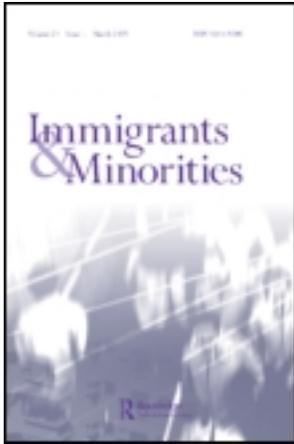


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### The Perceptions of Self and Others: Examining the Effect Identity Adoption has on Immigrant Attitudes toward Affirmative Action Policies in the United States

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# The Perceptions of Self and Others: Examining the Effect Identity Adoption has on Immigrant Attitudes toward Affirmative Action Policies in the United States

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*While there exist several studies devoted to evaluating the political attitudes of US citizens, very little has been done to distinguish between the political attitudes of immigrants and citizens of the same racial or ethnic group. Using data from the Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality, 1992–94, this study evaluates the role identity adoption plays in highlighting the distinctions which exist between the political attitudes of immigrants and those of US citizens from the same racial/ethnic group. The results reveal that despite pronounced cultural distinctions between immigrants and US citizens, in many cases race and ethnicity are important unifiers on opinions regarding public policy issues, specifically that of affirmative action. This is an important finding because it suggests that there is some homogeneity of attitudes and public opinions for racial and ethnic groups, regardless of citizenship or immigrant background.*

**Keywords:** Race; ethnicity; immigrants; affirmative action policy; identity adoption

## Introduction

In 2004, Harvard University professors, Lani Guinier and Henry Louis Gates admitted in a controversial front page *New York Times* article that nearly half of the blacks attending Ivy League and top colleges and

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universities were either immigrants, the children of immigrants or biracial. Their comments would spark a heated debate that divided immigrants and citizens of the same racial and ethnic group on the issue of affirmative action in higher education.

Similarly, in Howard's study of immigrant political behaviour, 'Conflict of Identities: Examining the Effect that Identity Adoption has on the Political Participation of Black, White, Latino and Asian American Immigrants in the United States', the author finds that on issues of partisanship and political behaviour, first generation immigrants are more closely aligned to citizens of the same racial and ethnic group, as opposed to second generation immigrants who clearly distinguish themselves from United States citizens, despite sharing a similar racial or ethnic identity. In stark opposition to earlier studies of the immigrant second generation, the findings from Howard's study provide strong evidence to suggest that second generation immigrants are more likely to distance themselves from their racial and ethnic identity and instead centre their identity around their immigrant heritage.<sup>1</sup> This is because while their parents are struggling to acculturate more fully into the American social structure, the second generation seeks to establish a clear distinction between themselves and US citizens of the same racial and ethnic identity. By highlighting their immigrant heritage, the second generation is not just black or white or Latino, but West Indian, Canadian or Cuban.

Given the existing literature regarding the political behaviour of citizens and immigrants from similar racial and ethnic backgrounds, I was specifically motivated to investigate the extent to which there is division between immigrants and citizens of the same racial and ethnic background on sensitive policy issues such as affirmative action in hiring, promotion and education. Regarding race-conscious policies and other sensitive public policy issues, would first and second generation immigrants hold similar attitudes as distinct from US citizens, or would other intriguing combinations emerge? Collective political behaviour and political goals are one thing, but in the interests of tangible economic and social goods, would racial and ethnic linkages overcome the linguistic and cultural differences that exist between immigrants and US citizens or would they prove ineffective in mediating the conflict between the two groups?

## **Argument**

### *Defining Identity*

Constructing an identity according to national origin is a distinct process unencumbered by the nuances that are unique to constructing an identity

around race or ethnicity. An individual is either from a certain place or not. That particular place of origin represents an individual's national origin identity and therefore is factual. And while this particular identity may conflict with other identities, national origin is easily defined according to the place where an individual physically originated from.

While identity definitions based upon national origin are generally clear, racial and ethnic identity are not so easily defined. This is because there is no biological definition of race or ethnicity, instead these terms and classifications are defined by society and social interaction. There is nothing within the category and classification of race that is immutable. Furthermore, beyond 'certain morphological similarities, there is no gene or organization of genes that determines race'.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, the category definition of 'race' is simply a manifestation of the artificial and constructed biases influenced by the evolution of society and the passing of time. Furthermore, given that racial categories are socially constructed they are left up to interpretation, which means some disagreement will always remain regarding where and how to draw the 'proper' racial lines.

Defining ethnicity fares no better than defining race, but for entirely different reasons. Classifications constructed according to ethnicity are typically viewed as 'divisions among groupings of people within a given "race," based more on cultural similarities among people than on perceived physical differences between the groups and others'.<sup>3</sup> By definition, ethnicity is tied to culture; and culture is not inherited but rather constructed as a combination of rituals, language, practices and traditions that are learned and interpreted with each generation. Similar to race, there remains confusion regarding the definition of ethnicity. However, unlike race it is not the definition of ethnicity that lends itself to the confusion but rather how individuals choose to interpret it and assign meaning to the term. For example, the United States Census establishes a racial category for Asians but an ethnic category for Hispanics, despite the fact that both categories define a group of people according to the geographic origins of themselves or their ancestors. In this case it is easy to see why the nature of these categories provides no meaningful distinction between race and ethnicity.

