse student population, Sonny, Alex, and Arjun suggest that faculty and staff should be culturally sensitive. For example, Sonny described, “I’ve had professors who were wonderful who have told us, you know, ‘We can have food in class, but not during Ramadan.’ because it would be disrespectful for people who are Muslim.”

For Alex, her suggestion applied to faculty and staff to be sensitive to students with accents:

One thing that I’ve seen kind of a lot, and this is both by faculty members and by undergraduate students is that there are a lot of international students who are graduate students, and for some of them, English is their second language, and I hear them being made fun of a lot because of their accents, and this isn’t just a problem for Asian students, but mostly international students. I still think this is a problem. With undergraduate students, there isn’t really you can do about, but faculty shouldn’t be doing this because I hear it sometimes.

(interview with Alex, June 26, 2014)

Likewise, Arjun offered a suggestion when working with international students who are English language learners:

If they’re like from out of the country, and they’ve come to UIC to actually study, further studies. They really want to do really well, and they may be limited by, I don’t know, a language barrier. They’re not accustomed to America yet. In that regards, to have patience and explain things to them.

(interview with Arjun, November 17, 2014)

**Cease assumptions, equal treatment, break norms, and approachability.**

For Charlotte and Tim, they suggested that faculty and staff should cease making assumptions of Asian Americans. As Charlotte explained, “Try to not assume that all Asians are the same . . . that all Asians are Pre-Med, Pre-Pharm, etc.” Likewise, Tim stated, “just to be
unbiased . . . not holding some of these prejudices means a lot to people who don’t fall into these stereotypes.” In simpler terms, JZ asks faculty and staff to “treat Asian American students equally,” and Sonny encourages faculty and staff to “think outside the box and break norms.” Lastly, Holly suggested faculty to be more approachable and possibly be available to talk about racialized experiences: “make them feel more welcome and okay if I want to go there and tell them what happened . . . Give me a hint that it’s okay to talk about that with you or something.”

**Implications**

As the researcher of this study, I would like to build off the students’ suggestions and bring forward implications for practitioners, developers, and researchers. As described below, my suggestions are in alignment of a list of formal demands Libresco (2015) reports as the top four demands gathered from 51 U. S. campuses: to increase diversity of professors, require sensitivity training to students and faculty members, create or expand support for cultural centers on campus, and require cultural classes for students.

**For Practitioners**

The implications for practitioners, whether faculty or staff, are to better serve Asian American students. Specifically for faculty, there needs to be a consideration to diversifying curriculum. With the forthcoming increase of Asian Americans expected on campus, faculty need an inclusive curriculum that educates the other racial groups about racial oppression specific to Asian Americans, because, as the findings of my study show, most perpetrators of racial microaggressions lack the educational knowledge. Ideally, the curriculum should include pedagogy of positionality that engages both students and educators in recognizing and critiquing how one is positioned and how one positions others in social structures. An example of this is the Campus Courses 120: First Year Dialogue Seminar course, which helps first-year students
engage with and learn about diversity. The current offering is optional, however, and I recommend that UIC offer more sections and make the course mandatory for all first-year students because the earlier students are exposed to topics of diversity, the more engaged and successful they become on campus (Kuh, 2013).

Another example is what Hughes and Giles (2010) consider using in curricula an engaging activity called CRiT Walking, “a metaphorical tool that offers education scholars and practitioners a framework to use genre driven writing, autobiography, auto-ethnography, social justice principles, and radical perspectives to analyze, re-interpret, deconstruct, and reform educational settings” (p. 42). CRiT Walking puts theories into action and transforms students as CRiT walkers who can use historical data, personal accounts, and social criticism of the surrounding environment to navigate towards new perspectives on established social and educational phenomena.

