

Does the Model Minority Myth act as a barrier for intra-minority solidarity? An Investigation of Black Americans' commonality and political solidarity with Asian Americans

An Honors Thesis for the Department of Psychology

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Abstract

The Model Minority Myth (MMM) suggests that Asian Americans are economically affluent, high achieving in an academic setting, and high-status (Bell et al., 1997; Kim, 2001). The MMM has historically been weaponized by White Americans to pit minority racial groups against one another, which has led to interracial tension between the Asian Americans and other racial minority groups, especially with Black American communities (Tran & Curtain, 2017). The purpose of this experiment was to investigate whether the MMM hinders solidarity between Black and Asian Americans. Specifically, we hypothesized that being exposed to the MMM reduces Black Americans' solidarity with Asian Americans. Black participants ($N = 226$) were randomly assigned to read a Twitter thread that depicted Asian Americans as either prototypical model minorities or as non-prototypical model minorities before completing measures of collective action, feelings of commonality, common values, political solidarity, experiences of discrimination, and endorsement of the MMM. Participants in the prototypical model minority condition expressed less interest in collective action compared to participants in the non-prototypical condition. Exploratory regression analyses revealed that, as feelings of commonality, participant experiences with discrimination, and political solidarity increased, desires to engage in collective action also increased. This study centers Black participants who are underrepresented in psychology research and investigates how the Model Minority Myth may reduce Black participants' interests to engage in collective action. Furthermore, the results show that collective action is a complicated behavior that depends on many factors.

Keywords: Solidarity, Model Minority Myth, Asian American, Black American, common in-group identity

Does the Model Minority Myth act as a Barrier for Intra-minority solidarity? An Investigation of Black Americans' Commonality and Political Solidarity with Asian Americans

In the United States, Asian Americans are often stereotyped as being high-achieving and well-off racial minorities. This stereotype, also known as the Model Minority Myth, suggests that Asian Americans are economically affluent, high achieving in an academic setting, and overall high-status (Bell et al., 1997; Kim, 2001; Matsuda, 1997; Wing, 2007; Zou & Cheryan, 2017). In part due to these expectations, Asian Americans tend to be better-off than other racial minority groups in American society. For example, a 2012 study from Pew Research found that Asian Americans are the highest income and best educated racial group in the U.S. (Pew Research Center, 2012). Consequently, the Model Minority Myth has historically been weaponized (i.e., using stereotypes and words to invalidate and undermine an individual and by extension the population that the individual belongs to) by White individuals to pit racial groups against each other (Tran & Curtin, 2017). For example, when Japanese Americans were put into internment camps during WWII, other Asian Americans feared being put into camps. White individuals preached that to overcome racism and barriers, they should just work hard and “pull themselves up by their bootstraps.” Seeing the success of certain Asian American groups, White individuals began to spread the idea that people of color can succeed and overcome racism solely through working hard without acknowledging the historical struggles that Black Americans face (Chow, 2017; Demsas, 2021). This can cause a lack of mutual support, interests, and community (i.e., intergroup solidarity) between racially marginalized communities and Asian American communities, making it difficult for racially marginalized communities to come together to oppose and challenge oppressive forces (Demsas, 2021). Specifically, Black Americans may not feel a strong sense of intergroup solidarity with Asian Americans because of the historical

tension between the groups spurred by the Model Minority Myth, which would result in less collective action (i.e., working together to better both groups treatment and standing in U.S. society) being exchanged between the two groups. Thus, the current study sought to examine if the Model Minority Myth of Asian Americans can hinder intra-minority solidarity between racial groups, specifically between Black Americans and Asian Americans.

The Model Minority Myth as a Racial Wedge

The MMM is a strategic product of White Supremacy that is used to maintain “Whiteness”. Helms (2017) defines Whiteness as “the overt and subliminal socialization processes and practices, power structures, laws, privileges, and life experiences that favor the White racial group over all others”. Whiteness is a construct that includes racial attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and experiences related to White people and the privileged position White people embody in a racially hierarchical society (Schooley et al., 2019). Specifically, Helms (2017) expands on Whiteness as “a set of often unnamed and unmarked cultural and racial practices (e.g., customs, traditions), values, and attitudes that signify what is considered normative, thus privileging White skin and naturalizing systems of White supremacy. Whiteness refers to a structural position—a racialized social identity that is positioned as superior relative to other “races” within a system of racial hierarchy (Cancelmo & Mueller, 2019). Therefore, due to global histories rooted in White colonialism, Whiteness means economic and political power held by those racialized as White (Cancelmo & Mueller, 2019). Historically, for Asian Americans, overcoming racism meant turning to assimilation (Li & Nicholson Jr., 2021; Shih et al., 2019) where success came to those who became model minorities, which meant situating oneself closer to Whiteness. By distancing oneself further away from other racial minorities and working hard to succeed academically and economically, one can assimilate into Whiteness.

Therefore, the MMM which suggests that Asian Americans are economically affluent, high achieving in an academic setting, and overall high-status is a product of White Supremacy by situating Asian Americans closer to “Whiteness”.

The Model Minority Myth has historically been used as a racial wedge which was propagated by White Supremacy to divide Black and Asian American communities (Chow, 2017). For example, in the mid-1960s, a prominent sociologist wrote a piece for New York Times discussing the effects of the Japanese internment camps during WWII. He praised the success of Japanese Americans post-WWII through sheer hard work and argued that since Japanese people overcame racism, Black Americans should be able to do the same. The notions of this piece spread and led White individuals to pit Asian Americans and Black Americans against each other, using Asian Americans as evidence for a meritocratic society (Chow, 2017). Due to increasing pressures to succeed in American society, Asian Americans had to turn to assimilation and by that process, maintain structures of Whiteness as a means to succeed. The process of assimilation and receiving some perks of Whiteness for Asian Americans justifies the subordination of Black Americans who are devalued for not achieving the same level of success as Asian Americans. This ultimately protects the dominance of White Americans by pitting Black and Asian Americans against each other (Kim, 1999). This is a clear example of how the MMM can be used as a racial wedge to hinder Black and Asian solidarity.