In the Portes and Rumbaut study of second generation immigrants living in the United States, the authors find that 'there was an obvious convergence of race and ethnicity in the way they [second generation immigrants] define their [own] identities'.<sup>4</sup> Of those second generation immigrants who identified ethnically as Asian, 92% identified Asian as their race; of those second generation immigrants who ethnically identified as black, 85% identified black as their race; and finally of those second generation immigrants who ethnically identified as Hispanic or Latino,

58% identified Hispanic or Latino as their race. The findings of the authors indicate that the majority of second generation immigrants in their sample view ethnicity and race as synonymous identities: 'The explicit racialization of the Hispanic-Latino category, as well as the substantial proportion of [second generation immigrants] who conceived of their nationality of origin as a fixed racial category illustrates the arbitrariness of racial constructions'.<sup>5</sup>

This conflation of racial and ethnic identity is further justified when the authors evaluate the racial self-perceptions of the parents (first generation) of the second generation immigrants in the study. With the exception of Filipinos and Latin-origin groups (See Table 1), the racial perceptions of first generation black, white and Asian immigrants are highly correlated with those of second generation black, white and Asian immigrants.

In another study that examines the tension between race and ethnicity for immigrants, Mary Waters finds that for second generation black immigrants living in New York City, race and ethnicity are not synonymous. Waters's study of the ethnic and racial identities adopted by second generation Haitian and West Indian adolescents in New York City reveals that there are three main identity types adopted by second generation Haitian and West Indian immigrants: 1) racial; 2) ethnic; or 3) immigrant. Those second generation Haitian and West Indian immigrants that assumed the racial identity viewed themselves as blacks in the United States. Those second generation Haitian and West Indian immigrants that assumed the second and third identities viewed themselves as distinct from blacks in the United States and identified themselves as Haitian-American and West Indian-American (ethnic identity) or as Haitian and West Indian (immigrant identity).<sup>6</sup>

While Waters's findings on race, ethnicity and identity are applicable for black immigrants and even possibly for white immigrants, who would also be defined in this manner, for Hispanic/Latino and Asian/Pacific Islander immigrants this distinction is less applicable.<sup>7</sup> Black and White are 'accepted' racial categories while the identities of Hispanic/Latino and Asian continually oscillate between the categories of ethnicity, race and national origin. This ambiguity, unique to the process of defining race, ethnicity and national origin for Asians and Hispanics/Latinos, is also expressed in the Portes and Rumbaut study (see Table 1) if one examines the responses of first and second generation Filipino and Latin-origin immigrants.<sup>8</sup> There are obvious disparities between the two generations regarding how they identify themselves, but there are also disparities between the United States Census definitions of race, ethnicity and national origin for Latino/Hispanic immigrants and Asians, and the identity

**Table 1** Self-reported race of children of immigrants and their parents, by national origin groups, 1995–96

National Origin	Respondent	White (%)	Black (%)	Asian (%)	Hispanic/Latino (%)	Multi-Racial (%)	National Origin (%)	Other (%)
Cuba	2nd Generation	41.2	0.8	–	36.0	11.5	5.5	4.9
	1st Generation	93.1	1.1	0.3	1.1	2.5	0.5	1.4
Mexico	2nd Generation	1.5	0.3	–	25.5	12.0	56.2	4.5
	1st Generation	5.7	–	2.1	15.9	21.6	26.1	28.5
Nicaragua	2nd Generation	19.4	–	–	61.8	9.7	2.7	6.5
	1st Generation	67.7	0.5	1.6	5.4	22.0	0.5	2.2
Other Latin America	2nd Generation	22.8	1.9	–	52.9	14.7	4.6	3.1
	1st Generation	69.5	4.6	0.8	2.3	17.8	1.9	3.1
Philippines	2nd Generation	1.1	–	61.6	–	13.2	23.0	1.1
	1st Generation	0.3	0.5	44.1	–	11.1	41.4	2.7

Source: Portes and Rumbaut, *Legacies*. For entire table, see Portes and Rumbaut, *Legacies*, 178.

perceptions of these immigrant groups.<sup>9</sup> For example, with some definitions of the racial/ethnic category 'Asian', individuals of Pakistani or Indian descent are included, while other definitions exclude these two groups.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, while some definitions consider individuals of Pacific Island descent to be Asian others view them as racially and ethnically distinct.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, the term Latino has come to replace Hispanic because individuals from Spain can be Hispanic, but they are generally not considered Latino which typically refers to individuals of Central and South American descent.<sup>12</sup>

These inconsistencies lead to the following question: given the presence of a national origin identity, how salient *is* race and ethnicity to immigrants living in the United States? If indeed race and ethnicity are artificially constructed and unique to the United States, then on issues of public policy how will immigrants frame their public opinions in comparison to US citizens of non-immigrant parents from the same racial and ethnic background?

### **Hypotheses**

There is a lack of research on intra-racial and ethnic group divisions, tensions and conflict. Existing research on racial attitudes and stereotyping focus primarily on white-black racial attitudes towards one another.<sup>13</sup> Very little work examined the stereotypes and opinions that other racial and ethnic groups express towards each other. Those studies that have examined attitudes across multiple racial and ethnic groups have taken for granted the role that a prominent immigrant background plays in shaping an individual's attitudes and perceptions of others and themselves.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, there is a serious dearth of research in the area of evaluating the stereotypes and opinions that immigrants and citizens from similar racial and ethnic backgrounds hold towards one another.