By venturing into new curriculum, these two examples can encourage faculty to practice engaging pedagogy that changes students and society. Because pedagogy usually involves familiar knowledge that practices sameness and repetition, this common approach hinders change. Instead, education needs to explore the difference produced in the unknowable. There is a need for Asian American-centric curricula in schools that reflect its diverse student population, or at the very least, inclusive of non-Anglo-Saxon-centric curricula and services. As Hytten (2011) argues, educators must ask different questions of canonical knowledge and methodologies, “especially questions about what visions of the world are implicit in these knowledge/methodologies: whose voices and experiences are celebrated and whose are marginalized, and with what consequences” (p. 215). This allows transgression from common approaches of anti-oppressive education and breakage from dichotomous perspectives, allowing
educators to relate more to and gain a better understanding of the world and benefit students (Razack, 1998). To break from the norm, faculty could consider an anti-oppressive educational approach by using a poststructuralistic framework that problematizes and deconstructs racism and encourage educators to consider new approaches to teaching and to provide more cultural curricula that explore culture and its relationship to power (Kumashiro, 2000).

Specifically for staff in student service roles, there is a need to enhance the quality of service when working with Asian American students. As Hurtado (2007) explains, higher student perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity are associated with lower reports of discrimination and bias. Because Asian American students in my study reported racial incidents involving staff in service roles, staff members need to examine the ways they need develop themselves personally and professionally to establish interpersonal relationships and to inform their interactions with Asian American students because educational institutions play an active role in shaping the educational experiences of Asian American students.

An institutional approach in developing faculty and staff would be to provide a diversity certification program, like the one offered at DePaul University, that “helps participants gain the tools for linking diversity to organizational and work place performance” (BUILD Diversity Certificate, n. d.). By adopting this program, UIC can provide a voluntary diversity certification program that offers professional development courses for faculty and staff. These courses can include best practices subjects focusing on racial inequity, disability, microaggressions, and gender and sexuality. If the campus were to implement such a certification program and truly would like to make it effective, then I recommend that the campus make this program mandatory. The university already mandates faculty, staff, and students to complete an ethics program and mandates faculty and staff to report any non-university activities on an annual
basis. Thus, the university could consider mandating faculty, staff, and students to complete a diversity certification program annually or as part of the on-boarding process. Offering such a program would inform practitioners on the racial reality of all students, learn about the stereotypes that permeate in society and how they may be ascribed, and understand how encounters with these racialized experiences may affect the student success.

For Developers

The implications for policy and program developers are to bring attention to the specific needs of the Asian American student population. As revealed through the findings of my study, Asian American students have unique needs to which are not being recognized or attended. While an Asian American cultural center exists at UIC, decision-makers need to consider creating an academic unit for Asian and Asian American students that offers recruitment services and academic resources. As described in some of the student narratives, Asian Americans seek these services to assist them with their academic persistence and can offer a sense of belonging.

Additionally, as the students explained, they encountered racialized experiences on campus and not all of them knew where to go to discuss these encounters. To address this need, program developers should consider collecting information involving experiences of microaggressions in classrooms as part of the end of the semester evaluations (Libresco, 2015). Another format would be to create a stronger, formal process for complaints regarding experiences of racism and discrimination. Presently, the UIC Office of Access & Equity (OAE) is the main university department that attends to such complaints. However, OAE only takes record of incidents and does not pursue the issue unless the situation becomes hostile or leads to legal issues (K. Su, personal communication, September 6, 2013). Thus, I recommend that the campus develop a more formal pipeline like a bias reporting system where individuals can report
instances of bias, including those involving race. The information on this system can be submitted in confidence, collected by a specific unit, and reviewed by appropriate campus officials. The hosting unit can also provide a designated staff member with expertise training to support individuals who may feel like they have experienced biases, including racism or race-related incidents, as well as to perhaps raise awareness across campus of Asian American issues and concerns. These added systems would limit feelings of isolation of students who encounter racisms (Libresco, 2015).