However, it is important to note that there is a history of Black and Asian solidarity. For example, Black and Asian activists created the Third World Liberation Front to establish Ethnic Studies as a field at UC Berkeley (Demsas, 2021). Additionally, the Red Guards was an Asian American activist group who were inspired by the Black Panthers and fought for housing and education rights for Asian American communities (Maeda, 2005). Yuri Kochiyama was a

dedicated activist for Black communities in Harlem, NY and formed a close political alliance with Malcolm X (Zinn Education Project, 2022). More recently, the Yellow Peril Supports Black Power movement, which traces its roots to the 1960s, resurfaced at protests following the death of George Floyd, a Black man who was murdered by police officers who used extreme force during an arrest. Overall, Black Americans and Asian Americans have a history of creating joint coalitions to fight against injustices. Therefore, it is even more important to understand how the MMM can impact solidarity to maintain and bolster these relationships of solidarity.

Even though there is a long history of Black and Asian solidarity in the U.S., mainstream White American society continues to identify Asian Americans as model minorities, especially when compared to Black communities. The emphasis on the academic success of Asian Americans in a supposedly meritocratic education system reinforces the notion that Asian Americans are self-reliant, hardworking, and are better off than other racial minorities due to their efforts. While in reality, the U.S. education is not meritocratic and the success of an individual depends on race, wealth, and family connections (Brint, 2002; Liu, 2011) Meanwhile, Black Americans are demonized by White individuals as affirmative action recipients who do not work as hard as Asian Americans to achieve academic success. Crystal (1989) argues that the Model Minority Myth supports the belief that democracy ‘works’ and implies that racism does not exist and that the outcomes experiences by minority groups are due to their own shortcomings. Thus, the MMM is weaponized as a racial wedge to hinder positive relationships between Black and Asian Americans.

The Model Minority Myth (MMM) reduces the perception that Black communities face challenges by asserting that their struggles are not the product of systemic racism but instead due to personal factors. This is a strategic product of White Supremacy, such that for Whiteness (i.e.,

the overt and subliminal socialization processes and practices, power structures, laws, privileges, and life experiences that favor the White racial group over all others; Helms et al., 2017) to exist and maintain itself, it must show that it works. The MMM is used to craft the narrative that Whiteness is good and that by situating oneself closer to Whiteness and becoming a model minority, one will be able to succeed. In other words, if Asian Americans can climb the ladder of success with hard work, why can't Black Americans? These ideas may foster tensions and negative sentiments between the two groups, making it difficult to achieve solidarity. The pitting of these two groups against one another may cause a lack of *intergroup solidarity* between Black communities and Asian American communities. Thus, Black communities may not feel *common values or a sense of commonality* with Asian Americans, resulting in Black Americans expressing *less solidarity* for Asian Americans than when the MMM is not salient.

Endorsement of the Model Minority Myth and Barriers to Solidarity

Endorsement (e.g., When an outgroup believes in the stereotypes of another racial group and internalization (e.g., When members of a group believe the stereotypes associated with their own group) of the MMM can shape the racial attitudes and behaviors of Asian Americans, as well as other racial groups. Parks and Yoo (2016) found that White college students who expressed anti-Asian sentiments also endorsed the MMM. Specifically, White college students who believed that Asian Americans do not face systemic barriers were more likely to endorse anti-Asian sentiments such as treating Asian Americans as perpetual foreigners and having racially unfavorable attitudes towards Asian Americans. Research has also investigated how internalization of the MMM among Asian Americans is used to reduce the perception of the challenges that Black Americans face (Yi et al., 2021). Greater internalization of the belief that Asian Americans have an exceptional work ethic and inner drive that pushes them to success

(*achievement orientation*) was associated with greater anti-Black attitudes (Yi et al., 2021).

When Asian Americans believed that their racial group was economically successful due to hard work, they were more likely to believe that Black Americans didn't have these values of hard work, and therefore, were less successful. At high levels of internalization of the MMM, specifically the achievement orientation of the MMM, there is less support for the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and BLM goals for Black liberation (Matriano et al., 2021). Overall, high internalization of the MMM hinders understanding of Black Americans' sociopolitical positions due to systemic racism.

Additionally, high internalization of the MMM has been linked to opposition to affirmative action (Yi et al., 2021) even though affirmative action has been found to benefit Asian American communities who historically have experienced challenges in higher education. While 85% of Indian Americans, Mongolian Americans, and Taiwanese Americans attend college, Bhutanese Americans and Burmese Americans attend college at lower rates—15% and 34% respectively (Guan, 2018). High internalizations of the MMM and rejection of affirmative action among privileged Asian Americans erases the challenges that the diverse community of Asian Americans face and does not address the economic disparities between different Asian American groups. Therefore, maintenance of the MMM hinders understanding of Asian Americans and Black Americans sociopolitical positions in America and ultimately works against the interests of both groups to maintain White dominance.

Sense of Commonality and Solidarity

The relationships between members of different stigmatized groups can be shaped by discrimination (Guan, 2018). Even though stigmatized groups face various types of discrimination, a perceived sense of similarity and victimhood created opportunities for

coalitions and joint collective action (Vollhardt, 2015). For example, when low status members perceive discrimination against their ingroup, a shared identity of disadvantage is activated which can lead to more positive intraminority intergroup outcomes such as expressing more positive attitudes and evaluations about the other racial group (Chaney et al., 2018). This concept is known as stigma solidarity, where perceived discrimination among members of different stigmatized groups can elicit interests to engage in collective action (Craig & Richeson, 2012; Subasic et al., 2011). Therefore, stigma solidarity can be a form of common values. Sharing common values and experiences (i.e., recognizing the experiences of shared discrimination) may facilitate seeing other minorities as allies and part of a broader common “minority” ingroup.

Solidarity and Collective Action

One theory that can help articulate why some racially marginalized groups may not express experiences-with-discrimination-based common values with Asian American groups is the *common ingroup identity model*, which is derived from the social categorization approach to intergroup behavior, or *social identity theory* (Gaertner et al., 1993). It asserts that intergroup bias and conflict can be reduced by factors that transform members’ cognitive representation of groups from two groups to one group. The common ingroup identity model proposed that if members of different groups are induced to conceive of *themselves as a single group* [us or we] rather than two completely separate groups [me and you], attitudes toward former outgroup members will become more positive through processes involving pro-ingroup bias (Gaertner et al., 1993). However, because the Model Minority Myth situated Asian Americans close to Whiteness and argued that Asian Americans do not experience discrimination, Black Americans might not conceive Asian Americans as belonging to their ingroup. The process of recognizing

shared commonality and shared identities blur group boundaries and increases political solidarity due to perceptions of commonality (Glasford & Calcagno, 2012).

