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Los Angeles

Political Learning, Racialization and Socialization among Asian American Immigrants

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

by

Bang Quan Zheng

2020

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Political Learning, Racialization and Socialization among Asian American Immigrants

by

Bang Quan Zheng

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

University of California, Los Angeles, 2020

Professor Matthew Barreto, Co-Chair

Professor John Zaller, Co-Chair

This dissertation examines the acquisition of partisan attitudes among Asian American immigrants in the United States. It is an empirical inquiry into the processes in which Asian American immigrants learn about American politics, adjust their attitudes, prioritize their issue concerns, and develop political conceptions of the Democratic and Republican Party. This dissertation engages theories of social and cognitive psychology by examining individual-level partisan opinion formation as mediated by political conceptualization, partisan schemas, policy preference, and psychological attachment to the parties. Evidence is drawn from a series of original in-depth interviews, surveys, and survey experiments conducted as part of the dissertation, as well as from large, publicly available national surveys.

The development of partisanship among Asian Americans is a multi-stage process. It begins with pre-migration predispositions which lay the foundation for post-migration learning. But while Asian American immigrants arrive in the United States with distinct political leanings, they tend to have weak understandings of how they relate to American political parties, candidates, ideologies, and standard political debates. Hence, they tend to be uncertain, ambivalent and

inconsistent in their partisanship. As Asian Americans spend more time in the U.S., they develop increasingly sophisticated conceptions of American politics. Their growing understanding comprehends more than just the parties and the candidates; it also includes their notion of themselves as Asian Americans and how this group fits into the political system and American ethno-racial categories. At its highest level of development, their conceptualization merges personal and political identities into a profound guide to action in politics. Taken together, coherent cumulative experiences and gradual exposure to American politics lead to stronger and more sophisticated political conceptualization and greater consistency in partisan preference. In most cases this process nudges Asian Americans to identify with the Democratic Party. In certain cases, however, different life experiences, such as experience running a personal business, result in different partisan trajectories.

The dissertation of Bang Quan Zheng is approved.

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To Natalie & Emily

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At UCLA I am grateful to Lorrie Frasure-Yokley for helping me navigate through the program over these years. Lorrie has provided unparalleled guidance and support since I came to the graduate program. For one thing, this dissertation started with a research paper when I took one of

Lorrie's graduate seminars. Other than offering invaluable comments on my research projects, she has been the cheerleader who makes sure I uphold my optimism in the REP field. Matt Barreto became my mentor right after I moved into my 3rd year. Matt has a sharp vision and keen judgement; he sensed a big picture and a theoretical direction of this dissertation before I actually started writing. Matt assisted me in developing the original and theoretical concept of this dissertation, and spent considerable time and effort helping me to refine my ideas. Although I rarely interacted with David Sears in person, he is my academic role model: humble, wise, and dedicated to scholarly excellence. From David's work, we can see a senior scholar's wisdom—nuanced analysis, meticulous theoretical building and high academic standard. I am sure for the next decades; his theoretical contributions will continue to shape my work. Jane Junn of the University of Southern California and Pei-te Lien of UC Santa Barbara have been great mentors for my Asian American research. Whenever I approached them with academic questions, they never hesitated to give me their thoughtful comments. I also want to thank Natalie Masuoka and Efrén Pérez for several inspirational discussions. Along my journey to becoming a social scientist, the single most important advisor who trained me is John Zaller. Numerous office hours with him made my graduate school experience unmatched. John is not easy to work with though; quite often he is extremely meticulous. A scholar's scrupulousness is a great asset in academia. I cannot imagine how many more mistakes I would have made; how many good data analytic skills I would have missed if John hadn't constantly challenged me about the models, data, analyses, arguments, etc. Because of his stubbornness and meticulousity, the process of this dissertation research was full of challenges; but in the end, it was an invaluable intellectual reward. Working closely with John allowed me to learn from a master craftsman: From research design, data analysis, to academic writing, and beyond—every single part of my academic training is imbued with John's teachings.

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Preface: What this dissertation is about

Sundays usually are very busy in Chinatown; restaurants are full of customers, and tourists are busy shopping and sightseeing on Grant Avenue—the most historic street and the center of attraction spot in Chinatown. But June 7, 2020 was quiet in Chinatown and nothing except the sunshine was as it usually is. Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, the public was in panic: most people wore face-covering masks and cautiously maintained social distancing from strangers. On Grant Avenue all businesses had been closed since March. Nonetheless, one block south of Grant Avenue, in Portsmouth Square, senior Chinese immigrants still sat outside, wearing masks and talking about politics. Some people blamed the Chinese government for hiding and delaying the pandemic information resulting in its exponential global outbreak; some people blamed the Trump government's astounding incompetence in handling the pandemic, which led to the dramatic economic recession. A few blocks east of Grant Avenue is the so-called little Italy. Today is very special. Hundreds or maybe thousands of people rallied there for the Black Lives Matter (BLM). Protesters were mostly young blacks, whites, Latinos, and Asians. One block north of Grant Avenue is Stockton Avenue where street life was still busy as usual, Chinese immigrants from the Bay Area love to stop by here for grocery shopping—mostly new immigrants and usually do not speak English.

The Covid-19 pandemic and BLM brought these events and people together. The matrix of varying levels of identities, political consciousness, political socialization, and predisposition were seamlessly illustrated within these blocks. From the corner of Columbus Avenue and Green Street to Washington Square, US-born and well-assimilated young Asian Americans actively participated in BLM, holding up cardboard signs written in English, Chinese or Korean among the

rally—such synchronic views of BLM embody the sense of political commonality and an outcry against racial injustice. Older immigrants in Portsmouth Square seemed to have witnessed these kinds of protests many times; all these do not seem to bother them at all. They continued and enjoyed their chats as if nothing was happening. On Stockton Avenue, retailers and their employees were anxious and highly alert. They were prepared to close the doors to protect their businesses from possible riots and looting. Many stores held their roll up doors halfway down, and kept a close eye on the evolving situation. Yet, most new immigrants seemed unable to understand what such seemingly “chaotic” protests would mean to them. Some seemed to be curious about what was going on but not to completely grasp its implications; some people complained about the traffic obstruction caused by the protesters, while most people seemed indifferent to this event at all.

The paradox underscores these events of Covid-19 pandemic and BLM vividly illustrates multi-dimensional complexity, ethnic-identification subjectivity, and uneven assimilation and incorporation among Asian American communities. Different issue and political concerns, different political conceptualizations, and different predispositions constitute the elements of Asian American politics. This dissertation is about how these elements shape the ways in which Asian American immigrants learn about American politics and acquire partisanship.

CHAPTER 1

Theory of Political Learning among Asian American Immigrants

1.1 Introduction

This dissertation examines the acquisition of partisan attitudes among Asian American immigrants in the United States. It asks: how do Asian American immigrants learn about American politics, adjust their attitudes, prioritize their issue concerns, and develop political conceptions of the Democratic and Republican Party? To answer these questions, this dissertation engages theories of social and cognitive psychology by closely examining individual-level opinion formation as mediated by social origin and identity, political motivation, political awareness, and psychological attachment to the parties. Evidence is drawn from a series of novel in-depth interviews, surveys, and survey experiments conducted as part of the dissertation, as well as from large, publicly available national surveys.

I argue that the partisan direction of political learning is in most cases consistent with pre-migration predispositions. Asian immigrants arrive in the U.S. with distinct political leanings but weak understanding of how they relate to American political parties, candidates, ideologies, and standard political debates. Hence, they tend to be uncertain, ambivalent and inconsistent in their partisanship. But gradual exposure to American politics and successive lived experiences in the United States lead to greater political awareness and this in turn leads to greater consistency between the dispositions formed in their former home country and political party associated with those dispositions in their new country. In most cases this political learning nudges Asian

Americans to identify with the Democratic Party. In certain cases, however, various complexities and heterogeneities—isolated specific perceptions,¹ context-specific dimensions of awareness and partisan attitudes, to illustrate—lead to different partisan trajectories. For example, many business owners and political dissents become strong Republicans.

1.2 Why Asian American immigrants?

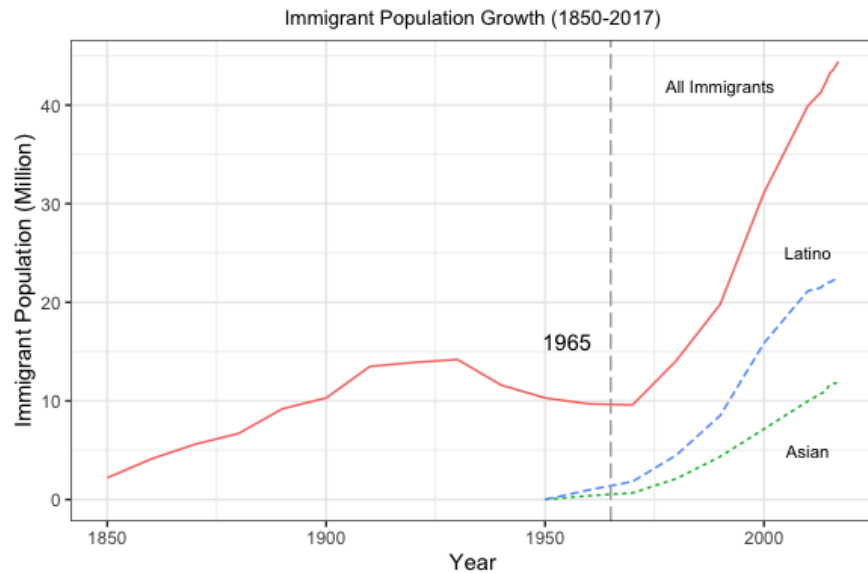


Figure 1. 1: Immigrant population growth from 1850 to 2017.

Note that Latino and Asian immigrant population before 1950 is not shown because it is relatively small.

Source: Data compiled by the author according to U.S. census data.

The rapid growth of the Asian American populations has made them an increasingly important force in American politics (Hajnal & Lee, 2011; J. Wong, Ramakrishnan, Lee, & Junn, 2011). A small fraction of the U.S. populations before 1950, their numbers started to soar after passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. Immigrants from Latin America and Asia have since become the fastest growing immigrant populations in the United States.