**For Future Research**

This research study contributes to the limited number of studies focused on Asian American students and their stories on experiences with race. Fifteen years of past research on campus racial climates show that 71% of the articles were based on quantitative methods while only one was qualitative and that too few researchers have explored how Asian American students experience campus racial climates (Harper & Hurtado, 2007, pp. 11-12). Thus, I hope my study can be a benchmark for future researchers who want to consider conducting qualitative research and bring Asian American student voices to the forefront. In order to build on these findings and determine the extent that these experiences are shared by other Asian American students in postsecondary settings, a future study could increase the number of students studied. This research was limited to just nine Asian American students; therefore, I am hoping my research can be a jumping point for future researchers to consider a larger pool of Asian American students, which would provide a stronger picture on their racial realities at UIC. Future research could include data collected from non-Asian American students that could enrich the data and crosscheck the accuracy of data gathered from different sources and could provide different perspectives on Asian American students (Kawaguchi, 2003).
Additionally, I hope future research can explore further an area that emerged from the stories of three students: the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality as variables contributing to the marginalization of Asian Americans. I believe these variables would have added richness to the narratives of the students interviewed if I had examined the intersections of gender and sexuality and race, especially with Ricky being gender non-conforming. Unfortunately, this area was not a focus in my study, and I hope future researchers take these variables in consideration.

Furthermore, as previously stated, the Chickering and Reisser model does not include the psychosocial development of Asian American students. With my findings, I hope future research can result in a creation of a student identity development model reflective of Asian American student identity. There is a need to use a model in higher education that is inclusive and acknowledges the complex identities of Asian American students to better inform higher education professionals when working with this racial population. It is only through such a model can higher education practitioners gain a deeper understanding on how encounters and perceptions of racialized experiences on college campuses have detrimental effects on Asian American students and their student success. Most importantly, such a model would emphasize the importance to institutions of the necessity to provide inclusive and culturally sensitive environments, culturally relevant courses and programming, racial visibility in administration and resources, and a campus space dedicated to Asian Americans.

Ultimately, I feel this study contributes to the fields of education and Asian American studies by allowing an examination of Asian American identities and how race impacts their academic life. With my findings, I hope to inform different players within the academic environment to take action in better serving, providing resources, and offering assistance to Asian American students, especially when this racial group encounters forms of racism on
campus. Furthermore, I hope to encourage college campuses to critically examine their policies and practices to determine how to best provide a sense of belonging for Asian American students and address issues of race impacting their academic success.

**Chapter Summary**

The findings of this dissertation indicate that Asian American students are indeed a complex group with unique experiences with race. The nine Asian American students, who participated in this study, reported experiencing forms of racism on campus, which have shaped how they interact with others and how they navigate their racial identities. They shared how they understood these experiences and if they address them, and they stated whether or not their student success was impacted in any way.

Through the findings of my research, I hope to inform university campuses to understand how Asian American students experience race and to bring attention to their specific needs. Also, I want to provide a medium where Asian American students can share their stories of racialized experiences to further enhance academic and social support systems for them. Overall, my goal with this research is to continue the critical dialogue of race, and most importantly, to contribute to the field of education. While this dissertation provides a benchmark on the college experiences of Asian American students, there is still more work to be done. As reflected in the title of this chapter, I adopt the approach of Kumashiro (2002) by calling it a discussion rather than a conclusion because I too refuse to come to “conclusions” on research focusing on Asian Americans on college campuses. Only through future research and practice can educators contribute to empowering Asian American students by seeing the college campus as a space of transformative possibilities. As Lagemann (2000) simply puts it: “schools could offer children from different backgrounds an equal chance in life and that schools in particular,
and education more generally, provide a powerful means for . . . promoting equality” (p. 196).
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APPENDIX A

LETTER TO STUDENT

[Date]

Dear Senior Student,

I am a doctoral student at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) inviting you to participate in my dissertation study about how Asian American students experience race on campus. The UIC Institutional Review Board has approved (IRB Approval #2014-0375 – Expires June 1, 2016) both this project and all materials for this study.

I would appreciate it if you could complete the Student Information Sheet found at this Qualtrics survey link: https://uic.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_d7udu2dp3LND7wx. If you meet the necessary criteria, I will contact you directly and schedule an interview with you that will last between 30-60 minutes. To meet the necessary criteria, you must identify as Asian American, you were born and raised in the United States, you entered UIC as freshmen, and you are in senior status and approaching graduation.

After the interview, I will inform you of the project’s timeline status, possibly request further meetings to clarify points in our conversations, and follow-up on particular comments or themes. Finally, a copy of my completed dissertation will be available to you upon its successful defense to be approved by my dissertation committee.