With the exception of Native Americans and the majority of African Americans, voluntary immigration to the United States is a shared historical experience among the multiple racial and ethnic groups that live in the United States. As is the case for many Americans from an immigrant background, their heritage and culture become irrevocably tied to that of the United States to the extent that the two are indistinguishable.<sup>15</sup> However, for first and second generation immigrants, their experience as an immigrant is integral to their position in the social framework of the United States.<sup>16</sup> Consequently, one would expect the political attitudes of an individual from a sixth generation Mexican ancestry to diverge sharply from those of a first generation Mexican immigrant.

Earlier studies of political attitudes across racial and ethnic lines make the assumption that first and second generation immigrants are likely to hold the same attitudes as citizens who are less influenced by their immigrant background due to the length of time that has passed since immigration occurred.<sup>17</sup> This assumption is erroneous given the research conducted on first and second generation black immigrants and African Americans. In John Arthur's study of African immigrants he finds that:

[T]he cultural barriers and the social and economic differences separating the Africans and the African Americans is sometimes the cause of a simmering hostility and misunderstanding between them. [Thus], sharing the common physical characteristic of skin color has not ensured cultural and economic unity between African immigrants and American-born blacks.<sup>18</sup>

Arthur's findings echo those of Nkiru Asika who states that 'there are feelings of distrust, a lack of understanding and a cultural and economic gap between the two groups'.<sup>19</sup> For African Americans and black immigrants there is clearly a tangible division between the two groups. However, previous studies of public opinion and political and racial attitudes make the assumption that the racial category 'black' is largely homogenous in their thoughts and perceptions. These studies fail to acknowledge that black immigrants in the United States do not necessarily undergo similar experiences as their American born counterparts, therefore, their perceptions and attitudes are likely to be dissimilar. Further, the lack of research regarding the distinct attitudes and opinions of Asian and Hispanic/Latino immigrants and citizens of similar ancestry reveals assumptions are being made that race and ethnicity serve as sufficient unifiers on issues of public opinion and political attitudes, when this is not necessarily the case.

The hypotheses set forth in this study have been developed by considering the intricate process of acquiring and nurturing a self-identity and how this is an integral component in the course of forming opinions on issues of public policy. Therefore, I argue that race and ethnicity do not necessarily ensure a consistency in public opinion and attitudes for ethnic and racial minorities in the United States when stratifications are made between immigrants and citizens, and across immigrant generations.

## **Data and Method**

Data for this study comes from the 1992–94 Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality (MCSUI) which is the result of work undertaken by more than

40 researchers from 15 colleges and universities and includes information on racial attitudes and stereotypes applicable to this article.

Data for the MCSUI was gathered using multistage area probability sampling of adults, 21 years and older from four metropolitan areas: Atlanta (April 1992–September 1992); Boston (May 1993–November 1994); Detroit (April–September 1992); and Los Angeles (September 1993–August 1994). The MCSUI oversampled for the underrepresented minority groups, blacks, Latinos, and Asian Americans, eventually arriving at approximately 9,000 face-to-face interviews.

This survey overcomes many of the limitations associated with surveys assessing the attitudes of immigrant groups by including multiple city survey sites, conducting the interview in the native language of the respondent, and oversampling for racial/ethnic minority groups. Table 2 provides a descriptive profile of the sample.

#### *Variables and the Models*

##### *Dependent Variable-Affirmative Action for Special Job Training and Educational Assistance*

The first dependent variable measures respondents' feelings regarding the provision of special job training and educational assistance for blacks, Asians and Hispanic/Latinos as an affirmative action policy. The survey question asks each respondent whether they strongly favour, favour, neither favour nor oppose, oppose, or strongly oppose special job training or educational assistance for each group. The variable, labelled 'Education', is based upon a five-point scale where '1' indicates the respondent strongly opposes the affirmative action policy for that group, while '5' indicates the respondent strongly favours the affirmative action policy for that group.

**Table 2** Total number of respondents from each racial group by city

	Detroit	Atlanta	Boston	Los Angeles	TOTAL
Blacks	741	824	443	1,103	3,111
Latino/as	30	30	703	1,020	1,783
Asians	12	23	34	1,055	1,124
Whites	728	642	585	835	2,790
"Other"	32	9	55	12	108
TOTAL	1,543	1,528	1,820	4,025	8,916

Source: Compiled by the author from the Multi-City Survey of Urban Inequality, 1992–94.

*Dependent Variable-Affirmative Action in Hiring and Promotion*

The second dependent variable captures respondents' feelings regarding preferences in hiring and promotion for blacks, Asians, and Hispanic/Latinos as an affirmative action policy. The survey question asks each respondent whether they strongly favour, favour, neither favour nor oppose, oppose, or strongly oppose giving preferences in hiring and promotion to each group. The variable, labelled 'Hiring', is based upon a five-point scale where '1' indicates the respondent strongly opposes the affirmative action policy for that group, while '5' indicates the respondent strongly favours the affirmative action policy for that group.

*Independent Variables*

The independent variables are derived from the argument that immigrant experience is most salient to first and second generation immigrants. For third generation immigrants and beyond, their ties to their immigrant ancestry are extremely weak and not integral to the process of forming their public opinions and attitudes, as they would be for first and second generation immigrants.<sup>20</sup> Consequently, the independent variables only make the distinction between first and second generation immigrants and American born citizens. The measurement of these variables is designed to demonstrate that the divergence of opinion on certain public policy issues among immigrants and citizens from similar racial and ethnic backgrounds is driven by the strength of the connection between an immigrant and their country of origin. Similarly, any convergence of opinion is driven by how strongly an immigrant is connected to their racial and ethnic community in the United States.