¹ By “isolated specific perception,” I mean some individuals might hold enduring anti-communist mentality or religious beliefs, etc. This isolated specific issue concern can strongly anchor individuals’ partisan orientation to certain parties.

As with some other immigrant groups, the numbers of Asian Americans who cast ballots in national elections lagged their numbers in the populations. But their turnout in the 2018 national midterm elections has risen to 42 percent, a slightly higher voting rate than found among Hispanic Americans. In Hawaii, Asian Americans make up a majority of the electorate, and in the western states of Washington and California, and especially in the larger cities in these states, they have voted in large numbers. There are currently 13 Asian Americans in the House of Representatives and 3 in the U.S. Senate.² Andrew Yang, a second generation Chinese American, became a top tier presidential candidate in 2020. Kamala Harris, a second generation African and Asian American, and the first woman of color successfully to be chosen as a vice presidential candidate of the Democratic Party. If elected, Harris would be the first African and Asian American vice president of the United States.

The study of the immigration experiences of Asian Americans is valuable for two main reasons. The first is that they are an increasingly important force in American politics. Hence the policies they favor and the partisan attachments they form will be an importance factor in the future course of American politics. The second reason to study Asian Americans is that their experience can shed light on the general immigrant experience, highlighting the basic mechanisms by which new groups make themselves part of the national political culture.

1.3 Partisanship of Asian Americans

Asian Americans who entered the United States during the Cold War were often refugees from communist countries. This background predisposed them to join the Republican Party. But at first

² All the claims in this paragraph need to be confirmed.

without much notice, and more recently amidst glaring publicity, new Asian American immigrants have been predisposed to join the Democratic Party. For example, according to the 2008 National Asian American Survey data (NAAS), Asian Americans have been leaning toward the Democratic Party. In 1992 only 31 percent of Asian Americans identified with Democrats; whereas in 2008, 62 percent of Asian Americans identified with Democrats, and in 2012 this number increased to 72 percent. No other racial group experienced such a dramatic (40 percent increase) partisanship shift within 20 years in American history.

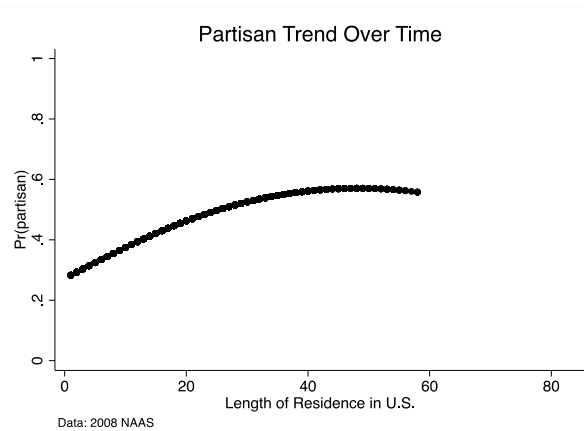


Figure 1. 2: Predicted partisan trend over time

These models are based on logistic regressions, the dependent variable is partisan identifier. Those who identified with the Democratic and Republican Party are coded 1, otherwise 0.

Despite the rapid immigrant populations coming from Asia, Asian American immigrants as a group are less likely to identify with any parties (J. Wong et al., 2011). As Figure 1.2 shows, Asian American immigrants who have lived in the United States longer are more likely to become partisans and participate politically. Loosely speaking, that is, lived experiences in the United States and exposure to American politics are positively correlated with the likelihood of partisan attachment. This development warrants deeper psychological investigations into the partisanship acquisition. As Converse (1969) revealed, the progression of rising consistency of partisan

preferences elicits the underpinning process of political socialization, in which many cognitive and affective factors are involved.

The rising importance of immigrants' political influence has been a notable trend in American politics (M. A. Barreto & Segura, 2014; Parker & Barreto, 2013; J. Wong et al., 2011). Empirically, it has been pointed out that growing immigrant populations at an exceedingly fast rate has been an important force that consistently changes the U.S. electorate landscape. Thus far, there is no systematic examination of Asian American partisanship acquisition. Therefore, understanding the multifaceted American politics and the sources of Asian American mass opinion in many ways rests on examining the origin and patterns related to the partisanship acquisition of foreign-born electorate and their subsequent generations.

1.4 Partisanship

The magnitude of persistence in partisanship over time has made it the most enduring predictor in the study of American political behavior (Box-Steffensmeier & Smith, 1996; Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1960; Lewis-Beck, Jacoby, Norpoth, & Weisberg, 2008). In essence, the analytical framework of this dissertation addresses the interactive mechanisms behind partisanship development that are deemed to be fundamental to political learning: partisan direction and partisan strength. Partisan direction and partisan strength are two different levels of analysis. A practical distinction can be understood between structural positions and developmental potentials—as the latter may be conditional on but not entirely determined by the former. In American politics and public opinion literature, partisanship is broadly conceptualized as the psychological attachment to a party, and a fundamental rationale for political orientations (Campbell et al., 1960; Green, Palmquist, & Schickler, 2002; Lewis-Beck et al., 2008). The concept

of partisanship and its measurement have been the foundation to the study of electoral behavior in that it is the most enduring of political attitudes responsible for shaping political values and perception and the most efficient predictor for political behavior (Campbell, Converse, Miller, & Stokes, 1966; D. Kinder & Sanders, 1985; W. Miller & Shanks, 1996). Hence partisanship may serve as an explicit preliminary signal of political incorporation, but how immigrants—particularly newcomers—acquire partisanship remains ambiguous. At one level, people’s attitudes toward political issues and partisan choices are due to psychological factors which determine their political behavior. The intensity and consistency of these psychological factors eventually differentiate the degrees of partisan loyalty and the voting participation (Lewis-Beck et al., 2008). Hence, the stability of the partisan direction and intensity is what Lewis-Beck et al. (2008) call “field of forces” or in V. O. Key’s (1959) words, “standing decision.” In the context of the American two-party system, partisanship therefore becomes the most important herald of partisan attitudinal assimilation.

As this discussion shows, the acquisition of partisanship has been well studied for native born Americans, but it is different among Asian Americans. For native Americans, the process of partisanship acquisition starts with pre-adult political socialization whereby their political knowledge, partisan orientation, political and cultural values are shaped by family, school and community (Jennings & Niemi, 1981). But approximately 60 percent of the Asian American populations were born outside of the United States. For them, the process of accumulating political knowledge, forming political opinions and learning about the parties is an interactive product of pre and post-migration experiences. Particularly, with the increase in immigrants since 1965 and the end of the cold war, the partisan structure among Asian Americans has changed substantially.

1.4.1 Predisposition

This dissertation shows how the pre-migration predispositions of Asian Americans become more firmly connected to the American party system as a result of post-migration experiences. Political predisposition refers to durable and crystallized beliefs or values that guide individuals to evaluate political communications in particular perspectives (Alvarez & Brehm, 2002b; D. Kinder & Sears, 1985; Zaller, 1992), which are mostly confined in pre-migration experiences and political values. However, the conceptualization of predisposition in this dissertation is slightly different from those in American political literature. Predispositions come from pre-adult socialization or individuals' lived experiences that once established play as a gatekeeper for new political information processing. More importantly, political predispositions are assumed to be an endogenous factor that affects political judgment or evaluation. In the context of policy preferences and immigrant socialization, this dissertation emphasizes the role of political predispositions as an anchoring effect³ between the policy and partisan preferences. The phrase "anchoring effect" refers to a cognitive bias that describes the tendency to rely heavily on initial information or pre-existing knowledge as a reference point to initiate the ensuing learning process or decision making. Precisely, predispositions consist of a series of core values, which are general and enduring principles that serve as a centrality force in individuals' belief systems (Converse, 1964, 1969; D. Kinder & Sears, 1985; Newcomb, Turner, & Converse, 1965). Thus, opinion formation about particular policies is derived from partisan and ideological preferences are in and of themselves the products of people's core values (Alvarez & Brehm, 2002a; Lewis-Beck et al., 2008). The

³ For details of anchoring effect theory, see Jacowitz and Kahneman (1995).

specific sources and discrepancies of individuals' predispositions are beyond the scope of this dissertation.

The pre-migration predispositions of immigrants tend to have the most persistent influences on policy attitudes and later the attitudes toward the parties. For instance, the Vietnamese and Cuban immigrants harbor strong anti-communism sentiment, thus they strongly identify with the Republican Party. Their lived experiences with the communist regimes or the concerns with home country politics strongly anchor their partisan choice to the party which is believed to have a tough political stance on communist states. Whereas in this dissertation, lived experience is a broad concept, which is not limited to sheer foreign policy concerns. For example, a person's attitudes toward the support of the affordable healthcare policy, and opposition against the increase in defense spending are simply guided by a particular position on social and political issues. Whereas in this dissertation I may use country of origins as proxies for aggregate pre-migration lived experiences,⁴ when there are no better variables available.

I argue that individuals tend to choose a party that presents the least barrier to learning and gives the highest degrees of consistency with their predispositions. As Sears, Huddy, and Schaffer (1986) point out, values should determine issue positions if both share the same manifest symbolic content. Over time the greater exposure to similar political information ought to increase the consistency between attitudes whose objects are regularly associated in the informational environment. At the macroscopic scale, the predispositions derived from characteristics, such as pre-migration experiences, national origins, and immediate social environment in the U.S., will affect the perceptions of the parties and diversity of channels of partisanship acquisition. And these

⁴ I am aware that country-level variation might not be a perfect proxy for individual-level variation particularly, for countries such as China. However, it is a stronger case if we look at immigrants who come from India and Vietnam, because these people tend to possess strong partisan bias toward the parties.

perceptions are derivatives of the matrix of their social characteristics. The objective of this dissertation is to ascertain what these characteristics are and how they influence one's chances of being a partisan.

In order to establish the notion that pre-migration predispositions have an important influence on immigrants' perception of the parties, three basic ideas will be established:

- 1) Pre-migration political predispositions have an anchoring effect on initial perception of the parties.
- 2) Pre-migration predispositions are an initial benchmark by which immigrants evaluate policies.
- 3) Pre-migration predispositions serve as a convenient basis for immigrants to react to the policies of the political parties.