In order for me to check-in with you or to follow up after my dissertation is approved, I will retain your name, phone number, and email address. Please be assured that your personal information will be kept confidential and secured. To ensure your confidentiality in my completed dissertation, your chosen alias will be used to avoid any identifiers to your true identity.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions regarding this study. I would also like to provide you with my dissertation advisor’s contact information for your reference:

Dr. Benjamin Superfine
Associate Professor in Educational Policy Studies
UIC College of Education, 1208 EPASW, MC 147, 312-355-XXXX, bsuperfi@uic.edu

Thank you for your time and assistance.
Sincerely,

Mark R. Martell, Student Investigator/Doctoral Candidate,
MMARTELL@uic.edu
APPENDIX B

STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET
https://uic.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_d7udu2dp3LND7wx

Thank you for completing the Student Information Sheet, which will only take about 5-10 minutes of your time. Please be assured that your personal information will be kept confidential and secured. (IRB Approval #2014-0375)

First and Last Name

Please choose an alias name for yourself. (This alias will be used during the interview and in the written dissertation. An alias ensures your confidentiality and removes any identifiers.)

Age:

Gender:

☐ Female
- Transgender Female
- Male
- Transgender Male
- Genderqueer

Please provide an email address where you can be contacted for an interview and for any follow-ups. (Please be assured that your personal information will be kept confidential and secured.)

Can you be contacted by phone? If YES, what is the best number to reach you? (Please be assured that your personal information will be kept confidential and secured.)

- Yes
- No

Do you identify as Asian American?

- Yes
- No

What is your ethnicity?

- East Asian (e.g. Chinese, Japanese, Korean)
- South Asians (e.g. Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)
- Southeast Asians (e.g. Cambodian, Filipino, Vietnamese, Laotian)
- Hapa or Mixed
- Other
Were you born and raised in the United States?

- Yes
- No

What generation status are you?

- 1st generation
- 1.5 generation
- 2nd generation
- Other

Did you attend high school in the United States?

- Yes
- No

Do you attend the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC)?

- Yes
- No

Did you start at UIC as a freshman?

- Yes
- No
Are you presently a senior at UIC? If YES, when is your expected graduation date?

- Yes
- No

Are you able to participate in an in-person interview for a study that will take about 60-90 minutes of your own will?

- Yes
- No

Have you ever experienced or witnessed acts of racism or discrimination at UIC?

- Yes
- No
APPENDIX C

STUDENT CONSENT FORM

University of Illinois at Chicago
College of Education
Consent Form for Research

Project Title: Invisible Me: A Narrative Study on the Racialized Experiences of Asian American Students

Student Investigator: Mark R. Martell, Educational Policy Studies, UIC
Faculty Advisor: Benjamin Superfine, Educational Policy Studies, UIC
Supported/Funded by: Graduate College, UIC

What is the Purpose of this Study?

You are being asked to take part in a research study. This form has important information about the reason for the study, what you will do, and the way we would like to use information about you if you choose to be in the study.

You have been invited to take part in a research study about how Asian American students experience race at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). This study will be conducted by Mark R. Martell, student in the Department of Policy Studies in the UIC College of Education, as a part of a doctoral dissertation research. You are being asked to participate in this study because you meet certain criteria of a sample population from which the research study is seeking information.

The goal is to interview 12 persons for this study.

What will I Do if I Choose to be in this Study?

Your initial participation in this study will be for an interview that is expected to last 60 or more minutes. Follow-up interviews are not expected, but if required, they will be scheduled at your convenience. The interview questions are designed to gain an understanding on how you experience race on campus.

As a participant in this study, you will be interviewed at a location of your choice and a time of your choosing. Your interview will be digitally audio-recorded. We will do so only with your permission. Detailed notes will be taken during your interview and afterwards. Confidentiality of your research records will be strictly maintained by assigning an alias. Your identity and your responses will be kept confidential.

You may review the recording and request that all or any portion of the recording that includes your participation be destroyed. You have a right to review and edit the recording to delete any material you do not want recorded. You may also ask to turn off the recorder at any point in the conversation.
You have the right to skip or not answer any questions to which you prefer to not respond. If at any time, you do not feel comfortable with the study or with the researcher, you may refuse to continue.