This study is grounded in the assertion that there is a clear distinction between the public opinions and attitudes of immigrants and US citizens from the same racial and ethnic identity. Therefore, in order to capture this distinction, nine variables are derived from the Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality Survey. The measurement of these variables is based upon the assertion that the saliency of the immigrant experience is reflected in the duration of time which has passed since immigration occurred. These variables were constructed in three stages.

First, dummy variables were constructed for the following racial and ethnic categories: 1) Black/African American; 2) Asian; and 3) Hispanic Origin not of Black or African Descent. The second stage of variable construction involved assigning an immigrant generation or citizenship status to each group. A dummy variable was constructed from the question

asking respondents if they were naturalised citizens or not. This variable represents 'First generation immigrants'. A second dummy variable was constructed from the question asking respondents if one or both parents were born outside of the United States. This variable represents 'Second generation immigrants'. A third dummy variable was constructed from information gathered on respondents born in the United States to non-immigrant parents. This variable represents 'U.S. Citizens of non-immigrant background'.

The dummy variables for racial and ethnic categories were then interacted with the variables measuring US citizens of non-immigrant background and first and second generation immigrants (see Table 3).

These independent measures, admittedly, can serve only as proxy for the concept of adopting a racial, ethnic or immigrant identity. Unfortunately, these variables do not provide information as to whether an immigrant actually adopts an immigrant or racial/ethnic identity. The measurement of these explanatory factors distinguishes between immigrants and citizens based upon the racial and ethnic identity reported by the respondent. In essence it provides us with information on how these individuals 'self-identify' racially and ethnically. Therefore, this is not a personal account indicating whether the respondent actually adopts a racial/ethnic or immigrant identity. The position the respondent takes on the dependent

**Table 3** Variables measuring race, ethnicity and immigrant identity

Variable measurement	Variable meaning
Black/African American* US born to non-immigrant parents	Black/African American US Citizens <sup>†</sup>
Black/African American* Naturalized Citizen	Black/African American First Generation Immigrants
Black/African American* US born to immigrant parent(s)	Black/African American Second Generation Immigrants
Asian *US born to non-immigrant parents	Asian US Citizens <sup>†</sup>
Asian *Naturalized Citizen	Asian First Generation Immigrants
Asian *US born to immigrant parent(s)	Asian Second Generation Immigrants
Hispanic *US born to non-immigrant parents	Hispanic US Citizens <sup>†</sup>
Hispanic *Naturalized Citizen	Hispanic First Generation Immigrants
Hispanic *US born to immigrant parent(s)	Hispanic Second Generation Immigrants

<sup>†</sup>The definition of US citizen excludes respondents indicating an immigrant background.

variables is where we infer that their immigrant identity is more salient to them than racial/ethnic identity, or vice versa.

Finally, income and education are included in the model in order to control for the influence these two factors have on the attitudes of individuals towards affirmative action policies. By controlling for socio-economic factors, I work to remove any bias these variables may have on the relationship between an individual's identity adoption and their opinions regarding affirmative action policies.

### *Model Specification*

To test the strength of racial, ethnic and immigrant identity on public opinion regarding affirmative action in hiring and education the following ordered logit models are estimated.

### **Discussion of the Results**

The ordered outcome for the survey question regarding affirmative action for special job training and educational assistance is derived from the respondent's agreement or disagreement with the statement: 'Blacks/Asians/Hispanics-Latinos should receive special job training and educational assistance as an affirmative action benefit'. The possible responses range from 1 to 5 where 1 = Strongly Oppose this statement to 5 = Strongly Favour this statement.

Now turning to the ordered logit model for blacks, the results suggest that Black US Citizens, First Generation Black Immigrants, Hispanic/Latino US Citizens and First Generation Hispanic/Latino US Immigrants

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Ordered Logit (Education)} = & \alpha_1 + \beta_1 X(\text{Black US Citizen})_1 + \\ & \beta_2 X(\text{Black First Generation})_2 + \beta_3 X(\text{Black Second Generation})_3 + \\ & \beta_4 X(\text{Asian US Citizen})_4 + \beta_5 X(\text{Asian First Generation})_5 + \\ & \beta_6 X(\text{Asian Second Generation})_6 + \beta_7 X(\text{Hispanic US Citizen})_7 + \\ & \beta_8 X(\text{Hispanic First Generation})_8 + \beta_9 X(\text{Hispanic Second Generation})_9 + \\ & \beta_{10} X(\text{Black})_{10} + \beta_{11} X(\text{Asian})_{11} + \beta_{12} X(\text{Hispanic})_{12} + \beta_{13} X(\text{US - Citizen})_{13} + \\ & \beta_{14} X(\text{First - Generation})_{14} + \beta_{15} X(\text{Second - Generation})_{15} + \beta_{16} X(\text{Education - Level})_{16} + \\ & \beta_{17} X(\text{Income})_{17} + \mu_1 \end{aligned}$$

**Figure 1** Ordered logistic regression of opinion regarding affirmative action for special job training and educational assistance on racial/ethnic and immigrant identity.

$$\begin{aligned}
\text{Ordered Logit (Hiring)} = & \alpha_1 + \beta_1 X(\text{Black US Citizen})_1 + \\
& \beta_2 X(\text{Black First Generation})_2 + \beta_3 X(\text{Black Second Generation})_3 + \\
& \beta_4 X(\text{Asian US Citizen})_4 + \beta_5 X(\text{Asian First Generation})_5 + \\
& \beta_6 X(\text{Asian Second Generation})_6 + \beta_7 X(\text{Hispanic US Citizen})_7 + \\
& \beta_8 X(\text{Hispanic First Generation})_8 + \beta_9 X(\text{Hispanic Second Generation})_9 + \\
& \beta_{10} X(\text{Black})_{10} + \beta_{11} X(\text{Asian})_{11} + \beta_{12} X(\text{Hispanic})_{12} + \beta_{13} X(\text{US - Citizen})_{13} + \\
& \beta_{14} X(\text{First - Generation})_{14} + \beta_{15} X(\text{Second - Generation})_{15} + \beta_{16} X(\text{Education - Level})_{16} + \\
& \beta_{17} X(\text{Income})_{17} + \mu_1
\end{aligned}$$

**Figure 2** Ordered logistic regression of opinion regarding affirmative action in hiring and promotion on racial/ethnic and immigrant identity.