However, it is important to emphasize that perceiving the differentiation among two groups is also crucial for achieving solidarity and creation of a collective group identity rather than a complete erasure of both group's cultural values. Past research has found that when trying to attain solidarity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, embracing each group's unique attributes and values not only respects diversity but also encourages the exchange of principles and practices of each group. Recognizing and embracing each other's differences overall fosters a stronger collective group identity (González et al., 2022). Therefore, even though we focused on the potential for groups to have a shared "common identity" it is still important for researchers and social activists to recognize the differentiation between groups such as unique cultural values and cultural practices. It is important to acknowledge shared experiences and common values while still embracing the differences that both groups have. However, because the Model Minority Myth paints Asian Americans as having distinctly positive experiences in America (which is not entirely true, and hence, a myth), it could decrease feelings of common values between Asian Americans and Black communities.

Collective Action. Duncan (2012) proposed the two paths to collective action and activism. Duncan's framework proposed that: (1) personality and life experiences directly affect activism; (2) group consciousness, defined as perceived injustice, identity, and efficacy directly affect activism; (3) individual differences affect group consciousness and in-turn, affect activism. Overall, Duncan's model explained why some people get involved in collective action and some do not. Individual differences and life experiences moderated the development of group consciousness/collective identity and in turn affected motivations for collective action. However,

Model Minority beliefs impedes own-group activism in three important ways. First, they promote beliefs in meritocracy and individual mobility; second, they encourage comparisons between Asian Americans as a successful monolith despite socioeconomic gaps between different Asian American groups, and other disadvantaged groups. Third, they uphold the view that status differences between groups are legitimate (Tran & Curtin, 2017). Therefore, the MMM acts as a barrier to collective action by hindering the development of a collective identity for racial minorities by ideologically separating Asian Americans from other groups. By promoting beliefs in a meritocratic society, the MMM: (1) posits that Asian Americans can succeed through sheer hard work and implies that groups who haven't made it are not hardworking; (2) and alienates Black Americans who have faced struggles in the U.S due to systematic racism. Lastly, Tran and Curtin (2017) found that experiences with racial discrimination can directly inspire collective action and that experiences with discrimination can also foster awareness of structural inequity (rejection of the model minority myth) and will also lead to collective action.

Overall, knowing that the MMM reduces the perceived challenges faced by both the Black and Asian communities, research has not examined how Black Americans' endorsement of the MMM can impact Black Americans and their relationships with Asian Americans. Most of this research has focused on how Asian Americans internalize the MMM. Mainstream Psychology research rarely centers Black participants' perceptions and their experiences with intergroup relations (Shelton, 2000). Therefore, this study is an important step in studying Black and Asian solidarity because Black Americans deserve to be centered in intergroup relations research. To understand the dynamics of intergroup relations, it is necessary to understand all perspectives need involved.

The Current Study

The purpose of this experiment was to test if the Model Minority Myth hindered intra-minority solidarity between racial groups, specifically between Asian and Black Americans. The current study is important because, to understand how and when societal norms foster positive intra-minority relationships, it is important to examine how current stereotypes may hinder positive social relationships, such as allyship and solidarity, between minority groups.

We hypothesized that when Black, U.S. participants read a Twitter thread about a college-based Asian American Society advocating for more merit-based scholarships for Asian Americans who excel in academics (Prototypical Model Minority Condition), they will report:

H1) that Asian Americans as a group experience *less* racial discrimination

H2) a *lower* sense of commonality with Asian Americans

H3) *lower* political solidarity with Asian Americans

H4) *lower* interests to engage in collective action with Asian American activism in comparison to Black U.S. participants who read a Twitter thread about a college-based Asian American Society advocating for more need-based scholarships for low income and first-generation Asian Americans (Non-Prototypical Model Minority Condition). All hypotheses, materials, cleaned data and data analysis syntax can be found on the Open Science Framework: [<https://osf.io/g5kpv/>].

Method

Participants

A power analysis for an independent sample t-test with two conditions confirmed that to detect a small effect ($d=0.20$) with 80% power, we would need 800 participants, 400 per condition (Erdfelder et al., 1996). Participants were recruited via Prolific for a compensation of \$1.63. In total, we sampled 299 participants due to limited funding. We excluded a total of 73 participants: 11 were test responses, 16 failed the manipulation multiple choice quiz, 28 failed the open-response attention check, 6 were incomplete, 1 declined consent at the beginning, 3 withdrew their consent, and 8 did not fit the demographic of adult Black Americans. Therefore, the total sample was 226 participants ($M_{age} = 35.6$, $SD_{age} = 13.08$; Woman/Female = 153, Man/Male = 70, Nonbinary = 3; Black = 226). Participants varied in education levels, but most had a 4 year degree (Less than high school = 2, High school graduate = 34, Some college = 55, 2 year degree = 25, 4 year degree = 80, Professional degree = 30, Doctorate = 0) and were politically liberal ($M_{political} = 2.85$, $SD_{political} = 1.5$, 1 being very liberal and 7 being very conservative). There were 114 participants in the prototypical model minority condition and 112 participants in the non-prototypical model minority condition.

Materials

Manipulation. Participants were randomly assigned to see a Twitter thread (adapted from Kuo et al., 2020) that depicted Asian Americans as either an exemplar of the Model Minority Myth (i.e., prototypical condition) or as a non-exemplar of the Model Minority Myth (i.e., non-prototypical condition), refer to Appendix A. In the prototypical condition, the Twitter thread highlighted a news article from a fictitious university which called for more merit-based scholarships for high achieving and academically successful Asian American students. In the non-prototypical condition, the Twitter thread highlighted a news article from the same fictitious

university which called for more need-based scholarships for low-income and first-generation Asian American students.

Commonality. Feelings of commonality were measured (e.g., *I feel a bond with Asian Americans*; Leach et al., 2008) via 4 questions using a seven-point scale (1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree). For the full scale for all measures, please see the Appendix B. This measure intended to capture individuals' perceptions on shared bonds and whether they thought what happened to Asian Americans impacted them.

Perceptions of discrimination. To measure how much participants believed that Asian Americans, and also they, themselves, experience discrimination due to race, the *Experience with Discrimination* measure was used (e.g., *Due to [Asian Americans'/my] racial background they are treated with less courtesy or respect than other people*; Williams et al., 1997). Items were rated on a seven-point scale (1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree).

Common Values. For the measure of common values with Asian Americans, the *Common Values* measure was used (e.g., *People from my racial group feel a bond with Asian Americans*; Glasford & Calcagno, 2012). Seven questions were asked using a seven-point scale (1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree) to identify potential shared commonality between Black Americans and Asian Americans. This measure intended to capture shared life principles and values.