1.4.2 Partisan strength

Predispositions give an initial push toward one of the parties. As experience with that party rises, attachment to the party grows stronger and more stable. Partisan stability refers to attitudinal stability toward the parties. In a two party system, the process of slowly increasing consistency of favoring a party over the other reflects the process of political socialization in which many cognitive and affective factors are involved (Converse, 1969). I argue that partisan stability is the way in which individuals see the party as the one which represents their—broadly defined—political interest, they will continue to favor that particular party. However, Asian Americans differ from native-born Americans in that their political socialization of American politics starts after the establishment of their political values. It takes time for immigrants to learn and consolidate their partisan choice.

In order to establish that post-migration experiences are an important determinant of intensity of immigrants' partisan attitude toward the parties, three basic ideas will be established:

- 1) The more issues that individuals care about, the more attention they will pay to the issues and hence exhibit less chance variability in attitude toward the issues (Zaller, 1992: 68).
- 2) When individuals develop a sense of belonging to a social group, they absorb the positions the group advocates. Party identification can serve as a social identity which symbolizes the values and policies citizens like or dislike (Green et al., 2002). Thus, knowing the close association between the party positions and the formation of politicized identity lead to stronger partisan stability.
- 3) Greater exposure to information flow leads to greater consistency between attitudes whose objects are regularly associated in the informational environment (Sears et al., 1986).

1.5 Current approaches to Asian American partisanship

There are three major limitations in current studies of immigrant incorporation. The first limitation is that existing studies in immigrant incorporation tend to under-analyze partisan direction and partisan strength among Asian immigrants. Indeed, few studies in Asian American opinion pay serious attention to the overall temporal partisan trajectories which involves intra-group demographic dynamics. As Figure 1.3 shows, there is considerable variation in these trajectories.

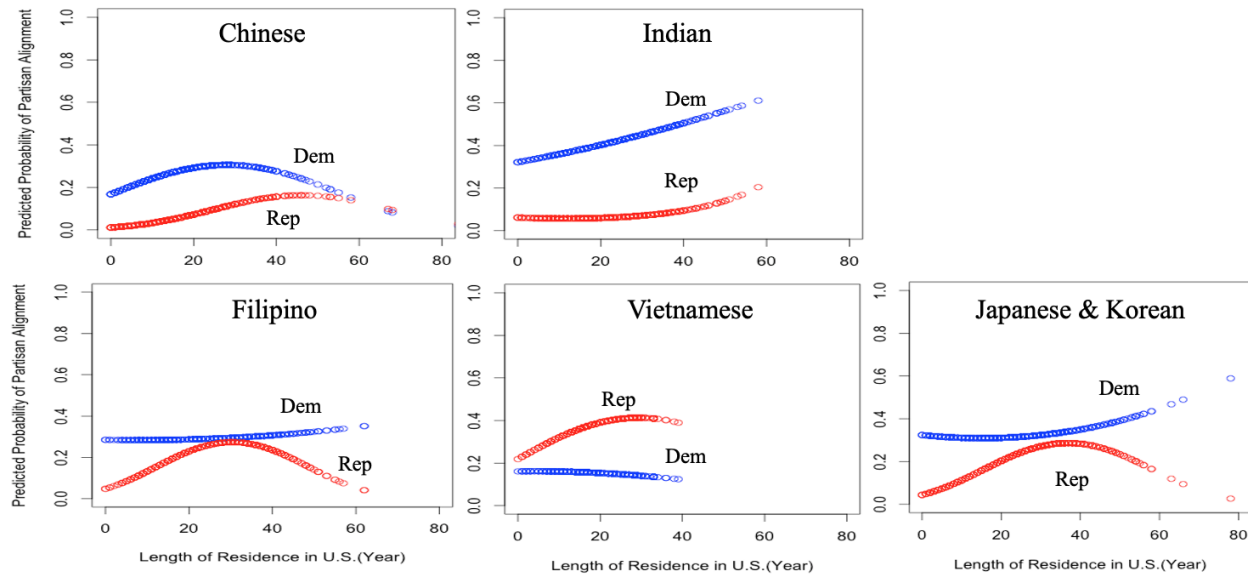


Figure 1. 3: Predicted partisan orientation among Asian co-ethnic groups over time. These models are based on logistic regressions, the dependent variables are Democrat or not, and Republican or not. Y-axis is the probability of partisanship alignment; X-axis is length of residence in the U.S. Data: The 2008 NAAS

Most groups tend to favor the Democratic Party, except the Vietnamese, many of whom were fleeing the Communist Party takeover in that country. The predisposition toward the Democratic Party is clearest among Indian Americans. This may be because their pre-migration experience did not include the deep antipathy toward the communist party that disposes many other Asian American immigrants toward the Republican Party. The Chinese are especially interesting. Older Chinese immigrants came to the United States mostly from Taiwan or Hong Kong and had anti-communism mentalities that disposed them to be strong Republicans. Whereas since the 1990s, Chinese immigrants from mainland China have been the major source of Chinese immigrants, and they are more likely to identify with the Democratic Party. I will discuss this in more detail in chapter 3.

Indeed, the growth in scope and complexity of modern immigrant populations presents the field of political science with numerous inferential and computational challenges. For one thing,

it has been bewildering whether the rapid partisan shift toward the Democratic Party is due to an influx of immigrants or Asian Americans changing their partisan preference. How to deal with various forms of heterogeneity has been a key issue for social statisticians. It has been observed that parameter estimation and latent structure of these sub-Asian groups have non-standard statistical and computational behaviors. As a result, scholars tend to have inconsistent results derived from regression analyses.

A second shortcoming in existing Asian American public opinion research is that it focuses on aggregate affective reactions and then tends to overlook individual-level cognitive structures in forming partisan attitudes. As Sears, Lau, Tyler, and Allen (1980) point out, the public's policy attitudes and vote choices are based primarily on affective responses to political symbols such as "liberal" or "conservative." The appeal of the simpler and more affective models lies in extensive evidence that most people do not seem to have cognitive elaboration (Hamill & Lodge, 1986; Lodge & Taber, 2013; Sears et al., 1986). Yet, behind this affective response, there are complex ideological or cognitive structures which come with certain central attitudes organizing an abstract conceptualization of political stimuli. Despite the complex nature of cognitive structures, it is generally assumed that they are relatively stable. In fact, existing research tends to treat immigrants' political knowledge as stable as their native-born citizens, while ignoring the temporal variations in immigrants' post-migration political socialization processes. These variations are attributed to the dynamic nature in socioeconomic status, English-language proficiency, lengths of history in the United States, ethnic and racial origins, religions, immigrant experiences, and so on. In addition, heterogeneous political and ideological orientations originating in the Asian homelands produce additional barriers to the establishment of pan-ethnic consciousness (Lien, 2001a). Therefore, failure to take systematic account of political cognition would lead to

measurement error in survey response when studying political attitudes among immigrant citizens. Using sheer observational data alone is difficult to uncover the finer grain of interactive conception of attitude formation, cognitive structures, and much less cognitive processes.

The third limitation of existing studies is failure to take account of the “non-attitudes” problem first identified by Converse in 1964. Quite often, individuals’ opinions that polls seek to measure are shapeless and elusive. As Mueller (1973) succinctly revealed, “polls often have been applied to questions for which they are incapable of supplying tangible answers.” Due to the lack of experience in opinion surveys, many Asian immigrants cannot map their opinions into the appropriate response categories (Pan, Craig, & Scollon, 2005). This is why traditional surveys have difficulty capturing the attitudes of newly arrived Asian Americans and why they tend to have large percentages of noncompliant answers, e.g., “don’t know” in survey responses. This in turn creates large error variances in survey data analyses. How to handle these problems is a large and continuing issue in the study of the attitudes of most citizens, but particularly the attitudes of those recently arrived in the country.

1.6 What is political learning

Political learning in this dissertation refers to a process of constructing cognitive structures of the parties in which individual-level opinion of the parties is formed and the attitude is expressed. Precisely, it is about the retention of the political information and formation of politicized identity that help construct the basic political conceptualization. The distinction between political learning and political socialization is that the latter is the developmental orientations over the life cycle—a process through which an individual at an early stage acquires political knowledge, adopt feelings and attitudes for evaluating political world in the pursuit of social adaptation and induction into

the political system (Campbell et al., 1960; R. E. Dawson & Prewitt, 1969; Jennings & Niemi, 1968). For immigrants, this process is the nurturing and adjustment of existing individual attitudes, opinions and behavior to conform with the prevailing democratic electoral system of norms and values in the United States by choosing one party over the other in a bi-party system.

Scholars in political psychology and political behavior tend to agree that most members of the mass public do not have elaborative hierarchical cognitive structures about politics; rather, individuals respond to political issues and the parties based on somewhat noncognitive and compartmentalized effects (Huddy, Mason, & Aaroe, 2015a; Lau, 1986; Sears et al., 1986). In this research, political cognitive structures do not assume infinite scope. Presumably, they are basic cognitive structures suffice to categorize major political issues associated with the parties. Human learning always undertakes and evolves in a cumulative process of development (H. A. Simon, 1967); hence, political learning partitions political socialization into discrete stages which are characterized by qualitative differences in lived experiences, temporal exposure to American politics and accumulation of political knowledge which involve different political stimuli in each stage. Successive lived experiences in the United States disclose much about the trajectories of political conceptualization and politicized identity formation among new immigrants in tandem with older immigrants, well-assimilated immigrants and US-born generations in which political learning may be evaluated and understood. It is through these political learning processes that Asian immigrants form coherent cognitive structures of politics as an organization dimension that channels capricious attitudes into a systematic political preference and attitude.