**Table 4** Ordered logit estimates and odds ratios of attitudes towards affirmative action for special job training and educational assistance for BLACKS on race, ethnic and immigrant identity

Variables	B	Odds Ratio
Black US Citizen	1.59*** (.054)	4.90*** (.262)
Black First Generation	.959*** (.204)	2.61*** (.533)
Black Second Generation	.267 (.179)	1.31 (.233)
Asian US Citizen	-.349*** (.151)	.705** (.106)
Asian First Generation	-.538*** (.100)	.584*** (.059)
Asian Second Generation	.044 (.137)	1.05 (.143)
Hispanic/Latino US Citizen	.530*** (.109)	1.70*** (.184)
Hispanic/Latino First Generation	.628*** (.092)	1.87*** (.173)
Hispanic/Latino Second Generation	-.086 (.124)	.916 (.114)
Education	.045** (.016)	1.05*** (.017)
Income	-.042*** (.006)	.958*** (.005)
Log likelihood	-9155.05	-9155.05
Model Chi-squared	1097.7***	1097.7***
Pseudo R-squared	.057	.057
Number of observations	7313	7313

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses.

\*Significant at .10 level, \*\*Significant at .05 level, \*\*\*Significant at .01 level.

favour affirmative action benefits for blacks in educational assistance and job training. The findings also reveal that Asian US Citizens and First Generation Asian Immigrants oppose affirmative action benefits for blacks in educational assistance and job training.

The analysis suggests that First Generation Black Immigrants appear to adopt a black American racial identity on this particular issue. This is an important finding because it reveals that the black racial identity serves as a unifier for black US citizens and First Generation Black Immigrants. Unfortunately, the Second Generation Black Immigrant category fails to achieve significance so we are unable to draw any conclusions regarding the strength of their racial or immigrant identities.

Another interesting result of the analysis is that on this issue, blacks and Hispanics/Latinos share similar attitudes. I argue that this is the case because Hispanics/Latinos believe affirmative action policies benefit not just blacks but them as well, so when they support policies benefiting blacks they are simultaneously supporting policies that benefit their group as well. The opposition to the notion of affirmative action benefits for blacks by Asians speaks to the unique positioning of Asian Americans in the perceived American racial hierarchy.

As Kim-Jean and Lee state: ‘Apart from a few scholars who characterize Asian Americans as “white” in terms of their status in American society, most concur that Asian Americans occupy a distinctive “third” position ... somewhere in between black and white.’<sup>21</sup> As Paul Ong suggests, Asian Americans have a very complicated relationship with affirmative action, which illustrates why there is the assumption that Asians neither need nor benefit from affirmative action policies.<sup>22</sup> The results suggest that unlike Hispanic and Latino immigrants and citizens, Asian US citizens and First Generation Asian immigrants do not believe that they receive any tangible benefit from supporting affirmative action policies that benefit blacks.

Another important finding from these results is that for each ethnic and racial group, US Citizens and First Generation Immigrants appear to share similar attitudes. With the second generation groups failing to achieve statistical significance, I am unable to make certain conclusions, but it is evident, at least that for this particular policy, that racial and ethnic identity are more salient than national origin identity for first generation immigrants. The remaining analyses will reveal whether this is a definitive argument.

Regarding the findings for Asians, the results suggest that Black US Citizens, First Generation Black Immigrants, Hispanic/Latino US Citizens and First Generation Hispanic/Latino US Immigrants favour affirmative

**Table 5** Ordered logit estimates and odds ratios of attitudes towards affirmative action for special job training and educational assistance for ASIANS on race, ethnic and immigrant identity

Variables	B	Odds Ratio
Black US Citizen	.249*** (.049)	1.28*** (.063)
Black First Generation	.516** (.200)	1.68** (.336)
Black Second Generation	.246 (.174)	1.28 (.222)
Asian US Citizen	-.192 (.150)	.826 (.124)
Asian First Generation	-.126 (.100)	.882 (.088)
Asian Second Generation	-.230** (.132)	.795** (.105)
Hispanic/Latino US Citizen	.300*** (.107)	1.34*** (.144)
Hispanic/Latino First Generation	.674*** (.091)	1.96*** (.179)
Hispanic/Latino Second Generation	-.144 (.123)	.866 (.107)
Education	.003 (016)	1.00 (.016)
Income	-.035*** (.005)	.965*** (.005)
Log likelihood	-10120.9	-10120.9
Model Chi-squared	97.42***	97.42***
Pseudo R-squared	.005	.005
Number of observations	7285	7285

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses.

\*Significant at .10 level, \*\*Significant at .05 level, \*\*\*Significant at .01 level.

action benefits for Asians in educational assistance and job training. The findings also reveal that Second Generation Asian Immigrants oppose affirmative action benefits for Asians in educational assistance and job training.