At any time in the study, you may decide to withdraw from the study. If you withdraw no more information will be collected from you. When you indicate you wish to withdraw, the investigator will ask if the information/specimens/materials already collected from you can be used.

After the interview, the recording will be transcribed. If portions of the interview transcription are used in the final dissertation, a written copy will be sent for your review. You may delete anything you do not want included in the final dissertation.

What are the Possible Risks or Discomforts?
Your participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk to you beyond that of everyday life. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

What are the Possible Benefits for Me or Others?
You are not likely to have any direct benefit from being in this research study. Taking part in this study may help researchers, policymakers, program developers, and practitioners better serve Asian American students and gain knowledge on their needs to ensure student success.

What Alternatives are Available?
You may choose to not participate in this research study.

Financial Information
Participation in this study will involve no cost to you. You will not be paid for participating in this study.

What are my Rights as a Research Participant?
If you choose to be in this study, you have the right to be treated with respect, including respect for your decision whether or not you wish to continue or stop being in the study. You are free to stop being in the study at any time.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Choosing not to be in this study or to stop being in this study will not result in any penalty to you or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you want to speak with someone who is not directly involved in this research, or if you have questions about your rights as a research subject, contact the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects. You can call them at 1-866-789-6215 (toll free) or email OPRS at uicirb@uic.edu.

Any new findings developed during the course of this research that may affect your willingness to continue will be provided to you.
What about my Confidentiality and Privacy Rights?

Participation in this research study may result in a loss of privacy, since persons other than the investigator(s) might view your study records. Unless required by law, only the Student Investigator, the Principal Investigator, the UIC Institutional Review Board, and representatives from the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects have the authority to review your study records. They are required to maintain confidentiality regarding your identity.

Results of this study may be used for teaching, research, publications, and presentations at professional meetings. If your individual results are discussed, your identity will be protected by an alias rather than your name or other identifying information. Other appropriate measures will be taken to conceal individual identities.

Centralized Data Collection or Registries

The results of your examinations will be collected on a centralized computer or data registry in the possession of Student Investigator, Mark R. Martell. Results are stored in password-protected files. All recordings will be destroyed at the end of the study.

Audio Recordings

All recordings will be destroyed at the end of the study.

Whom should I Call if I have Questions or Concerns about this Research Study?

If you have any questions, problems, illness, or injury during your time on this study, call us promptly. Dr. Benjamin Superfine is the dissertation advisor for this research study. You can email him at bsuperfi@uic.edu or call him at (312)-355-XXXX, Monday through Friday from 9 am – 5 pm. You can also call the Student Investigator Mark R. Martell with questions about this research at telephone number (773)-XXX-XXXX or via email at MMARTELL@uic.edu.

You will receive a copy of this consent document to keep. You may email the researcher at MMARTELL@uic.edu at the completion of your participation to request a final copy of the written report.

Consent

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told whom to contact. I agree to participate in the research study described above and will receive a copy of this consent form after I sign it.

Consent to Audio Record the Interview

Please initial one of the following to indicate whether you agree to allow the interview to be audio taped:

_____ “I agree to allow my voice to be recorded in conjunction with this research. I understand that all audio recordings will be destroyed at the conclusion of this research.”

_____ “I do not agree to allow voice to be recorded in conjunction with this research.”
Consent to Use Your Identification in Conjunction with this Research
Please initial one of the following to indicate whether you agree to allow your alias to be used in conjunction with this research (for academic talks and publications):

_____ “I agree to allow my alias to be used in conjunction with this research.”
_____ “I do not agree to allow my alias to be used in conjunction with this research.”

______________________________________________
Subject’s Name (printed) and Signature Date

______________________________________________
Name (printed) and Signature of Person Obtaining Consent Date
APPENDIX D
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Participant Alias: Date and Time of Interview:

Introductory Script:
Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. I will be asking you questions about your race and your academic experience at UIC. I anticipate the interview will take approximately an hour or more. Although this interview will be recorded, the information I gather will be kept confidential. You may review these audio files (mp3) and request that all or any portion of the tapes that includes your participation be destroyed. Your participation is totally voluntary. You may choose to change your mind about your participation in this interview and you may refuse to answer any particular question during the interview with no adverse effects. Feel free to interpret the questions asked in any way you interpret them. There are no wrong answers. Any questions?