1.7 Theoretical premises

The theoretical arguments undertaken in this dissertation rely on three well-accepted theoretical premises in social and cognitive psychology, each of which plays a central role in the analysis of this dissertation:

1) Initial crystallized predispositions affect the ways we learn new political information and form partisan opinions. The cognitive structure of organized prior knowledge abstracted from lived experiences, which are subsequently applied to understand new incoming information and guide interpretation of stored information in memory (Lau, 1986; Lodge & Taber, 2013; A. H. Miller, 1986). With this premise, I will demonstrate that Asian immigrants are apt to learn and adopt the policies that are consistent with their pre-migration predispositions including pre-migration experiences, even though they have little political knowledge of U.S. political parties. Predispositions serve as a latent dimension of partisan orientation, which may not explicitly mirror in partisan choice and manifest in survey responses. Nonetheless, it is on the basis of policy positions, that Asian Americans start to discern the parties. I then build on these premises to construct and test my hypotheses of how immigrants' partisanship acquisition is shaped by pre-migration predispositions and post-migration experiences.

2) Individuals' modes of interaction with the institutions and other individuals require the organization of motivated behavior, which involves psychological processes such as perception and cognition (Newcomb et al., 1965). I will demonstrate that the ways in which immigrants respond to politics is based on cognitive structures of the parties and emotional attachment to the country. Temporal exposure to American politics tends to increase consistency between attitudes whose objects are regularly associated in the information environment.

3) The distinctive human capacities make it possible for individuals to place themselves in the position of others, through which they experience vicariously what others experience. As a result, people acquire motives of being concerned about what happens to others as if the same things were happening to themselves. Insofar as people's perception changes as they relate their life chances to their social environment, new motives are developed as a consequence (Newcomb et al., 1965). The post-migration experiences, taken together, is a way through which immigrants adopt new social identity that reflects their self-concept defined by the perception of political commonality with other minority groups.

1.8 How pre-migration predispositions shape partisan direction

The psychological mechanisms that link pre-migration predispositions and post-migration experiences to the development of partisan attitudes can be best understood by the work of psychologists. Social cognitive research shows that categorization is one of the most basic acts for individuals to simplify information processing. The way in which individuals process information consists of unconscious and conscious mechanisms (Lodge & Taber, 2013). Conscious and unconscious processes represented an explicit and implicit information dual process to handle the familiar and unfamiliar information. Lodge and Taber (2013) introduced the *John Q Public* model, which suggests that unconsciousness information processes are driven by long-term memory (LTM), in which the basic rationale is a set of crystallized predispositions that is contingent upon the level of familiarity of the subjects that individuals face. The ways individuals learn new information is through connecting the unconscious reasoning to make sense of political thinking. In contrast, the experiences in the United States constitute the effective component of the conscious information process.

Predispositions operate on the basis of association principles. E. R. Smith and DeCoster (2000) reveal that enduring knowledge and general expectancy can be based on typical properties of the environment. In other words, predispositions facilitate the affective association between pre-existing memories and new information. Predispositions guide unconscious thinking automatically. In Bargh's (1994) notation, preconscious thinking is the same as implicit reasoning. To the extent, this concept is more or less identical to pre-migration predispositions in my account. That is, it refers to the prior attitudes toward certain policy or issues, when the specific knowledge of the actual policies or issues does not exist or adequately developed.

Automaticity links the pre-conscious thinking to new information. When approached with new information, individuals tend to develop reasoning based on whatever knowledge they might have to help build the connection between their pre-existing knowledge and new information. The Associative-Propositional Evaluation (APE) model suggests that human's thinking is organized into two forms: associative and propositional. The former refers to the activation of mental associations in memory, and I refer to pre-migration predispositions. Propositional thinking consists of validating the information implied by one's implicit attitude through propositions, and I refer to post-migration experiences.

All these psychological models agree that pre-existing attitudes, values or experiences are important factors that shape the ways in which immigrants interpret and understand new political information when they move to the United States. In this light, we ought not to underestimate the influence of pre-migration predispositions. I argue that immigrants possess crystallized political values, and these values are ascribed to their pre-migration lived experiences. These political values will not change easily when they move to the United States. Rather, these political values are underlying benchmarks by which Asian Americans evaluate policies. To some extent, pre-

migration predispositions are usually integrated into the processes of learning the parties by steering the information in the direction that is biased toward their predispositions.

1.9 Post-migration and partisan strength

Conceptually, in my account political learning is a discontinuous process involving distinct stages which are characterized by qualitative differences in political motivations. They also assume that the structure of the stages is not variable according to each individual. However, the time of each stage may vary individually, thereby rendering differing political attitudes and behaviors. To connect this discontinuous process, political socialization among adult immigrants needs a series of stimuli by which to incentivize political learning and activate their political awareness in order to engage politically. The process of political learning lies in progressive and developmental stages, in which the attitudinal incorporation serves as the proceedings of partisanship development. Suffice to say, political conceptualization is integrated in various cognitive and emotional stimuli along with experiences related to the coherent accumulation of knowledge in American politics in general and politicized identity formation in particular.

One of the functions of political learning is to acquaint immigrants with a wide range of information about social, economic and political problems. A person with little knowledge of politics, the parties or candidates will not have consistent political opinions simply because they are unaware of the salience of the issues. Hence, political learning in my account differs from political mobilization that scholars use in the study of campaign effects or social movements. For the latter, there is more concern about short-term and explicit impacts derived from contextual political events. Social, economic, and political forces can generate impacts on political behavior. These exogenous forces need cognitive development and emotional foundation as building blocks,

e.g., sentiment or resentment is contingent upon one's evaluations and interpretations of the political events. The connections between perceptions of cause and the outcome are dependent on the mental map that one possesses. Philip Converse (1964) explains this as a belief system. The most important part of a belief system is for voters to know how their beliefs are related to the party system. When new immigrants have this understanding, they have both cognitive and affective elements by which to establish the basic platform for further partisan orientation.

Asian immigrants arrive in the U.S. with strong predispositions but little of the cognitive and emotional machineries needed to discern and evaluate the parties. Over time, however, exposure to American politics and coherent accumulation of political knowledge embedded in successive lived experiences lead to better cognitive and emotional machineries and deeper attitudinal assimilation. Pre-migration predispositions tend to have an anchoring effect that disposes Asian immigrants toward liberal policy positions. At a different level, the development of social identity as a racial minority in the United States leads Asian American immigrants to perceive common political interests with other minority groups.

1.10 Political learning and American politics literature

Political learning integrates multi-dimensional perspectives—from traditional American public opinion research to the burgeoning subfield of race and ethnic politics. The notion of political learning has been broadly mentioned but never explicitly and precisely defined in American politics literature. It is usually conflated with pre-adult political socialization, adult re-socialization, and, to some extent, campaign effects to capture the variations in political attitudes inflicted by exogenous social forces that are embedded in time. Converse (1964) and Jennings and Niemi (1981) talk about the political learning and partisan loyalties in life cycle trajectory to denote

the initial stage in the socialization process. Rational behaviorists use “voter learning” to explain the partisan shifts as a signal of punishment for incumbent parties and maximize their individual-level political interest (Achen, 1975; Downs, 1957; Fiorina, 1981; Jackson, 1975). Lenz (2012) and Hetherington (2001) use the term “party learning” to denote that citizens follow their preferred parties’ positions on policies.

In the realm of race and ethnic politics and immigrants’ political cognitive development, Hajnal and Lee (2011) in their study of Americans’ partisan choice portray Latino and Asian immigrants’ nonpartisanship as “an ongoing process of learning in a still unfamiliar and uncertain political milieu” (p147). They also view the transformation from nonpartisan identifiers to full-fledged partisan loyalists as an outcome of political learning. In Latino politics, Uhlaner and Garcia (2005) propose a learning model to account for how Latino Americans learn the differences between the parties through experience. Collingwood, Gonzalez O’Brien, and Tafoya (2020) use the term “partisan learning” and “racial learning” to account for the change in the public’s racial policy preferences in sanctuary city. J. Wong and Tseng (2007) introduce parental socialization models which challenge the traditional top-down paradigm in which the children of immigrant parents transmit political knowledge to their parents. From the perspective of racial consciousness and psychological engagement, M. Dawson (1994) and Lee (2002) talk about how the Civil Rights movement raised and disseminated comprehensive racial consciousness among African American communities. From the angle of racial consciousness, M. Barreto (2010) points out that learning Latino ethnic cues leads to higher levels of ethnic identification and political awareness, and stronger feelings of shared group consciousness. In a similar vein, Junn (2006b) uses the term “development of political consciousness” to express a similar concept, namely, the sense that cues govern the underlying connections between racial group consciousness and political mobilization.

As Junn (2006b) succinctly puts it, cues “map racial and ethnic identities with political kick.” These accounts have one consensus—exposure to political discourses tends to affect citizens’ attitudes.

The notion of political learning in this dissertation is different from the above accounts, but is similar to that of Segura (2013), in which immigrants’ political learning refers to political re-socialization through reorienting of prior political attitudes toward the U.S. centered political attitudes. Coming from different cultural and social environments, immigrants must reorient themselves to and learn a new political system that is dissimilar from that of their home countries, and that includes institutional arrangements, associations of political values with the parties, and social norms which are unfamiliar. Among these unfamiliar ideas are partisan attachment, racial and class hierarchies and their influence in structuring the U.S. polity, the positions of Latin American and Asian immigrants in the pre-existing hierarchies, and how those racial hierarchies shape the political interest and the sense of commonality with other minority groups. That is, immigrants do not come to the United States with a clear or even embryonic consciousness of minority politics and the profound political meaning of being minorities as the necessary stepping-stone to partisan attachment and political participation. Therefore, immigrant political socialization and incorporation should be treated as continuous rather than dichotomous. It should include differential ratios of pre-migration and post-migration social and political experiences (Segura, 2013).⁵ These differential ratios of attitudinal assimilation, to some extent, demonstrate the degrees of political socialization, and how immigrants prioritize their issue concerns.

⁵ According to Segura (2013), “the variable ranges from a high end representing an individual whose social and political experiences are rooted in foreign birth and adult migration; through middle values capturing those of youthful migration, those born of immigrant parents or married to immigrant spouses; and finally down to the other extreme, individuals with neither personal nor familial connection to the migration experience and its social effects” (p.256).

1.11 Overview of the chapters

The rest of this dissertation proceeds as follows. Chapter 2 discusses the extent to which the existing literature sheds light on Asian American partisanship acquisition, as well as its limitations in explaining how Asian immigrants learn about the parties and form their mass opinion.