The ordered logit result for Second Generation Asian Immigrants would suggest this group does not adopt a racial/ethnic identity but rather adopts an immigrant identity. In this case I do not believe that tensions regarding identity adoption is the only story being told here. Considering that the Asian US Citizen and First Generation Asian Immigrant categories also fail to achieve significance, the findings lead me to argue that tensions between identity assumption are not the sole pressure influencing the results,

but rather that attitudes towards the particular public policy issue also make an important contribution.

In a deliberate manoeuvre by conservatives in the 1980s, Asian Americans were portrayed as victims of pro-black affirmative action programmes, despite the fact they were actually suffering from the quotas and benefits ‘intended to preserve the whiteness of student bodies.’<sup>23</sup> In many instances the perceived harm affirmative action programmes inflict on Asian Americans has been used to generate opposition towards programmes that would otherwise benefit Asians in the United States.<sup>24</sup> An example of this came in 1996 with the passage of Proposition 209 in California. ‘Proponents of Proposition 209 insisted that “preferential treatment” for blacks and Latinos rendered Asian Americans victims of reverse discrimination.’<sup>25</sup> As a result of the ideological tactics of conservatives dedicated to eradicating affirmative action programmes, Asian Americans have developed a very complex relationship with affirmative action, which the results of this analysis reveal.<sup>26</sup>

The findings for this particular model are extremely important because they support the assertion that Asian Americans do not perceive any benefit from supporting affirmative action policies, even for themselves. However, the results suggest that blacks and Hispanic/Latinos support affirmative action for Asians because they believe that by supporting the policy for other groups they also benefit. With the measure of Asian US Citizens and First Generation Asian Immigrants failing to achieve significance in the model and given the low R-squared it is difficult to come to strong conclusions, but the results are consistent with previous studies that suggest Asians do not face obstacles similar to other minority groups in the United States, and therefore are less likely to support and benefit from affirmative action policies.<sup>27</sup>

The ordered logit results for Hispanics/Latinos are similar to the findings for the category Blacks. The results indicate that Black US Citizens, First Generation Black Immigrants, Hispanic/Latino US Citizens and First Generation Hispanic/Latino US Immigrants favour affirmative action benefits for Hispanics/Latinos in educational assistance and job training. The results also indicate that Asian US Citizens and First Generation Asian Immigrants oppose affirmative action benefits for Hispanics/Latinos in educational assistance and job training.

The results suggest that First Generation Hispanic/Latino Immigrants appear to adopt a Hispanic/Latino racial/ethnic identity on this particular issue. This is an important finding because it reveals that the Hispanic/Latino racial/ethnic identity serves as a unifier for Hispanic/Latino US citizens and First Generation Hispanic/Latino Immigrants.

**Table 6** Ordered logit estimates and odds ratios of attitudes towards affirmative action for special job training and educational assistance for HISPANICS/LATINOS on race, ethnic and immigrant identity

Variables	B	Odds ratio
Black US Citizen	.581*** (.049)	1.78*** (.089)
Black First Generation	.722*** (.197)	2.06*** (.406)
Black Second Generation	.254 (.176)	1.29 (.226)
Asian US Citizen	-.412** (.151)	.663** (.199)
Asian First Generation	-.564*** (.100)	.569*** (.057)
Asian Second Generation	-.153 (.133)	.858 (.114)
Hispanic/Latino US Citizen	.691*** (.108)	1.99*** (.216)
Hispanic/Latino First Generation	.756*** (.091)	2.13*** (.194)
Hispanic/Latino Second Generation	-.163 (.121)	.850 (.103)
Education	.027** (.016)	1.03** (.017)
Income	-.041*** (.006)	.959*** (.005)
Log likelihood	-9719.8	-9719.8
Model Chi-squared	298.8***	298.8***
Pseudo R-squared	.015	.015
Number of observations	7300	7300

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses.

\*Significant at .10 level, \*\*Significant at .05 level, \*\*\*Significant at .01 level.

Unfortunately, the Second Generation Hispanic/Latino Immigrant category fails to achieve significance so no conclusions can be drawn regarding the prominence of their racial or immigrant identities.

Once again, the findings suggest Hispanics/Latinos and Blacks share similar attitudes because they believe that by supporting affirmative action policies for other groups will lead to benefits for themselves. Also, similar to the results for Blacks, Asians oppose affirmative action benefits for Hispanics/Latinos which further supports the argument that there is a clear divergence in the experience of Asians from other racial and ethnic groups in the United States.

The ordered outcome for the survey question regarding affirmative action for hiring and promotion is derived from the respondent's

**Table 7** Ordered logit estimates and odds ratios of attitudes towards affirmative action for hiring and promotion for BLACKS on race, ethnic and immigrant identity

Variables	B	Odds Ratio
Black US Citizen	1.72 *** (.053)	5.57*** (.293)
Black First Generation	.817*** (.197)	2.26*** (.446)
Black Second Generation	.080 (.169)	1.08 (.183)
Asian US Citizen	-.053 (.146)	.949 (.139)
Asian First Generation	.026 (.096)	1.03 (.099)
Asian Second Generation	.017 (.130)	1.08 (.184)
Hispanic/Latino US Citizen	.534*** (.105)	1.71*** (.179)
Hispanic/Latino First Generation	.763*** (.090)	2.14*** (.192)
Hispanic/Latino Second Generation	.039 (.121)	1.04 (.126)
Education	-.067*** (016)	.935*** (.015)
Income	-.065*** (.005)	.937*** (.005)
Log likelihood	-10569.7	-10569.7
Model Chi-squared	1201.9***	1201.9***
Pseudo R-squared	.053	.053
Number of observations	7302	7302

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses.