Political Solidarity. To measure potential for political solidarity the *Political Solidarity* measure was used (e.g., *people from my racial group should work with Asian Americans to improve the position of both groups*; Glasford & Calcagno, 2012). 7 questions were asked using a seven-point scale (1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree) to identify potential political solidarity.

Collective Action. Interest in collective action was measured using the *Collective Action* measure (e.g., *I would like to participate in a demonstration against discrimination toward Asian Americans*; van Zomeren et al., 2011) measured on a seven-point scale (1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree).

Endorsement of the Model Minority Myth. Lastly, endorsement of the Model Minority Myth was measured using a seven-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with higher scores representing greater endorsement of the model minority myth and lower scores representing the opposite (e.g., *In comparison to other racial minorities (e.g., Black/African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans): Asian Americans have stronger work ethics*; IM-4; Yoo et al., 2014). This measure is broken into two sub-measures: MM-Achievement Orientation and MM-Unrestricted Mobility, however, we focused on the Unrestricted Mobility subscale for the results because the achievement scale is tied to Asian American's academic achievement and math performance, which was not the focus of our study. The purpose of our study is to investigate Asian American and Black American solidarity through analyzing stigma solidarity and shared commonality. The Mobility subscale focuses on ideas that Asian American's do not face systemic barriers, which can be a barrier to solidarity.

Procedure

Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions (prototypical vs. non-prototypical). After reading the Twitter thread for their respective condition, they completed one attention check item, which asked them to select the answer that best summarizes the twitter thread they just read. After this, all participants completed the collective action measure first before seeing the rest of the measures. The collective action measure was presented first because the measure was modified to directly ask about interests in collective action regarding the

students at the University of New Haven who were discussed the stimuli. Therefore, we chose to show the collective action measure first before the other measures because it was directly linked to the stimuli. The remaining measures were presented in random order. After participants completed all the measures, they completed one more, open-response, attention check item that asked them to choose their favorite season including a brief explanation to screen for bots and were debriefed.

Results

Pre-Analysis Screening

Prior to testing our primary hypotheses, we conducted a pre-analysis screening to determine if the data met various assumptions for analysis. Visual inspection of histograms show that all variables were roughly normally distributed. Inspection of skewness and kurtosis showed that all variables were slightly leptokurtic or platykurtic and skewed but were all within the acceptable range of -1 to 1 (See Table 1). Box plots indicated that there were 9 univariate outliers across all variables: 2 for Perceived Asian American Discrimination, 2 for Common Values, 2 for Endorsement of MMM, and 3 for Endorsement of MMM Mobility subscale. Z-score analyses confirmed that most of the outliers were acceptable (within $|3|$ standard deviations) except for 1 outlier for Endorsement of MMM Mobility subscale. Three multivariate outliers were found using the Mahalanobis Distance metric. All outliers were plausible, so we chose to retain these data points. We consider them again during post-analysis screenings.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for continuous variables by condition

	Prototypical Condition				Non-Prototypical Condition			
	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Collective Action	3.90	1.69	-0.22	0.16	4.53	1.59	-0.40	-0.65
Commonality	4.04	1.66	-0.41	-0.71	4.44	1.46	-0.43	-0.13
Participant Discrimination	4.38	1.71	-0.39	-0.78	4.58	1.59	-0.59	-0.31
Perceived Asian American Discrimination	4.74	1.12	-0.42	-0.23	4.74	1.06	-0.40	0.13
Common Values	3.60	1.38	0.09	-0.34	3.87	1.41	0.01	-0.38
Solidarity	4.72	1.45	-0.58	0.04	5.05	1.49	-0.77	0.28
Endorsement of MMM	4.78	1.14	-0.46	0.28	4.63	1.22	-0.03	0.41
Endorsement of MMM Mobility	4.24	1.32	0.14	-0.14	3.99	1.27	-0.21	0.22

Scatterplots revealed relatively linear relationships across all relationships between variables. Correlation analyses between all variables can be seen in Table 2. The only two strong significant correlations ($r > .70$) were between Commonality and Solidarity, $r(224) = .73, p < .001$, and between Commonality and Common Values, $r(224) = .76, p < .001$.

Table 2

Correlations Between all Continuous Variables

Variable	(1) Collective Action	(2) Commonality	(3) Participant Discrim.	(4) Asian Discrim.	(5) Common Values	(6) Political Solidarity	(7) EMMM	(8) EMMM Mobility
1	—							
2	0.69***	—						
3	0.28***	0.12*	—					
4	0.40***	0.40***	0.33***	—				
5	0.52***	0.76***	0.08	0.29***	—			
6	0.58***	0.73***	0.14*	0.44***	0.48***	—		
7	-0.12*	-0.15*	-0.13*	-0.03	-0.16*	-0.007	—	
8	0.11*	-0.37*	0.08*	-0.34***	-0.26***	-0.35***	0.11*	—

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Discrim = Discrimination shortened

EMMM = Endorsement of Model Minority Myth

Experiences with Discrimination

Asian Americans. Contrary to our predictions, the difference between the prototypical and non-prototypical condition on perceptions of Asian American experiences with discrimination was not statistically significant, $t(224)=1.56, p = .12$.

Participants. Participants' ratings of their own experiences with discrimination also did not differ significantly between the prototypical and non-prototypical conditions $t(223)=0.916, p = .37$.

Commonality with Asian Americans

Contrary to our hypotheses, the difference between the prototypical and non-prototypical conditions on feelings of commonality was not significant, $t(221)=1.91, p = 0.06$. Furthermore, the difference between the prototypical and non-prototypical conditions on common values was also not significant., $t(224)=1.49, p = 0.14$.

Political Solidarity with Asian Americans

Contrary to our hypotheses, the difference between the prototypical and non-prototypical conditions on political solidarity was not significant, $t(224)=1.68, p = 0.09$.

Engagement in Collective Action

There was a significant effect of condition on collective action, $t(224) = 2.88, p = 0.004$, wherein participants in the non-prototypical condition ($M = 4.52, SD = 1.59$) expressed more intentions to engage collective action than those in the prototypical condition ($M = 3.90, SD = 1.69$), with a small to medium effect size ($d=0.38$ 95% CI [.12-.86]). A post hoc test to compute achieved power based on the sample ($n_{Prototypical}=114; n_{Non-prototypical}=112$) and the effect size ($d=0.38$) revealed that the test was adequately powered ($\beta-1=0.81$). These results imply that

Black participants in the non-prototypical condition expressed stronger interests to engage in collective action with Asian Americans than those in the prototypical condition.