I. OPENING
   1. Tell me a little bit about yourself.

II. PERSONAL GOALS
   1. What is your major? minor? What made you decide on that focus of study?
   2. What expectations do you have for yourself while you are in college? Any personal goals?
   3. What career paths are you considering? What made you consider these roles of profession?

III. COLLEGE CLIMATE
   1. What attracted you to UIC?
   2. What do you like about UIC?
   3. What would you change?
   4. Describe your connection to the campus. What makes you feel like you belong?

IV. COLLEGE CULTURE
   1. What do you think is the general campus attitude towards Asian Americans students? How is this conveyed or communicated?
   2. Do these impressions impact the way you interacted with other students? Faculty? Staff?
   3. Does this affect your student success (personal, academic, and career goals)?

V. EXPERIENCES WITH RACE
   1. Has there ever been a time on campus when you were treated differently because of your race? (Follow up question: Have you ever felt unwelcomed or uncomfortable because of your race?) Describe your reaction. (Follow up question: How did it feel? Have these instances all been blatant or subtle? How so?)
2. How have these race-related experiences changed, if at all, your campus experience, the way you use campus resources, the places you go on campus, etc.?
3. How have these race-related experiences affected, if at all, your student success?

VI. RESPONSE AND UNDERSTANDING
1. With what Asian American stereotypes, good or bad, are you familiar? Have others expressed their stereotypical beliefs about you? From where do you think these racial stereotypes come?
2. What are some of the ways you have addressed or dealt with these experiences with race you mentioned? To whom or where would you go, off or on-campus, to discuss any of these experiences?
3. What suggestions do you have for the faculty and staff administrators on campus in regards to working with Asian American students?

VII. CLOSING
1. Do you have anything else you’d like to share, or do you have any questions for me?
VITA

Mark R. Martell
CURRICULUM VITAE

EDUCATION
University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), Chicago, IL
Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Policy Studies 2016
Dissertation: Invisible Me: A Narrative Study on the Racialized Experiences of Asian American Students
Chair, Advisor: Benjamin M. Superfine

Florida International University (FIU), Miami, FL
Master of Arts in Linguistics 2000
Bachelor of Arts in English, Minor in Music 1998

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE EXPERIENCE

Director
UIC Asian American Resource Cultural Center (AARCC)
January 2015-present
- Responsible for the administrative leadership and operational management of cultural center.
- Supervise, develop, and evaluate 2 full-time staff and student employees to ensure center goals are met.
- Provide informal advising, appropriate referrals, and support faculty, staff, and students with their needs.

Co-Principal Investigator
UIC Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institution Initiatives
January 2015-present
- Assist principal investigator with AANAPISI outreach and special projects.
- Assist in the grant writing preparation for reapplication of AANAPISI grants.
- Support AANAPISI initiatives, programming, and special events.

Executive Board Member

Co-Chair
UIC Chancellor’s Committee on the Status of Asian Americans
August 2010-August 2012
- Co-led a 14-member committee of faculty, staff, and students and co-supervised a graduate assistant.
- Co-managed annual budget of $20,000 and authorized and monitored fiscal activities.
- Co-liaison and co-informant to Chancellor regarding Asian American issues affecting campus community.

Co-Host
OUT for Work LGBTQ+ National Conference and Career Fair 2012 and 2013
January 2012-September 2013
- Collaborated with UIC Gender & Sexuality Center to host Midwest premiere, attended by 300+ attendees.
- Co-led a 10-member committee of career services staff from Illinois various universities and students.
- Solicited presenters, companies, departments, and alumni for sponsorship and funding of $6,000-$8,000.

Advisory Board Member and Ethics Trainer
UIC Asian American Resource Cultural Center (AARCC)
August 2006-August 2012
- Served as advisory board member and provided guidance on AARCC issues.
- Participated in selection of new AARCC Peer Mentors and trained them on ethical-making decisions.
- Acted as primary resource for Asian American students on career development and preparation needs.