Chapter 3 investigates the aggregate pattern of partisan direction and strength from a historical perspective. It compares the demographic trends of Asian American immigrants in the United States between the 1980s and the 2000s to understand the patterns of their partisan choice. This chapter demonstrates that pre-migration predispositions and post-migration experiences provide two different mechanisms for structuring Asian Americans' partisan direction and strength. Drawing on the 2008 NAAS data, as well as the 1960-2010 U.S. census data, I find that pre-migration predispositions and post-migration experiences—that is, country of origin and time in America both have important effects on the development of partisanship. It shows that the recent waves of Asian immigrants have been predisposed to support the Democratic Party when they first arrive in the United States except for Vietnamese, while post-migration experiences reinforce their partisan strength.

Chapter 4 and 5 examine political conceptualization and politicized identity for Asian Americans' partisan acquisition. Chapter 4 introduces a dual-concept measure and its typologies of political conceptualization and politicized identity among Asian American immigrants. It applies mixed methods to investigate the origins and initial socialization processes that influence Asian American immigrants' political conceptualization and politicized identity. Drawing evidence from in-depth qualitative interviews, this chapter investigates the social origin of the

development of political stimuli, and how Asian immigrant new arrivals understand some social phenomena for which social scientists use as key variables in quantitative analysis.

Chapter 5 examines the statistical relationship between party conceptualization and politicized identity. This chapter shows that despite political conceptualization and politicized identity are highly correlated, they impose important influence on the ways in which Asian American immigrants understand American politics. Therefore, the findings derived from this chapter show a nuanced trajectory of cherished learning processes. That is, it shows that the additive nature of political learning is the integration of new information into political cognitive structures for understanding new subjects, which involves both party conceptualization and politicized identity. The interplay of these measures conveys a progression from uncertainty or ambivalence to confident understanding of the parties as Asian American immigrants live in the United States over time. The contribution of this chapter is that it illuminates the underlying mechanism for Asian American immigrants to understand and conceptualize politics, as well as the psychological determinants of partisan preference.

Chapter 6 applies schematic processing theory and uses survey experiment to examine the formation and dynamics of party schemas and how discrimination experiences affect Asian American immigrants' perception of the parties. I argue that Asian Americans use schemas based on their lived experiences to filter and sort the political information they encounter and to recognize and retain that which is most relevant to their lives. More importantly, the survey experiment in this chapter shows that discrimination experiences tend to nudge Asian American immigrants lean toward the Democratic Party through the perception of inclusiveness.

Chapter 7 and 8 examine how psychological development affects political behavior. Chapter 7 examines the patterns of Asian Americans' partisanship acquisition by asking why and in what ways Asian Americans develop partisan affiliation with the Democratic and Republican Party. Drawing on the 2008 National Asian American Survey data, I find that Asian Americans' partisanship acquisition derives mainly from policy preferences and a sense of minority political commonality and racial identity.

Chapter 8 uses the original survey experiment to examine the intertwined relationships between policy congruence, partisan loyalty and political knowledge. In this chapter, I use Item Response Theory (IRT) with a novel political knowledge scale to measure how political knowledge affects partisan choice in tandem with the exposure to both policy cues and party cues. Using the original survey data (N=2,706) collected in 56 universities in the United States, I show that Asian Americans' partisan preference are affected mostly by policy preference, and that political knowledge has moderating effect on policy preference but not much on party cues.

Chapter 9 is a concluding chapter, which discusses the generalizability of the findings derived from this research and how it might shed light on our understanding of other immigrant groups. This chapter also discusses methodological developments likely to improve future research on immigrant political learning.

CHAPTER 2

Immigrant Political Socialization and Partisanship

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss the existing literature on Asian American partisanship acquisition, stressing both its strengths, and its limitations in explaining how Asian immigrants learn about the parties and form attachment to them. Also, I will discuss the contributions of studies of Asian Americans' political learning to the general understanding of immigrants' political socialization. I will argue that the research must deal with the ways in which partisan attachments are formed, the kind of political information to which immigrants are exposed, and how motivation to acquire and retain political knowledge is established. Research must, in other words, take into account of the full matrix of interconnected predispositions, information sources, and identities (Green et al., 2002; Lee, 2002; Zaller, 1992). Taken together, these factors determine *capacity*, *awareness* and *motivation* (Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Luskin, 1990) for Asian Americans to learn about the American party system and acquire the party attachments appropriate for their predispositions.

There are four major distinct approaches to the study of American partisanship. None of these approaches recognizes differences between native born Americans and immigrants that could affect the acquisition of partisanship. The result is that existing theories are insufficient to account for the development of partisanship among Asian Americans. In particular, they cannot account for the stratification of the immigrant populations into different levels of political

conceptualization. Each level of political conceptualization comes with its capacity, motivation and awareness to form the cognitive underpinnings of partisanship in the immigrant populations.

2.2 Pre-adult political socialization

The review of partisanship begins with *The American Voter*. Campbell et al. (1960) offered the first comprehensive examination of partisanship in American politics. In this study they argued that party identification is acquired in pre-adult socialization. The underlying logic of the Michigan model is that intergenerational partisanship is instilled in early childhood socialization as individuals grow up in a certain social environment. Traditional political socialization has been defined as “the process through which an individual acquires his particular political orientation—his knowledge, feelings and evaluations about his political world” (R. E. Dawson, Prewitt, & Dawson, 1977). Sharing identical racial, socioeconomic status, and social surroundings, individuals’ political view and political identification not only align with their environment but also inherited by their descendants as political predispositions. Partisanship stability can therefore be highly stable for people who remain in the same geographical locations (Green & Palmquist, 1990; Sears & Funk, 1999). This broad argument encompasses many agents and processes of individual opinion formation. They include the family, school and peers as agents of political socialization, the role transitions in the life cycle, and aging (Box-Steffensmeier & Smith, 1996; Campbell et al., 1960; Easton & Dennis, 1967; Green & Palmquist, 1990; Jennings & Markus, 1977; Jennings & Niemi, 1981; Jennings, Stoker, & Bowers, 2009). Yet all of these agents and processes refer to native born Americans, not immigrants who come to America after growing up elsewhere.

Moreover, even for native born Americans, the formation of intergenerational partisan allegiances is limited to stable populations in homogeneous social environments. New immigrants who migrate from other countries usually do not have pre-adult political socialization to begin with. Pearson and Citrin (2006) point out that the notion of political assimilation may not be consistent with the legitimacy of political preferences based on membership in cultural, linguistic, religious, or racial groups. Indeed, many immigrants are still in the process of acculturation of the new homeland in America, such as learning English, and adopting values and norms (Ong & Nakanishi, 1996). Immigrants' journey to political socialization largely starts from the ground up and is experience-based, which accounts for differing individual life situations and social environments that influence immigrants' socialization and re-socialization. According to data from the 2016 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey (CMPS), most immigrants and their subsequent generations learn politics from televisions and schools; essentially, family members, friendship networks and ethnic communities do not impose much direct influence on political learning. Thus, the process of political socialization has different agents, and the connections between ideology, policy positions and the parties tend to be weak at best.

Given all this, the foundational feature of the Michigan model—the intergenerational transmission of party attachment—has no relevance for immigrants. To explain the development of partisan attachment in this population requires an entirely different theoretical explanation. As J. Wong et al. (2011) thoughtfully put, “If the population in question is not politically socialized in the U.S., then socialization per se cannot explain the remarkable proportion of non-identifiers” (p.135). Eventually immigrants do become partisans, but their starting point is undeniably different from non-immigrant Americans.

2.3 Policy preference and partisanship

Rational behaviorists view partisan choice as an act intended to maximize individual welfare. For example, Downs (1957) argued that partisanship embodies citizens' best estimate of which party will better serve their interests. Voters may, however, update their vote choice based on the short-term benefit to them of the performance of the parties. Echoing Down's position, Fiorina (1981) argues that partisanship represents a "running tally" of performance evaluations as people accumulate experience with the parties' tendency and capacity to government's policy to their benefit. Scholars in this subfield of political behavior generally agree that policy preferences are the foundation for political involvement and partisan orientation (B. I. Page & Jones, 1979; Verba & Nie, 1972).

Yet, the conflated relationships between partisanship and policy positions have been controversial because party identification affects policy views or the other way around is difficult to tease out (Jackson, 1975; Lewis-Beck et al., 2008; B. I. Page & Jones, 1979). A major advancement in illuminating this intertwined relationship is Lenz's (2012) recent research. More rigorously than previous scholarship, Lenz (2012) shows that some citizens change their policy attitudes to comport with their preferred party's. The study is based on three-wave panel data that permits Lenz to measure baseline opinion, a party due to change opinion, and the persistence of the opinion change. This research shows that exposure to political communications is part of the process by which citizens form partisan opinions and update them. However, Tesler (2015) shows that the causal direction can be reversed—that is, citizens may change their political attitudes to conform with crystallized predispositions. For example, Tesler (2015) points out that many white Americans' opposition of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is based on racial resentment against Barack Obama rather than a cue from the party leader. Both scholars appear to be correct for the

particular cases they study, but there are many potential cases and we cannot always be sure which way the causal process will be running.

The same may be true for nonimmigrant citizens. Their policy views can be shaped by the partisan cues that they receive from the mass media or they can be grounded in racial resentment. Thus, individuals' evaluation of policies or candidates can be shaped by the ebb and flow of political information. But, as with native born Americans, there can be a question about whether the ebb and flow of mass opinion is top-down or bottom-up and this question may be hard to resolve.

Yet for immigrant groups, the causal direction can be less complicated because adult immigrants tend to hold consistent views on a wide range of policy issues after they immigrate to the United States. Handlin (1951) and Gordon (1964) were the first to notice this in their pioneering study of immigration assimilation. They found that immigrants' cultural patterns of behavior are rooted in the combination of cultural norms and values that they brought over from their countries of origin and from common domestic experiences. Contrastingly, as other scholars have documented, Asian immigrants tend to know little about American politics (Hajnal & Lee, 2011; J. Wong et al., 2011). Therefore, if immigrants approached the American political system with strong inclination toward some policies, these policy views are apt to shape political opinions and evaluation about the parties rather than vice versa. Partisan preferences of immigrants are therefore likely to represent predisposition-based and policy-based preferences that may be considered largely exogenous rather than, as for native born Americans, largely endogenous.