Exploratory Analyses

We conducted an exploratory regression analysis to examine whether and how perceptions of racial discrimination faced by Asian Americans, participants' experiences of racial discrimination, feelings of commonality and common values, feelings of political solidarity, endorsement of the model minority myth mobility subscale, and their interactions, predict collective action. We focused on the EMMM mobility subscale (vs. using the whole scale) because it correlated with *all* other predictors and with collective action (see Table 2), and the measures align more with perceptions of status (e.g., *Asian Americans are less likely to experience racism in the United States*) as opposed to aligning with Asian Americans' academic achievement (EMMM). All predictors were group-mean centered and the non-prototypical condition was set as the reference group. Overall, all predictors and interactions together accounted for 57% of the variation in collective action ratings, and this value is statistically significant, $F(15, 210) = 18.9, p < .001$. Refer to Table 3 for regression results.

In sum, the manipulation did affect ratings of collective action, wherein participants in the prototypical condition were less likely to demonstrate intentions to engage in collective action compared to participants in the non-prototypical condition. Additionally, Black participants who, overall, shared more commonality with Asian Americans were also more likely to demonstrate stronger intentions to engage in collective action in comparison to Black participants who did not share commonality with Asian Americans. However, Black participants who shared more common values expressed less of a desire to engage in collective action. It is important to note that both common values and commonality aim to capture general feelings of

commonality, but common values focus on shared life principles and values while commonality asks about the individual's perceptions on shared bonds and whether they thought what happened to Asian Americans impacted them. Participants who rated that they experienced more discrimination were also more likely to demonstrate intentions to engage in collective action. Similarly, participants who expressed more political solidarity showed stronger collective action intentions. Perceptions of Asian American discrimination and the endorsement of Model Minority Myth Mobility subscale did not influence participants' ratings of collective action—suggesting that these are stable ideologies.

Table 3

Regression results

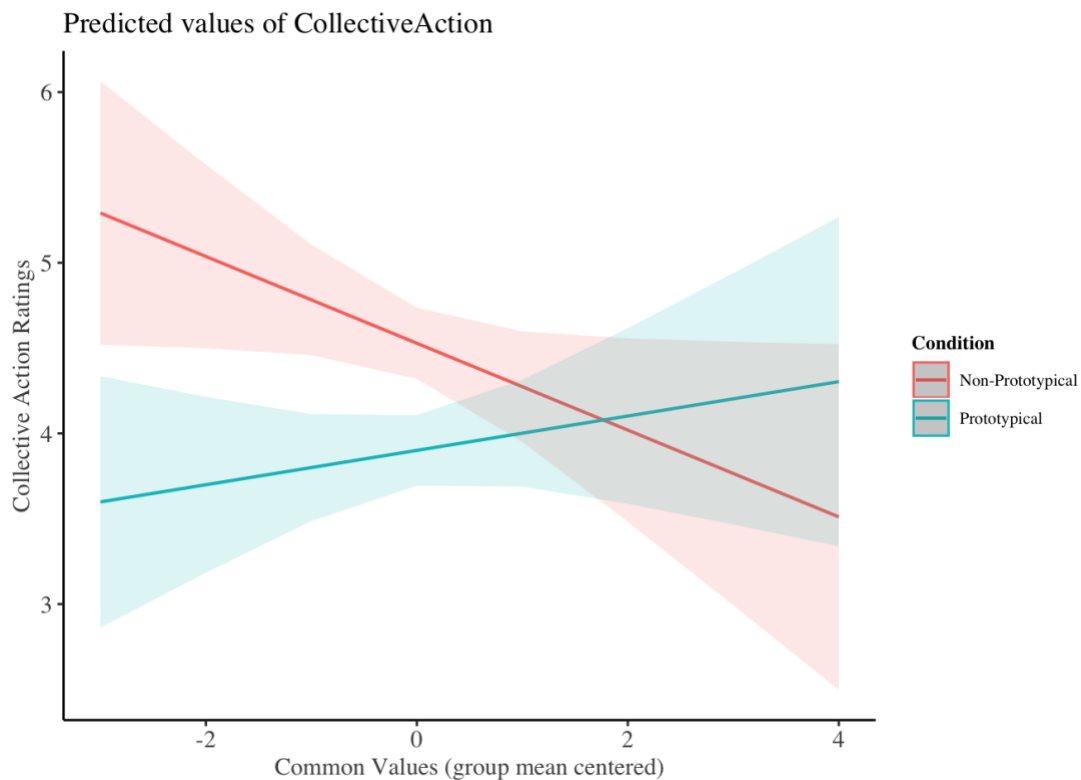
<i>Predictors</i>	Collective Action		
	<i>Estimates (Standard Error)</i>	<i>95% CI</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	4.53 (0.11)	4.32, 4.74	<0.001
Condition (Non-Prototypical=reference)	-0.63 (0.15)	-0.92, -0.33	<0.001
EMMM Mobility Subscale	-0.04 (0.10)	-0.23, 0.15	0.696
Commonality	0.62 (0.14)	0.35, 0.89	<0.001
Asian Discrimination	0.01 (0.12)	-0.22, 0.25	0.911
Participant Discrimination	0.26 (0.08)	0.11, 0.40	0.001
Common Values	-0.26 (0.13)	-0.51, -0.01	0.041
Political Solidarity	0.33 (0.11)	0.11, 0.55	0.004
<i>Interactions with Condition</i>			
Cond * EMMM Mobility Subscale	-0.19 (0.13)	-0.45, 0.08	0.167
Cond * Commonality	-0.07 (0.18)	-0.42, 0.28	0.699
Cond * Asian Discrimination	0.03 (0.17)	-0.30, 0.36	0.848
Cond * Participant Discrimination	-0.11 (0.10)	-0.31, 0.09	0.263
Cond * Common Values	0.36 (0.17)	0.02, 0.70	0.037
Cond * Political Solidarity	-0.33 (0.16)	-0.63, -0.02	0.036
Deviance	265.555		
AIC	707.811		
-2log-Likelihood	677.812		
R ²	0.57		

Interactions. There was a significant interaction in which Black participants in the non-prototypical condition (i.e., who were exposed to a Twitter thread about low-income Asian students) expressed weaker intentions to engage in collective action with Asian Americans when they reported sharing more common values with Asian Americans. However, the opposite

pattern occurred for Black participants in the prototypical condition (i.e., exposed to a Twitter thread about high achieving Asian American students). Specifically, Black participants in the prototypical condition reported stronger collective action intentions when they reported sharing more common values with Asian Americans. Interestingly, Black participants in the non-prototypical condition who reported few common values with Asian Americans had statistically significant higher collective action ratings in comparison to Black participants who reported few common values in the prototypical condition. This difference between conditions diminished as common values increased. See Figure 1 for an illustration of the results.