Resident Director
Semester at Sea, Institute for Shipboard Education, Fall 2003 Voyage
August 2003-December 2003
- Led groups in Canada, Japan, China, Vietnam, Thailand, India, Tanzania, South Africa, Brazil, and Cuba.
- Created Faculty Fish program to benefit students by bridging Student Affairs and Academic Affairs.
- Coordinated cultural programs and activities reflecting overcas experience for shipboard life.
Advisory Board Member
Chancellor’s Committee on the Status of LGBT Issues 2000-2010
Gender & Sexuality Center (Office of GLBT Concerns) Advisory Board 2000-2003
  • Served as advisory board member and provided guidance on LGBT issues.

Originator
UIC Safe Zone program August 2000-August 2003
  • Created program to create awareness, educate campus community, and identify gender and sexuality allies.
  • Trained faculty, staff, and students at UIC and regional conferences like GLACURH and ISRAA.

HIGHER EDUCATION EXPERIENCE
Assistant Director
Office of Career Services, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL September 2007-January 2015
  • Provide direct advising to students on academic majors, career options, and graduate school opportunities.
  • Develop and conduct educational workshops focusing on career development and job preparation.
  • Engage and partner with academic units, employers, alumni, and professional organizations to contribute to the retention, academic success, and career readiness of students.
  • Originate Faculty, Staff, and Advisors Initiative program to strengthen campus partner relationships.
  • Coordinate WriteAway!, an extensive writing program, to support advancement of doctoral students.
  • Create Career Peer Mentor program to give students paraprofessional experience in career advising.
  • Support and co-supervise student employees, graduate assistants, interns, and student videographer.
  • Premiere OUT for Work 2012 National Conference in the Midwest and gain funding and sponsorship from UIC Chancellor, corporate employers, campus departments, and other universities and colleges.
  • Collaborate with director and peers to redefine departmental vision, mission, and values.

Student Employment Specialist
Student Employment Office, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL September 2005-September 2007
  • Directed daily operations of human resources unit in the absence of the Assistant Director.
  • Developed and implemented marketing strategies and increased student employment on campus by 8%.
  • Monitored human resources procedures, processed transactions in Banner system, assisted hiring campus units with inquiries, and maintained confidentiality of student employee records.
  • Managed job site UICCAREERS.COM and developed statistical weekly and annual reports on data of new hires, job postings, and student traffic.
  • Provided leadership in the coordination of internship fairs and National Student Employment Week.
  • Disseminated information to students, university community, and potential employers on part-time on-and off-campus jobs, the Student Temporary Service, and the Job Location & Development program.

Employment Trainer
Training Department, The Employment Project, Chicago, IL March 2004-August 2005
  • Led Stepping-Up and Employment Preparation Training programs and developed curriculum preparing adult-learners transitioning from homelessness to returning to college or the workplace.
  • Hired, trained, mentored, and supervised two adult part-time training assistants.

Resident Director
Campus Housing Department, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL June 2000-July 2003
  • Managed halls with 800 students and participated in duty rotation for area housing of 2,500 students.
  • Conducted student disciplinary meetings and utilized educational sanctions.
  • Provided consultation and counseling for students and referred students to appropriate campus resources.
  • Hired, supervised, motivated, and evaluated five to eleven Resident Assistants.
  • Participated in outreach efforts with academic departments to grow Faculty in Residence program.
TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Co-Instructor for ASAM 100: Seminar on Asian Americans in Higher Education
Asian American Studies, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL January 2016-present
- Assist in curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation of three course sections.
- Lecture on racism, racial microaggressions, and impact on students of color.
- Assist in the grading of assignments and providing feedback for approximately 45 students.

Teaching Apprentice for ED 200: Educational Policy Foundations
College of Education, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL January 2012-May 2012
- Assisted in teaching and grading 25 undergraduate students on education foundations and policy studies.
- Created and taught two sections: Race, Language, & Literacy and Gender & Sexuality in the Classroom.
- Taught solo on existing sections: Teaching as a Profession and on Educational Reform.
- Received high ratings and positive feedback in end of the semester student evaluations.