\*Significant at .10 level, \*\*Significant at .05 level, \*\*\*Significant at .01 level.

agreement or disagreement with the statement: 'Blacks/Asians/Hispanics-Latinos should receive preferences in hiring and promotion as an affirmative action benefit'. The possible responses range from 1 to 5 where 1 = Strongly Oppose this statement to 5 = Strongly Favour this statement. Examination of the ordered logit model for blacks reveals that Black US Citizens, First Generation Black Immigrants, Hispanic/Latino US Citizens and First Generation Hispanic/Latino US Immigrants favour affirmative action benefits for blacks in hiring and promotion. This finding is consistent with the findings from the previous affirmative action question. The remaining groups fail to achieve statistical significance in the model.

Regarding the findings for Asians, the results suggest that Black US Citizens, First Generation Black Immigrants, First Generation Asian

**Table 8** Ordered logit estimates and odds ratios of attitudes towards affirmative action for hiring and promotion for ASIANS on race, ethnic and immigrant identity

Variables	B	Odds Ratio
Black US Citizen	.649 *** (.049)	1.91*** (.094)
Black First Generation	.620*** (.199)	1.86*** (.370)
Black Second Generation	.206 (.171)	1.23 (.210)
Asian US Citizen	.088 (.150)	1.09 (.163)
Asian First Generation	.330*** (.100)	1.39*** (.139)
Asian Second Generation	-.145 (.131)	.865 (.113)
Hispanic/Latino US Citizen	.483*** (.106)	1.62*** (.172)
Hispanic/Latino First Generation	.841*** (.090)	2.32*** (.209)
Hispanic/Latino Second Generation	.010 (.122)	1.01 (.124)
Education	-.79*** (016)	.924*** (.015)
Income	-.553*** (.005)	.946*** (.005)
Log likelihood	-10641.4	-10641.4
Model Chi-squared	244.24***	244.24***
Pseudo R-squared	.011	.011
Number of observations	7283	7283

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses.

\*Significant at .10 level, \*\*Significant at .05 level, \*\*\*Significant at .01 level.

Immigrants, Hispanic/Latino US Citizens and First Generation Hispanic/Latino US Immigrants favour affirmative action benefits for Asians in hiring and promotion. While the findings for blacks and Hispanics/Latinos remain consistent, the finding for First Generation Asian Immigrants diverges from the results for the previous question regarding affirmative action, in that First Generation Asian Immigrants support the notion of affirmative action benefits for Asians in hiring and promotion.

Considering that the variables which represent Asian US Citizens and Second Generation Asian Immigrants fail to achieve statistical significance in the model and given the low R-squared, it is difficult to come to concrete conclusions, but the results are consistent with previous studies that argue

**Table 9** Ordered logit estimates and odds ratios of attitudes towards affirmative action for hiring and promotion for HISPANICS/LATINOS on race, ethnic and immigrant identity

Variables	B	Odds ratio
Black US Citizen	.897 *** (.049)	2.45*** (.120)
Black First Generation	.768*** (.199)	2.16*** (.428)
Black Second Generation	.177 (.172)	1.19 (.206)
Asian US Citizen	-.141 (.146)	.868 (.127)
Asian First Generation	-.001 (.097)	.990 (.096)
Asian Second Generation	.027 (.129)	1.03 (.133)
Hispanic/Latino US Citizen	.691*** (.106)	1.99*** (.213)
Hispanic/Latino First Generation	.963*** (.090)	2.62*** (.237)
Hispanic/Latino Second Generation	-.099 (.121)	.906 (.109)
Education	-.08*** (.016)	.923*** (.015)
Income	-.06*** (.005)	.938*** (.005)
Log likelihood	-10756.0	-10756.0
Model Chi-squared	447.23***	447.23***
Pseudo R-squared	.020	.020
Number of observations	7297	7297

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses.

\*Significant at .10 level, \*\*Significant at .05 level, \*\*\*Significant at .01 level.

Asians face a 'diamond ceiling' phenomenon in the workforce. These studies suggest that while Asians appear to perform at high levels in school and in the workforce they face unique obstacles when it comes to promotion.<sup>28</sup> As Agarwal states, 'If you are Asian then you are praised for good work and your loyalty to the organization, but promotion and other forms of reward and recognition seem to be reserved for other colleagues.'<sup>29</sup> Consistent with earlier studies, this analysis reveals that Asians – at least First Generation Asian Immigrants according to the results – appear to be aware of this 'diamond ceiling' effect and are therefore more inclined to support affirmative action policies that encourage preferences in hiring and promotion for Asians.

The ordered logit results for Hispanics/Latinos reveal that Black US Citizens, First Generation Black Immigrants, Hispanic/Latino US Citizens and First Generation Hispanic/Latino US Immigrants favour affirmative action benefits for Hispanics/Latinos in hiring and promotion. This finding is consistent with the findings from the previous affirmative action question. The remaining groups fail to achieve statistical significance in the model.