Figure 1

Effects of condition and common values on collective action ratings

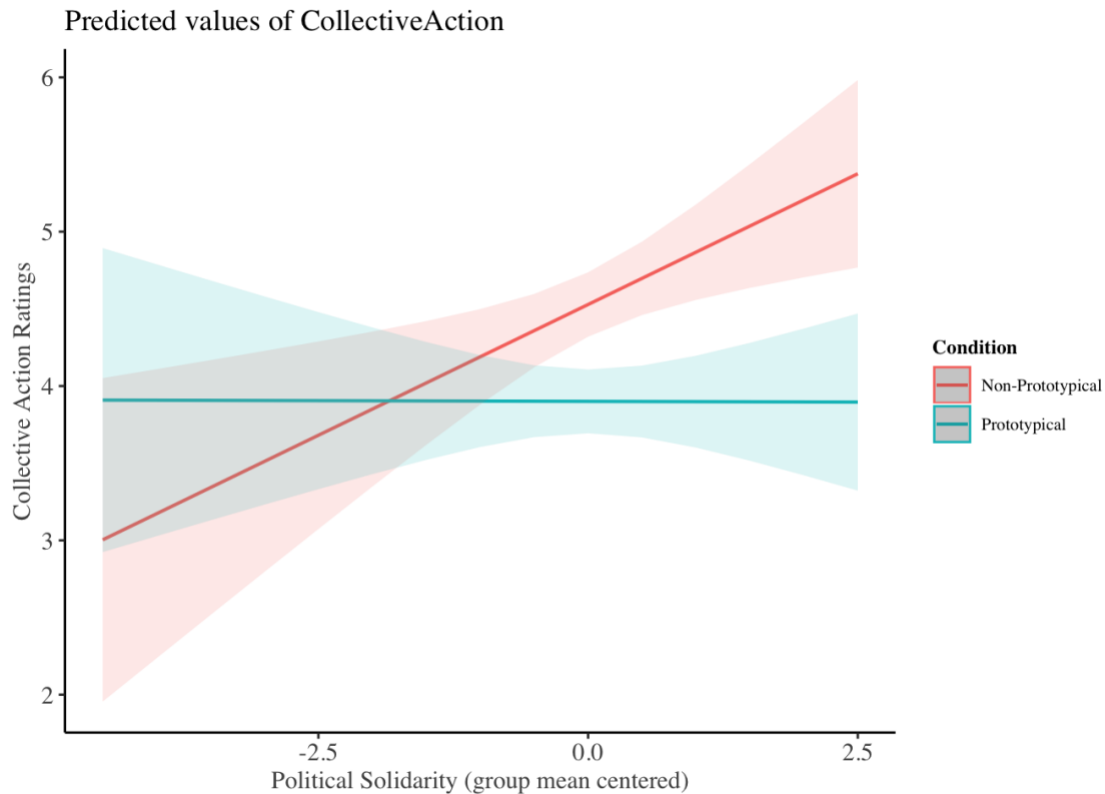


Additionally, there was a significant interaction in which Black participants in the non-prototypical condition (i.e., exposed to a Twitter thread about low-income Asian students)

expressed less collective action for Asian Americans when they reported less political solidarity with Asian Americans. However, the opposite pattern occurred for Black participants in the prototypical condition (i.e., exposed to a Twitter thread about high achieving Asian American students). Specifically, Black participants in the non-prototypical condition reported more collective action when they reported sharing more political solidarity with Asian Americans. Interestingly, Black participants in the non-prototypical condition who reported high political solidarity with Asian Americans had statistically significant higher collective action ratings in comparison to Black participants with high political solidarity in the prototypical condition. This difference between conditions diminished disappeared as political solidarity decreased. See Figure 2 for an illustration of the results.

Figure 2

Effects of condition and political solidarity on collective action ratings



Summary

Overall, we found that Black participants who were in the prototypical condition reported less interests to engage in collective action compared to Black participants in the non-prototypical condition. However, we did not find that these groups differed on feelings of commonality with Asian Americans, political solidarity with Asian Americans or perceptions of Asian American experiences with discrimination. Furthermore, upon further investigation using a regression analysis, we found that as feelings of commonality, participant experiences with discrimination, and political solidarity increased, interests to engage in collective action also increased. Although, increased feelings of common values predicted a decreased interest in collective action. Thus, we found that the Model Minority Myth reduced desires to engage in collective action and interests to engage in collective action is impacted by a variety of factors such as commonality, common values, participant experiences with discrimination, and political solidarity.

Discussion

General Discussion

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding how the Model Minority Myth can hinder intra-minority solidarity between racial groups, specifically between Asian and Black Americans. The results indicated that Black participants who were exposed to a narrative that showed Asian Americans as prototypical Model Minorities had less desires to engage in collective action with Asian American activism compared to Black participants who were exposed to a narrative that showed Asian Americans as non-prototypical (first-generation low-income Asian Americans who need need-based scholarships). This finding was consistent with our hypothesis and was also consistent with Tran & Curtin (2017)'s work that dealt with how

model minority beliefs negatively impacted desires to engage in collective action. Thus, the Model Minority Myth may act as a barrier to collective action by hindering the development of a collective identity by separating Asian Americans from other racial groups through positing that Asian Americans don't experience discrimination and distinctly having positive experiences in America.

Additionally, consistent with previous research, stigma-based solidarity through perceptions of shared common values with other marginalized groups (Chaney et al., 2018; Schmitt et al., 2003; Subasic et al., 2011) did attitudes towards collective action. Exploratory regression analyses showed that feelings of commonality, participant experiences with discrimination and political solidarity predicted ratings of collective action. Contrary to our hypothesis, our research did not find that there was a statistically significant difference in perceptions of Asian American discrimination between the prototypical and non-prototypical conditions. However, overall, participants in the prototypical condition did perceive Asian Americans as experiencing less discrimination than participants in the non-prototypical condition. This notion is consistent with previous literature as the Model Minority Myth situates Asian Americans close to whiteness (i.e., a racialized social identity that is positioned as superior relative to other "races" within a system of racial hierarchy; Cancelmo & Mueller, 2019) by portraying Asian Americans as success stories and a monolith that does not experience discrimination nor structural barriers in life (Bell et al., 1997). This notion, at times, even led to indifference among college age students when Asian Americans were victims of racial discrimination (Delucchi & Do, 1996). However, the ideology that Asian Americans do not experience discrimination has been dispelled by investigations of Asian American experiences of discrimination in the workplace (Bell et al., 1997).