Part-Time Instructor
Continuing Education Department, Harold Washington College, Chicago, IL August 2007-May 2008
- Developed and implemented curriculum for English language learners through lectures and exams.

UIUC CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT
Task Force to Help Dream Act Students Succeed 2013-present
Professional Staff and Faculty Recruitment Committees 2000-present
Office of Vice Chancellor Student Affairs Strategic Planning 2014-2015
Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Training Series 2013-2014
Student Affairs Staff Development Committee 2012-2015
Internal Review Team for Student Support Units 2012-2013
Dean of Students Student Conduct Chair and Hearing Panel 2007-2015
S.E.E. Scholarship Recipient Committee 2006-2008

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS
National Association of Student Personnel Administrators Region IV-East 2013-present
National Association of Student Personnel Administrators 2009-present
Association for Student Conduct Administrators 2013-2015
Midwest Association for Colleges and Employers 2012-2015
Midwest Association of Student Employment Administrators 2005-2007
ACPA’s Standing Committee for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Awareness 2000-2003
American College Personnel Association (ACPA) 1999-2005

STUDENT ADVISORY EXPERIENCE
Intramural Soccer, UIUC August 2013-present
Omega Delta Fraternity, UIUC August 2011-present
Programming Board and Student Organization, Semester at Sea August 2003-December 2003
Illinois State Resident Assistant Association, UIUC Campus Housing August 2000-May 2003
Residence Hall Council, UIUC Campus Housing August 2000-May 2003

NATIONAL AND LOCAL ENGAGEMENT
Chicago Cultural Alliance 2015-present
The Employment Project / Inspiration Café Merger Research Team 2004-2005
Dream Job Gala Fundraiser Logistics Committee 2003-2004
Recruitment Team at ACPA, OPE, and Inspiration Corporation 2000-2005
VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Asian & Friends Chicago
GAMtv (Actor) 2013-2014
UIC Moving Images Student Senior Project (Actor) 2012
NightBlue Performing Arts Group (Company Member) 2006-2010
- Miss Saigon (Thuy), La Cage Aux Folles (Jacob), 12 Angry Men (Juror #11), Rent (understudy Angel)
Broadway Youth Center at Chicago (Mentor) 2006-2008
Reeling International Film Festivals (Box Office, Usher) 2000-2010
Chicago International Film Festivals (Usher) 2000-2010
Chicago Gay Men’s Chorus (Member) 2000-2003

HONORS AND RECOGNITION

15 Years of Service Recognition December 2015
Chancellor’s Academic Professional Excellence Award, UIC November 2012
Safe Zone Ten Year Anniversary Award, UIC March 2012
Published articles in Out on Campus the SCLGBTQ newsletter, ACPA August 2001-May 2003
Valsin DuMontier New Professional Award, ACPA April 2001

COMPUTER SKILLS

Microsoft Office Suite (advanced); Adobe Dreamweaver (moderate), Adobe Photoshop (basic); Mac iMovie,
Garage Band (advanced); Prezi (advanced); Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Google + (advanced); Pinterest
(basic); Issuu (advanced); Google Docs programs (advanced)

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

Lectured at Wright College, Chicago, IL.

Presented as a workshop at Midwest ACE Conference, Chicago, IL.

National Career Conference, Chicago, IL.

Presented research paper at the Organization for the Study of Communication, Language & Gender
Conference, Evanston, IL.

as a workshop at the Government College Relations Council Fall Meeting, Chicago, IL.

Bhattar, R., & Martell, M. R. (2010, March 8). The queer revolution: A panel discussion on LGBTQ campus
activism. Presented as a workshop at the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators
annual conference, Chicago, IL.

March 7). Beyond rainbows: The legacy, movement and future of LGBTQ inclusion on campus.
Presented as pre-conference institute at the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators
annual conference, Chicago, IL.

Professions Student Conference by UIC’s Urban Health Program, Chicago, IL.

KidStart Program, Chicago, IL.

AARCC’s Asian American Peer Mentor training, Chicago, IL.

with HIV. Presented at AIDS Foundation of Chicago, Chicago, IL.

shipboard community as part of Semester at Sea program, International Waters.