2.4 Social identity and linked fate theories

Another major approach to the study of partisan choice is based on social identity—how, that is, individuals choose between the parties according to criteria adopted or nurtured by the perception of belonging to a particular group. Social identities are thus the driving force in partisanship. As Green et al. (2002) wrote, “the labels of Democrats and Republicans carry the mental picture of different constituent groups, and how individuals feel toward varied social categories associated with the parties has a compelling effect on whether they identify with a partisan group.”

For African Americans, Dawson’s (1994) Linked-Fate theory, and Tate’s (1994) Common Fate theory are based on the idea that African Americans’ steadfast support for the Democratic Party due to their belief that the Democratic Party represents their collective interest. This view echoes the point of Green et al. (2002) that “when people feel a sense of belonging to a given social group, they absorb the doctrinal positions the group advocates” (p.4). Social networks theory put forth by Sinclair (2012) tends to suggest people who live in the same neighborhood try to adopt similar party identifications. Party identification thus can serve as a social identity which symbolizes the values and policies citizens like or dislike.

Migrating from foreign countries, immigrants lack clear perceptions of American politics, including a sense of racial and ethnic politics in the United States. This makes political socialization difficult for immigrant communities. Together social identity theory and linked fate theory nonetheless provides a foundation for understanding the development of ethnic and political consciousness in immigrants. Immigrants can form party affinity on the basis of everyday experiences and observations which are in some ways similar to those of African Americans. That is, immigrants’ political learning is grounded in ethnic-based social values that are shared within

co-ethnic communities by which they measure themselves as social actors. Thus, post-migration experiences reinforce the sense of racial minority and pre-migration predispositions in daily practices.

Social identity explains how individuals of one group share the feelings of other groups who have similar experiences and perceptions. Obama's presidency is a good example. According to the 2016 CMPS data, 80 percent of Asian American respondents, partisan or non-partisan, saw Obama's presidency as the first African American a positive development and profound basis for optimism about American democracy. In contrast, when Donald Trump criticized undocumented immigrants, around 70 percent Asian American respondents felt that this criticism also implicitly targeted Asians and other documented immigrants as well. This sharp contrast shows that Asian Americans' social identity can be grounded in shared feelings with other minority groups. Just as the Black Lives Matter movement, or the Tea Party movement, reflected the lived experiences of their membership, also the experiences of Asian Americans can leave deep imprints on their political attitudes, including party conceptions and partisan schemas.

2.5 Minority identity

Along the line of social identity theory, Cain, Kiewiet, and Uhlaner (1991) address the cohort-based effects to understand the partisan shift among Asian American partisans. By cohort-based effect, according to Cain et al.'s (1991), is the first presidential elections which Asian immigrants experienced were won by the Republican candidates as adults living in the U.S. Likewise, the first presidential elections the native born Asian Americans experienced were won by the Republican candidates when they were eligible to vote. The cohort-based effect assumes that Asian Americans embrace the equivalent perceptions of the parties regardless of the partisan bias that Asians held

before they move to the United States and develop political awareness. For the cohort-based effect to exercise as an organizing social force, individuals in the same cohort must share similar life experiences, identity, ideology, and information. Thus, it is hard to measure the extent to which the cohort effect serves as a positive or negative role in shaping the partisanship.

From a slightly different angles, Cain et al. (1991) also examine minority status effects, which suggests that minorities suffer racial discrimination and fewer economic opportunities, which in turn encourages them to identify as Democrats. Scholars have found that social identity is a key directional factor for partisanship. The Democratic Party's liberal stance on a wide range of policies such as immigration, bilingualism, and public education had been appealing to minorities (Cain et al., 1991). More recently, Kuo et al.'s (2016) experimental research shows that the feeling of exclusion from whites tends to encourage Asian Americans to align with the Democratic Party. Likewise, Masuoka's (2006) research also finds that the feeling of discrimination propels Asian Americans to lean toward the Democratic Party. That is to say, Democrat and Republican labels carry latent yet profound racial messages through which Asian Americans may find a closer affiliation with their political interests. To learn and internalize these party conceptions, Asian immigrants must live in the United States and have exposure to politics for a certain period of time. Thus, the length of residence serves as a proxy for this socialization process. Whereas whether these experiences render partisan direction or partisan strength remain unclear. In theory, we can hypothesize that the less racial discrimination that Asian Americans face, the less likely they should identify as Democrats. Yet, the conceptualization of minority group hypothesis is too broad to capture the subtleties in the process of accumulation of political information between foreign and native-born Asians. For the former tends to rely on experience-based political learning, while the latter tends to rely on socialization from their immigrant parents, schools, or communities.

Nonetheless, the differentiation between minority status and experience-based exposure to American politics is unclear in all these accounts. According to the PEW Asian American survey, one-fifth of Asian Americans say that they have experienced racial discrimination in 2012.¹ However, this number is significantly lower than Latino and black counterparts, in large part, because new Asian immigrants still live in highly segregated areas (Logan & Zhang, 2013). Although the data of relevant racial consciousness among Asian Americans is scarce, compared to other minority groups Asian Americans have lower racial consciousness, which is demonstrated in their relatively inattentiveness to racial discrimination against their own group. According to the PEW survey research, the majority of Asian Americans perceive racial discrimination against their own group as a minor issue.² In part, Asian immigrants have to overcome some socioeconomic hurdles, such as English proficiency or live outside ethnic enclaves in order to arrive at the realization of being a minority group in the United States. In other words, the way in which Asian immigrants are exposed to and learn about American politics is a dynamic and slow process. Thus, for many Asian immigrants, the connection between partisan attitude and experience of discrimination is still in a nascent stage. By implication, this connection will abridge in the second-generation of Asian Americans. To this extent, their pre-existing perceptions of the parties have profound influence for them to sort and accumulate new knowledge of American politics.

2.6 Immigrant partisanship acquisition

The fourth strand of party theory focuses on ethnic-minority and immigrants' partisanship acquisitions. Different from other theories discussed above, this strand has a strong focus on ethnic

¹ <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/06/19/the-rise-of-asian-americans/>

² *ibid.* 48 percent say it is a minor issue, and 35 percent say it is not a problem.

minorities and immigrants. The centerpiece of this strand is Hajnal and Lee's (2011) *Why Americans Don't Join the Parties*, which offers the most comprehensive theoretical explanation of Latino and Asian Americans' partisan choice currently available. Their work lays a powerful theoretical foundation for understanding immigrant citizens' partisan choice. As such, it deserves a detailed and critical review.

Overall, Hajnal and Lee (2011) argue that ideological ambivalence, information uncertainty, and identity formation account for the patterns by which ethnic minorities and immigrants acquire their partisanship. Their efforts to construct a theoretical account of immigrants' partisan choice, is laudable but faces an uphill battle empirically. Here I review each of its three main parts, beginning with information uncertainty.

2.6.1 Information uncertainty

In Hajnal and Lee's account, information uncertainty refers to inadequate knowledge of American politics. As they argue, new immigrants and their children tend to know little about American politics and parties, thus they usually have no idea where to fit in. Thus, immigrants and their offspring tend to rationally identify as independent or nonpartisan. As they state, "In the absence of familiarity with what parties have to offer, it is entirely reasonable to these groups to maintain a skeptical stance toward partisanship and withhold judgment" (p.175). Hajnal and Lee (2011) also state that, "direct experience with knowledge of a political system that is unfamiliar to immigrants and their offspring is a vital precursor of partisan attachments" (p184). This is, of course, a fair argument; however, we still have sparse data of how much political information and political knowledge Asian and Latino Americans possess. Hence, Hajnal and Lee operationalize information based on two simple items: perceived party differences and general political

attentiveness, which are far from adequate to gauge and differentiate respondents' political knowledge. For example, in the 2008 NAAS data, 53 percent of respondents thought they could discern the important differences between the parties, only 18 percent could not. While 29 percent of respondents did not answer this question. We do not know how difficult this question is for immigrants, and why so many respondents did not answer it. It is entirely possible that it is too easy for older immigrants and US-born generations, but too difficult for new arrivals.

Hajnal and Lee (2011) are agnostic about the latent partisanship and assume that predispositions and information start at the same initial position when they arrive in the United States, that is, new immigrants do not have predispositions that make them more inclined to accept or reject the policy positions that are endorsed by the parties, nor do they have the latent tendency to support either Democrats or Republicans. In the political psychology literature, scholars distinguish this latent partisan preference from explicit attitudes. For example, recent research of Sears, Danbold, and Zavala (2016) find that most Latinos, including nonpartisans and undocumented immigrants, demonstrate a consistent and overwhelming latent partisan preference toward the Democratic Party even with minimal information about the parties. Similar patterns are also demonstrated among Asian immigrants. Even though Asian Americans are hesitant to declare partisan affiliation, they do favor Democratic candidates over Republicans. According to the 2016 CMPS data, 55 percent of Asian American voters who identified as Independent or non-partisan voted for Hilary Clinton. This suggests that while new arrivals tend to have little political knowledge and usually are unable to discern the parties, they nonetheless have dispositions of varying strength (Chapter 3 will have a detailed discussion).

2.6.2 Ideological ambivalence

Ideological ambivalence³ in Hajnal and Lee's account means that pre-existing ideologies confuse Asian Americans' perception of partisan choices. The so-called ideological roots in Hajnal and Lee's account are a series of political belief systems that are derived from prior socialization. Instead of seeing these ideological roots dispose immigrants toward a certain party, Hajnal and Lee see them as a barrier to forming partisan attachments. As they state, "these alternate ideological orientations that immigrants bring may cut orthogonally to the liberal-to-conservative continuum that separates the two parties" (p. 23). As a result, these ideological roots diminished attachment to both parties. Moreover, the ways in which Hajnal and Lee view immigrants' partisan orientation does not take into account demographic trends among Asian immigrants. Despite immigrants tending to have deep-seated predispositions, such "alternate ideological orientations," do not prevent them from forming party attachments. Rather, pre-migration political socialization carries profound influences in individuals' ideological preferences. For example, Asian immigrants who came to the United States after the 1990s did not have as strong anti-communism mentality as those in the 70s and 80s. Many of them are prone to lean toward the Democratic Party when they first arrive in the United States.