Even though perceptions of Asian American experiences with discrimination did not predict collective action among Black participants, higher ratings of *participant experiences with discrimination* did predict higher collective action ratings in our exploratory analyses. This is an interesting finding because previous literature points to how knowledge of a shared common disadvantage with another racial group leads to greater willingness to participate in collective action (Glasford & Calcagno, 2012; Subasic et al., 2011). So rather, instead of the knowledge that other group is facing experiences with discrimination, individual experiences with discrimination might be a stronger predictor when considering desires to engage with collective action. This notion is supported by past research that investigated how personal experiences with discrimination could inspire resistance and motivation to engage in efforts on behalf of other groups (Craig & Richeson, 2016; Vollhardt et al., 2016). So, while it is both important to share common values and commonality to drive relationships of solidarity, recognizing the different lived experiences between both groups is equally as important.

Regarding feelings of commonality, our research did not find that there was a statistically significant difference between the prototypical and non-prototypical conditions on feelings of commonality which went against our original hypothesis. This pattern of results is inconsistent with previous literature. According to the common ingroup identity model, if there are two groups that have been marginalized by society, it can help them form a common ingroup identity with another group due to perceived similarity of discrimination (Cortland et al., 2017; Craig & Richeson, 2016; Gaertner et al., 1993). However, due to narratives that the Model Minority Myth pushes that Asian Americans are more academically, socially, and economically successful compared to other racial minorities (Yoo et al., 2014) it may reduce potential feelings of commonality among Black Americans by alienating Asian Americans from other marginalized

groups. However, despite not finding a significant difference between conditions, Black participants in the prototypical condition did report overall lower mean values of common ingroup identity and common values compared to Black participants in the non-prototypical condition, hinting at the need for further investigation of these differences. Interestingly, the exploratory analysis did find that participants who had high common values displayed less desire to participate in collective action. This finding was unexpected and does not align with previous literature. We are not confident that this finding will replicate due to our current study being underpowered.

Contrary to our hypothesis, our research did not find that there was a statistically significant difference between ratings of political solidarity between the prototypical and non-prototypical conditions. Interestingly, the linear regression showed that at lower levels of political solidarity participants in the high-status condition showed more collective action than participants in the low-status condition. But, as political solidarity increases, participants in the low-status condition show more collective action while ratings of collective action for participants in the high-status condition remain relatively unchanged. Even though t-test analyses did not align with previous literature per se, the regression results provide more insight on how feelings of political solidarity did increase interests to engage in collective action for individuals who do not view Asian Americans as model minorities.

Overall, the results of this study showed that exposure to the Model Minority Myth did decrease desires to engage in collective action in Black participants. Desires to engage in collective action is a complicated process that was affected by feelings of commonality and common values, participant experiences with discrimination, and political solidarity. However, we did not find that Black participants who were exposed to the Model Minority Myth differed

on political solidarity, feelings of commonality and common values, and perceptions of Asian American discrimination compared to Black participants who were not exposed to the Model Minority Myth. Lastly, even though we did find support for feelings of commonality and common values on ratings of desire to engage in collective action it is important to note that both the similarities and differences between groups are important to consider. We recognize that it is both important to have commonality but to also be able to perceive the unique values and lived experiences of the other group. Through embracing each group's unique attributes and values, different groups can show that they respect diversity but also encourage the exchange of principles and practices of each group. Recognizing and embracing each other's differences overall fosters a stronger collective group identity.

Limitations

One limitation was that the Model Minority Myth homogenizes Asian Americans, therefore we did not know if participants were imagining East Asian, Southeast Asian or another subgroup when imagining a prototypical Asian American. We are unable to account for any differences that a different prototypical Asian American subgroup could cause. There are many factors that can shape what forms a prototypical Asian American. For example, one study found that the perceived prototypicality of Asian subgroups in the United States and United Kingdom depended on historical saliences, where East and Southeast Asians were the prototypical group in the United States while in the United Kingdom it was South Asians (Goh & McCue, 2021). Therefore, future studies should seek to understand which Asian American subgroup participants imagine as the prototypical group when prompted to consider Asian Americans and how that can affect desire to engage in collective action.

A related limitation is that the Twitter thread was manipulated by changing the narrative that Asian American students deserve merit scholarships because they excel to deserving need-based scholarships due to being low-income and first-generation college students. Although the manipulation was modelled after real news articles and Twitter threads, the MMM encompasses more than just a belief that Asian Americans are academically successful. The MMM is tied to notions about economic success and work ethics of Asian Americans relative to other racial groups (Yoo et al., 2014). Future research should use a more well-rounded stimuli that captures multiple aspects of the MMM (academic achievement, economic status, work ethic, etc.).

Lastly, we also did not measure or control for whether Black participants had close Asian American friends. Past research has explored how positive intergroup contact is associated with support for social change and collective action (Hässler et al., 2020; Reimer et al., 2017; Tropp & Uluğ, 2019), and even perceptions of another group's injustice (Carter et al., 2019; Selvanathan et al., 2018). However, it may even be the case that our sample of Black participants had friend groups with mainly only Black friends. Due to the marginalization and systemic racism that Black people face regularly, many Black communities choose to form friendships with other Black people who understand their experiences (Leath et al., 2022; Marsh, 2008; Thelamour et al., 2019). Positive intergroup contact facilitates positive relationships that include perspective taking and developing empathy which is important for building interests to engage in collective action (Reimer et al., 2017). Therefore, having Asian American friends can be a potential moderator. Future research should investigate whether Black Americans have Asian American friends and how that affects desires to engage in collective action.

Conclusion

Despite the limitations, the present study has enhanced our understanding of the relationship between Asian Americans and Black Americans via the Model Minority Myth. Even though we did not find many differences between Black Americans assigned to a prototypical Asian American narrative compared to a non-prototypical Asian American narrative on feelings of commonality, political solidarity, and perceptions of discrimination, we did find that desires to engage in collective action differed. The findings of this study also highlight how decisions to engage in collective action is a complex process depending on levels of political solidarity and common values.