### **Conclusion**

This study finds that despite certain cultural differences which exist between immigrants and US citizens, in many cases race and ethnicity are important unifiers on affirmative action policy issues. This is an important finding because it suggests there is a considerable degree of homogeneity regarding the attitudes and public opinions among racial and ethnic groups. Nonetheless, this study does not assume that on all issues of public policy, US citizens and immigrants share similar attitudes. The remarks made by Guinier and Gates suggest there is a divergence of opinion, at the very least, regarding specific affirmative action programmes in higher education. However, the results of this analysis would suggest that even if immigrants maintain a strong connection to their national origin identity, their racial/ethnic identity is more salient to them on certain issues of affirmative action support. In the future, it would be interesting to determine those issues of public policy that sharply divide US citizens and immigrants of the same racial and ethnic group.

While the results of this study offer some important insights into the collective attitudes of black, Asian and Hispanic/Latino immigrants and US citizens, there are some weaknesses within the analysis that cannot be ignored. Most importantly, the Hispanic/Latino Second Generation Immigrant category fails to achieve statistical significance in any of the models which points to issues concerning measurement error. In addition, the low R-squared for several of the models is also troublesome because it indicates that there is a great deal of variance that is not captured by the model. Both of these issues point to some measure of error or misspecification of the model. In the future, consideration must be given to the incorporation of additional conditions that should be controlled for or that are explanatory in nature. It is certainly logical to assume that building a more robust model will improve the R-squared. In addition, it might also generate some relevant information from the Hispanic/Latino second generation immigrant category.

Another important limitation of this study is the absence of data that can provide specific insight into the identity constructions of individuals.

Unfortunately, the variables used in this study can serve only as proxy measures for whether or not an individual adopts a national origin or ethnic/racial identity. In the absence of in-depth interview data, it is impossible to make definitive statements regarding whether or not an individual clearly adopts a national origin or ethnic/racial identity. However, one can certainly make inferences from the findings of this study that a strong national origin or racial/ethnic identity could obviously drive the opinions and attitudes of respondents in certain directions. Furthermore, the work of John Arthur makes it clear that if individuals adopt an immigrant identity, they may view themselves as distinct from American born citizens with whom they share racial and ethnic ties. This in turn can lead to their adopting some of the negative stereotypes and beliefs held by the dominant white society. Therefore, while this study may not be able to determine clearly whether immigrants adopt a national origin identity as opposed to a racial/ethnic identity, there is evidence to suggest that if they do adopt a national origin identity they could possibly hold negative attitudes towards their American born counterparts from the same racial and ethnic group, which would be consistent with some of the findings in this analysis.

Despite some of the statistical and data limitations, this study offers a fresh perspective on the attitudes and public opinions of immigrants and US citizens from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. This analysis suggests that on many issues of public policy, similarities in race and ethnicity overcome some of the cultural differences between immigrants and US citizens. However, where race and ethnicity do not serve as a unifier, tension and conflict remains which has important implications for the future social harmony of the United States as immigration remains at peak levels.

## Notes

- [1] Nahirny and Fishman, 'American Immigrant Groups'; Kellstedt, 'Ethnicity and Political Behaviour'; Lamare, 'Political Integration of Mexican American Children'; Chui, Curtis, and Lambert, 'Immigrant Background'; Waters, 'Ethnic and Racial Identities'; Portes and Rumbaut, *Legacies*. See, also, Howard, 'Conflict of Identities'.
- [2] Oshige-McGowan, 'Diversity of What?'; Cavalli-Sforza, Menozzi, and Piazza, *History and Geography*.
- [3] Howard, 'Conflict of Identities'.
- [4] Portes and Rumbaut, *Legacies*, 177.
- [5] *Ibid.*
- [6] Waters, 'Ethnic and Racial Identities'.
- [7] *Ibid.*

- [8] Portes and Rumbaut, *Legacies*.
- [9] United States Census Bureau, *Profile*.
- [10] Hing, *Making and Remaking*.
- [11] Ong, *State of Asian Pacific America*.
- [12] Oshige-McGowan, 'Diversity of What?'
- [13] Oliver and Wong, 'Intergroup Prejudice'.
- [14] Ibid.
- [15] Portes and Rumbaut, *Legacies*.
- [16] Portes and Rumbaut, *Legacies*; Waters, 'Ethnic and Racial Identities'.
- [17] Oliver and Wong, 'Intergroup Prejudice'.
- [18] Arthur, *Invisible Sojourners*, 77–8.
- [19] Asika, 'Africans, African Americans'.
- [20] Dewind and Kasinitz, 'Everything Old is New Again?'; Passel and Fix, 'Myths about Immigrants'; Borjas, 'Intergenerational Mobility'.
- [21] Kim-Jean and Lee, 'Interracial Politics', 633.
- [22] Ong, *State of Asian Pacific America*; Oshige-McGowan, 'Diversity of What?'; Wong et al., 'Asian Americans as a Model Minority'.
- [23] Kim-Jean and Lee, 'Interracial Politics', 634; Takagi, *The Retreat From Race*.
- [24] Omi and Takagi, 'Situating Asian Americans'.
- [25] Park and Park, 'A New American Dilemma?'; Kim-Jean and Lee, 'Interracial Politics', 634.
- [26] Kim-Jean and Lee, 'Interracial Politics'.
- [27] Oshige-McGowan, 'Diversity of What?'; Wong et al., 'Asian Americans as a Model Minority'; Portes and Rumbaut, *Legacies*.
- [28] Agarwal, 'Diamond Ceiling'; Cotter et al., 'Glass Ceiling Effect'; Woo, 'Glass Ceilings'; Miller, 'Asian Americans'.
- [29] Agarwal, 'Diamond Ceiling', 2075.

### Notes on Contributor

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