2.6.3 Identity formation

In Hajnal and Lee's account, identity formation is characterized by uncertainty and ambivalence. This uncertainty affects how different immigrants and their children think about the parties and

³ According to them, the underlying reason for ambivalence is two-fold. First, many immigrants are unfamiliar with the terms of ideological discourse used in American political debates. Rather, many immigrants are still in the process of adapting the cultural values, religious ethics and terms of ideological discourse from their homeland context to the United States (p.91). Second, many immigrants form party attachments on the basis of isolated issue concerns. For example, the anti-communism concerns among Vietnamese and Cuban immigrants, make them susceptible to either shifting political tides or to disagreement after new issues arise from their immigrant experiences.

accounts for their tendencies to remain nonpartisan. The problems caused by identity uncertainty have profound relevance for critically understanding opinion formation among minorities. Yet, the treatment of racial identity and identity formation of social identity in Hajnal and Lee's account does not deal with these problems.⁴ For one thing, the question of when new arrivals start to perceive themselves as a group of minorities who share similar political interests with other minority groups remains unexamined. How immigrants choose between national origin identity, pan-ethnic identity, and social identity is also unexamined. Most new immigrants do not arrive in the United States with self-perceived identities that fit into the prevailing ethno-racial categories (Hero, 2010; Segura, 2013). For new arrivals the transition from foreign outsiders to racial minorities is the result of a process of political socialization that is driven by both cognitive and emotional stimulus factors. Junn (2006b) succinctly points out why the notion of pan-ethnic identity is challenging for immigrants. That is, as she says, on the one hand, it is due to multi-dimensional complexity and self-identification subjectivity; on the other hand, it is due to uneven assimilation and incorporation among new immigrants.

Even though new and old immigrants may have different kinds of identities, many existing survey analyses usually combine new and old immigrants into one category. As a result, when and how new immigrants develop the sense of belonging and the sense of political commonality with blacks and Latinos remain ambiguous. The stake here concerns the very empirical measurement of identity itself, its contours, its evolution, as well as the fierce battles to define its meaning and shape its trajectory of development among new arrivals. It is noteworthy that the 2008 NAAS data show that among the Asian American populations, the perception of political commonality with

⁴ As Hajnal and Lee put, "we consider the extent to which the identity formation of Latino and Asian Americans shape their partisanship. Here our main focus is on racial identity. As with most of the extant political science research on racial identity, our model specification is heavily informed by the concepts of social group identity" (p.184).

whites is more prevalent. In contrast, foreign-born Asians more often believe that they share no political interest with Latinos, but substantially fewer US-born Asians think so.

The relationship between identity and party identification is even trickier. It is hard to map identity into partisanship directly; it is mediated by the development of the sense of politicized identity that connects individual interest, group interest and political interest. Hajnal and Lee (2011) argue that, “an identity characterized by uncertainty is unlikely to offer much assistance in the choice of parties. Uncertainty surrounding one’s identity may in turn lead to a similar uncertainty surrounding partisanship choices—a situation that, more than anything else, is likely to lead to nonpartisanship” (p.83). Yet many immigrants do in fact develop identity-based partisan attachments. How does this happen? Hajnal and Lee do not say, the fundamental problem in their analysis is that they expect these identities will be automatically mapped into partisan choice without recognizing that a learning process must be involved in arriving at this point. Segura (2013) suggests that political socialization is a challenge for immigrants. Coming from different cultural and social environments, they must reorient themselves to and learn a new political system that is dissimilar from that of their home countries, which include institutional arrangements, associations of political values with the parties, and social norms to which they are unfamiliar. Also, they need to learn racial and class hierarchies in the US polity, and how those racial hierarchies shape the political interest and the sense of commonality with other minority groups. Segura (2013) puts it, “New arrivals do not come to the U.S. polity with any intuitive understanding of the structures of minority politics, racial beliefs, and structural inequality. Rather, ethnicity as a political cue is learned, and ethnic forms of political expression increase, not decrease, across early generations” (p. 264).

2.7 The two-stage sequential model

Hajnal and Lee (2011) propose an important two-stage sequential model⁵ of partisanship acquisition. In this model, Hajnal and Lee aim to separate the partisanship acquisition into two phases: the first phase is whether individuals are partisan or non-partisan. In the second phase, individuals will face the options of Democrat, Independent or Republican.⁶

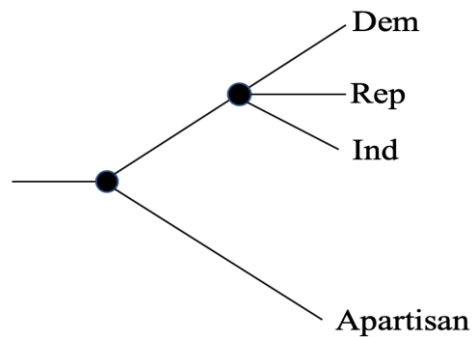


Figure 2. 1: Two-stage sequential choice model (Hajnal and Lee, 2011:182)

Testing this model is difficult with available data. One critical challenge is the large percentage of non-responses among Asian American immigrants. By “non-responses” I mean respondents choose “don’t know” and “refuse to answer” in survey answer categories. The peril of non-response in survey research has been documented by Brehm (1993), which suggests that the high percentage non-response rate will cause serious bias in sample variances and multivariate relationships. For Asian Americans, this peril is more prevalent because Asian Americans tend to have a large proportion of respondents who identify with Independent and nonpartisan. According

⁵ I chose a two-stage sequential choice model as an example, as Hajnal and Lee say, two-sequential and three-sequential choice models are more likely to represent Latino and Asian Americans’ processes. Moreover, two-stage sequential model is more consistent with their theoretical argument, that is, the partisan choice among Latino and Asian Americans tends to be multinomial rather than ordinal. Whereas statistical results of these two models are highly similar. See p.183 for details.

⁶ Hajnal and Lee first employ logistic regression to separate partisan and nonpartisan respondents, then among those self-identified partisans, they employ multinomial logit regression to examine the pairwise selections between Democrat, Republican and Independent.

to the 2008 NAAS data, the variable party identification consists of “Democrat”, “Republican,” “Independent,” “Other Party,” “Do not think in these terms,” “Don’t Know,” and “Refuse.” Of these options 15 percent of respondents identified with Republican, 31 percent identified with Democrat, 21 percent identified with Independent, and 33 percent identified with nonpartisan. Thus, Independent and nonpartisan⁷ account for roughly 54 percent of the survey responses. Therefore, the large percentage of nonpartisan identifiers in the survey indicates that the partisan opinion of Asians might not necessarily be captured by survey.

Independent contains multiple meanings and implications for foreign-born immigrants. With such a large proportion of Independent and nonpartisan, it is a critical challenge to clearly distinguish the selection between nonpartisan and Independent. Indeed, the boundary between Independent and nonpartisan is always blurring. The same issue also plagues the choices between “Democrat”, “Republican” and “Independent” in that it is difficult to differentiate lower levels of political interest, and the hidden partisanship from genuine Independents. Zaller (1992) also points out that if an individual is uncritical in response to the flow of political information, his or her considerations tend to be ambivalent. As a result, he or she would adopt a centrist position. That is to say, exposure to too much political information and too little can both lead to similar item response patterns regarding partisanship.

Uncertainty and ambivalence could be the reason why many immigrants choose to identify as Independent. In Barreto and Bozonelos’s (2009) study on Muslim Americans’ partisan preferences, they also found that those Muslims who were not familiar with American politics tend to identify as Independent or non-partisan, when they could not identify a party that represents

⁷ Those who refused to answer, do not know and skip the question are considered non-partisan.

their political interests. Unfamiliar with American politics and political parties, many Asians would shy away from identifying with the Democratic or Republican Party. Therefore, the distinction between non-partisan and Independent is extremely hard, if not impossible, to discern. However, US-born and foreign-born respondents can be separate stories. As Brehm (1993) points out, the lack of interest and information create two kinds of nonresponse. Therefore, whether US-born Asian Americans lack interest in answering survey questions, or foreign-born Asian Americans lack information to answer the survey questions remain unexamined in Hajnal and Lee's account.

On the substantive dimension, the extent to which we understand public opinion hinges on how survey opinion is conceived and measured. Hajnal and Lee accept at face value on self-report party identification. Many immigrant new arrivals usually are confused by the multiple response categories in survey questionnaires, because of their weak political knowledge and little experience in answering survey questionnaires. Mueller (1973) and Achen (1975) point out that measurement error in survey study is due to the fact that there are considerable variations in interpreting survey questions, making it difficult for respondents to supply tangible answers. The same concern can be magnified when respondents have vague ideas of the parties and political issues. Pan et al. (2005) in their cognitive interviews find that lack of experiences in answering survey questionnaires, new Chinese immigrants demonstrate substantial difficulties in interpretation of census key concepts. As a result, new arrivals tend to have difficulties expressing their attitudes to appropriate answer categories. Therefore, the better way to study the public opinion of immigrant new arrivals is in-depth interviews or open-ended surveys. The major advantage of open-ended survey questions is that they inquire attitudes that are on the top of respondents' mind at the time of the interview (RePass, 1971). Instead of predisposing respondents to a certain direction,

“nonreactivity” and cue-free survey questions have unique strength in measuring political conceptions and party schemas. Specifically, they allow respondents to react to survey questions based on their experiences, feelings, the retention of political knowledge, reflecting the underlying consistency in information processing about different attitude objects (Lau, 1986).