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Appendix

Twitter threads (Adapted from Kuo et al., 2020)

Twitter thread that either depicts Asian Americans as a Prototypical Model Minority or Non-Prototypical Model Minority

The Charger Bulletin @ChargerBulletin Follow

1/ Update: At the open forum with President Kaplan, #UNewHaven's chapter of Society of Asian Scientists and Engineers @SASE urged the university to offer more merit-based scholarships to students in science and engineering

11:06 AM - 9 Nov 2017

1 Retweet 3 Likes

1 1 3

The Charger Bulletin @ChargerBulletin · Nov 9

2/ Fourth-year student and @SASE president Sophia Lee said that currently, the University of New Haven does not do enough to reward #AsianStudents who excel beyond their peers in difficult science and engineering courses, effectively penalizing their academic outcomes

1 1 2

The Charger Bulletin @ChargerBulletin · Nov 9

3/ Students from a variety of backgrounds all have the opportunity to be recognized for their academic accomplishments in college. Resources such as merit-based scholarships can help the most deserving students make the most of their college experience

1 1

The Charger Bulletin @ChargerBulletin · Nov 9

4/ "Students come with many different talents, abilities, and circumstances. The university should be responsive to students of all backgrounds," Lee said #sciencemajor

1 1

 **The Charger Bulletin** @ChargerBulletin [Follow](#)

1/ Update: At the open forum with President Kaplan, #UNewHaven's chapter of Asia Refugee Rights Network @ARRN urged the university to offer more academic and financial resources to low-income and first-generation students



Open Forum with the President Kaplan and Univer...
 An open forum was hosted by President Steven Kaplan and university vice presidents on Thursday, Nov. 9 in the Alumni Lounge. Students had the opportunity to ask ...
chargerbulletin.com

11:06 AM - 9 Nov 2017

1 Retweet 3 Likes



1 1 3

 **The Charger Bulletin** @ChargerBulletin · Nov 9

2/ Fourth-year student and @ARRN president Sophia Lee said that currently, the University of New Haven does not do enough to help #AsianStudents from underserved communities succeed on campus -- many of these students experience poverty and food insecurity

1 1 2

 **The Charger Bulletin** @ChargerBulletin · Nov 9

3/ Students from underprivileged communities, especially those that arrived in the U.S. as refugees, often face significant financial burdens that affect their studies. Resources such as free tutoring and need-based aid can help support these students in their campus community

1 1 1

 **The Charger Bulletin** @ChargerBulletin · Nov 9

4/ "Students come with many different talents, abilities, and circumstances. The university should be responsive to students of all backgrounds," Lee said #FirstGenStudent

1 1 1

Appendix B

List of dependent variables and measure questions

Commonality (adapted from Leach et al., 2008)

Please indicate your agreement with the following statements (7-point scale from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”):

- I feel a bond with Asian Americans
- I feel solidarity with Asian Americans
- I feel committed to helping Asian Americans
- What happens to Asian Americans impacts me

Collective Action (van Zomeren et al., 2011; Ufkes et al., 2016)

Serves as a measure to examine feelings of collective action among Black Americans.

7-point scale from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”

- After reading this Twitter thread, I would like to participate in a demonstration against discrimination toward Asian students at the University of New Haven.
- After reading this Twitter thread, I would like to sign a petition against discrimination toward Asian students at the University of New Haven.
- After reading this Twitter thread, I would like to engage in actions against discrimination towards Asian students at the University of New Haven.
- After reading this Twitter thread, I would like to create flyers that speak against discrimination towards Asian students at the University of New Haven.
- After reading this Twitter thread, I would like to engage in collective action to prevent discrimination towards Asian students at the University of New Haven. Collective action is defined as the willingness to work with another group to achieve an objective shared by both communities.
- After reading this Twitter thread, I would like to donate money to organizations or clubs that work toward preventing discrimination against Asian students at the University of New Haven.

Experience with Discrimination (EDS; Williams, Yu, Jackson, & Anderson, 1997)

Please indicate your agreement with the following statements (7-point scale from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”):

Due to my racial background...

- I am treated with less courtesy or respect than other people.
- I receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores.
- People act as if they think I am not smart.
- People act as if they are afraid of me.
- I am threatened or harassed.

Due to Asian Americans racial backgrounds... (Found in supplement of Vinluan, A. C., & Remedios, J. D. (2020).)

- They are treated with less courtesy or respect than other people.
- They receive poorer service than other people at restaurants or stores.
- People act as if they think they are smart.
- People act as if they are foreign even though they were born in America (or have lived in America for a majority of their life).
- They are threatened or harassed.

Commonality and Political Solidarity (Glasford & Calcagno, 2012)

Please indicate your agreement with the following statements (7-point scale from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”):

Common Values and Commonality

- People from my racial group live by the same life-guiding principles as Asian Americans.
- People from my racial group have the same values as Asian Americans.
- People from my racial group feel a bond with Asian Americans.
- People from my racial group feel solidarity with Asian Americans.
- People from my racial group feel committed to helping Asian Americans.
- What happens to Asian Americans impacts people from my racial group.
- People from my racial group feel very close to Asian Americans.

Political Solidarity

- People from my racial group should work with Asian Americans to improve the position of both groups.
- People from my racial group must stick with Asian Americans and work with each other to change the position of both groups.
- People from my racial group would be better off if we worked with Asian Americans to improve each group's position.

After participants complete the measures above in random order, they will complete this measure: **Endorsement of the Model Minority Myth** (adapted from Yoo et al., 2010)

Please indicate your agreement with the following statements (7-point scale from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”).

In comparison to other racial minorities (e.g., Black/African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans):

MM-Achievement Orientation

- Asian Americans have stronger work ethics.
- Asian Americans are harder workers.
- Despite experiences with racism, Asian Americans are more likely to achieve academic and economic success.
- Asian Americans are more motivated to be successful.
- Asian Americans generally have higher grade point averages in school because academic success is more important to them.
- Asian Americans get better grades in school because they study harder.
- Asian Americans generally perform better on standardized exams (i.e., SAT) because of their values in academic achievement.

- Asian Americans make more money because they work harder.
- Asian Americans are more likely to be good at math and science.
- Asian Americans are more likely to persist through tough situations.

MM-Unrestricted Mobility

- Asian Americans are less likely to face barriers at work.
- Asian Americans are less likely to encounter racial prejudice and discrimination.
- Asian Americans are less likely to experience racism in the United States.
- Asian Americans are more likely to be treated as equals to White Americans.
- It is easier for Asian Americans to climb the corporate ladder.