2.8 The importance of political learning among immigrants

Thus far, we have reviewed the limitations in traditional studies in political socialization and partisanship. As applied to one of the most dynamic minority groups in the United States, the implications of these empirical and theoretical inquiries are profound in our understanding of political assimilation and incorporation in a multicultural and democratic society. Having said that, this dissertation will not completely answer some fundamental questions of how Asian American immigrants acquire partisan opinions, e.g., how religious beliefs shape people’s partisan attitudes. Instead, I will focus on two facets of the consideration which I believe must be more rigorously examined. First, I will propose a general explanation for how pre-migration predispositions affect immigrants’ partisan direction, and the conditions under which uncertainty affects this process. Second, I propose a general explanation of how the post-migration experiences of racial consciousness and sense of belonging; lead to greater consistency in partisan attitude. In doing so, I break new ground in the study of how predispositions and identities determine the development of partisan attachments among Asian American immigrants.

In doing all of this, I will continue to explore cognitive development and partisan choice inspired by Hajnal and Lee’s two-stage sequential model, but I challenge the idea that Asian immigrants’ partisan orientations are a blank slate, even though many new arrivals have little political knowledge of American politics. Rather, the empirical investigation in this research aims to

critically examine how predispositions shape the way Asian American immigrants learn the parties. Moreover, I basically concur that once Asian immigrants develop partisan allegiance, their partisan opinions will follow politics, yet the mechanisms of nurturing the psychological attachment and the degree of partisan loyalty are the subjects of debate. Furthermore, because political learning has direct impacts on political behavior, I am able to make an argument for how Asian American political participation is shaped by policy preference and political knowledge. From different perspectives, I will explicitly point out that it is due to disparities in predispositions and political knowledge. I demonstrate causality using a survey experiment, in which I argue that in general it is policy preference as a bedrock for Asian American immigrants to favor the Democratic Party, and political knowledge as the moderating factor.

Admittedly, my findings are parsimonious. I am not claiming that other factors are not important, e.g., social networks or religious beliefs, but instead that they do not explain the phenomenon I observe in my data. Because I am not finding contextual effects that are based on specific circumstances of local contextual effects or isolated issue concerns does not mean they do not exist. However, the general applicability of political learning demonstrates a mechanism that will apply to many other immigrant groups. In fact, political learning is a general feature of human's information processing and adapting to new political and social milieu.

Having specified Asian Americans' political learning, and discussed its contribution, and briefly laid out the tests I will conduct in this dissertation, I am ready to proceed with a series of empirical inquiries into the validity of the theory that will also allow me to demonstrate the political learning among Asian American immigrants.

CHAPTER 3

Partisan Direction and Strength: Aggregate Evidence

Experiences immigrants have in different political systems before they cross the Pacific may result in different relationships they maintain with their homeland as well as different attitudes toward homeland government and political status they develop after the crossing; this, in turn, may affect how much they participate in politics on both sides of the Pacific.

—Pei-te Lien (2010)

3.1 Introduction

How much does it matter from where and when Asian immigrants come from? To answer these questions, this chapter examines how the country of origin and time of arrival in America shape Asian Americans' partisan direction and strength. Drawing on Cain et al.'s (1991) analysis on Latino and Asian Americans' partisanship acquisition based on 1984 data, they found that other than foreign policy concerns, Asian immigrants and subsequent generations of Asian Americans exhibit no trends in either the direction of their partisan preferences or in partisan intensity. Drawing on the 2008 National Asian American Survey (NAAS) data, as well as the 1960-2010 U.S. census data, I have different findings. I find that pre-migration predispositions and post-migration experiences—that is, country of origin and time in America both have important effects on the development of partisanship.

I argue that partisan direction and partisan strength are two different levels of analysis. More specifically, predispositions embedded in national origins tend to have an “anchoring effect”¹ for the partisan orientation, while post-migration experiences tend to shape the partisan strength. These differences are not universal; they are derived from complex episodes of international and domestic political environments. The legacy of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which was coincident with the Cold War in the Asia Pacific region, provided a main discursive ground for pre-migration predispositions. The legacy of much of these political circumstances left a deep imprint among the refugees who successfully sought asylum in the United States, on the embryonic party perception in the United States. Nonetheless, the deprivation of the political legacy is temporal. When the domestic and international political climate changes over time, so do pre-migration experiences. In spite of this kind of argument as simplistic as it may seem, as the epigraph implies, one must not underestimate the crucial psychological significance of such a dynamic interplay in both Asian and global political contexts.

Few studies have attempted to explain immigrants’ partisan orientation by analyzing the dynamic interplay between pre-migration predispositions and post-migration experiences. This, in large part, is due to the lack of survey data, particularly longitudinal data for time-series analyses. Cain et al.’s (1991) seminal research was the first comprehensive account to understand Latino and Asian Americans’ partisanship acquisition. Nonetheless, this study is based on small Latino and Asian samples (N=267) from California and one time only. Lacking nationwide samples, the extent to which the findings of that research can be generalized remains unknown. Hajnal and Lee (2011) provide a thorough examination of Americans’ partisan choice; but their account focuses

¹ As I have defined in Chapter 1, an “anchoring effect” refers to a cognitive bias that describes the tendency to rely heavily on initial information or pre-existing knowledge as a reference point to initiate the ensuing learning process or decision making.

exclusively on sociodemographic variables without extending the analysis to pre-migration predispositions.² Hence, the extent to which source country political circumstances and temporal political predispositions shape post-migration political attitudes remains understudied.

This chapter is the first thorough examination of this interplay between the 1984 California survey data analyzed by Cain et al. and the 2008 NAAS data now available for the study of Asian American politics. It focuses on the analyses of disparities in political circumstances and temporal political predispositions embedded in national origins, along with the conventional variables and investigates the extent to which they shape Asian Americans' partisan direction and strength. By conventional variables, I mean socioeconomic status, generational effect, cohort effect, aging effect, minority status effect and foreign policy concern. These variables are the most common predictors for partisan choice in the field of public opinion and American political socialization. After controlling socioeconomic attainment, generational effect, aging effect, cohort effect, minority status effect and foreign policy concern, national origin tends to overwhelmingly dictate the partisan direction. The other is that experience-based exposure to American politics is embedded in the length of residence as a key factor, which sustains Asian Americans' partisan alignment with the Democratic Party and partisan intensity. This chapter serves as an overview of aggregate empirical investigation of partisanship acquisition using only observational data. By "aggregate," I mean using national origins as proxies for pre-migration predispositions.³

² A pilot study of the national Asian American political survey (PNAAPS), 2000-2001 (N=1,218) is another good dataset to study Asian Americans' political attitude, but these data do not have comparable survey questionnaire as those of Cain et al., making the parallel comparisons untenable.

³ Some scholars argued that national origins cannot be used as predispositions.

3.2 Data and method

In order to examine trends in Asian American political socialization across generations and co-ethnic groups, I will compare political attitudes across time within socio-demographic characteristics categories. In doing so, I rely on Cain et al.'s (1991) analysis on Asian American partisanship as a baseline and compare it to the analysis based on the 2008 NAAS data. Despite the lack of panel data, these comparisons allow us to examine temporal trends in Asian American partisan dynamics, and to infer its underlying causes. More specifically, I will follow Cain et al.'s (1991) analytical method, and partition the sample into first, second and third-generations. Among the first generation, I will further partition it into 3 major periods on the basis of longevity in the United States. The first period is from 0 to 7 years; the second period is from 8 to 15 years; and the third period is from 16 years and beyond. Moreover, in the same analysis, I will also compare the California subsample of NAAS with the nationwide one. According to the 2010 U.S. census, 32 percent of Asian Americans live in California, and Cain et al.'s (1991) analysis is based on the survey samples that were collected in California. Thus, the NAAS subsample of California offers an important cross-reference to both Cain et al.'s analysis and the broader analysis derived from the nationwide data. For cross co-ethnic group analysis, I will focus on Chinese, Indian, Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean and Japanese immigrants. These groups include both foreign-born and US-born, whereas foreign-born accounts for 85 percent of samples in the 2008 NAAS data. These six major co-ethnic groups together account for 75 percent of the Asian American populations in the U.S.

To further validate the differences between first, second and third generations, and between co-ethnic groups, I will conduct two-sample proportion *t* tests for each pair of generational and co-ethnic groups on each category based on $\alpha=0.05$ significant level and two-tailed tests. The

conceptualization of party identification is a subject of heated theoretical debate among scholars in political behavior, as it can be understood as multidimensional or unidimensional (Franklin & Jackson, 1983). For instance, the Michigan model considers party identification as an endogenous variable, with party loyalty a driving force for partisan stability, while the Downsian model treats party identifications as exogenous to electoral behavior, which varies with policy and issue positions. In other work, such as Hajnal and Lee’s (2011) research, measures of Asian and Latino American party identifications are treated as unordered variables. In some sense, I agree with Hajnal and Lee (2011) that without sufficient knowledge of American politics, it is hard for many Asian Americans to think of partisan choice as an ordered scale. Nonetheless, in this study I choose to follow Cain et al.’s (1991) rationale, which treats party identification as an ordinal variable, because my purpose is to compare and contrast the 1984 California survey data that Cain et al. (1991) used. Keeping the same dependent variable construct enables better observation of the discrepancies.

3.3 Partisan direction

3.3.1 Socioeconomic advancement

	0~7			8~15			16+			2nd Gen			3rd Gen		
	84	CA	US	84	CA	US	84	CA	US	84	CA	US	84	CA	US
	08	08	08	08	08	08	08	08	08	08	08	08	08	08	08
Family owns home	29	29	35	70	52	62	68	71	74	81	72	49	67	74	43
Family income less than \$20K (\$35K in 2008)	48	33	30	22	23	25	20	15	21	25	6	8	19	6	7
Household head unemployed	19	5	3	4	4	3	12	3	3	6	3	2	12	2	1
N	58	132	401	69	424	1185	50	1447	3573	63	173	574	42	97	382

Note: Figures reported are in percentages.
Source: Cain et al. (1991) & 2008 NAAS

Table 3. 1: Economic advancement of Asian Americans

Table 3.1 summarizes the major patterns of socioeconomic attainments among Asian Americans in the 1984 California survey data and the 2008 NAAS data. At a glance, these two waves of immigrants share similar patterns. The 2008 data show that the younger generation fares slightly better than those of the 1984 data when they first moved to the United States, whereas the 1984 data show a faster rate in economic progress—particularly after living in the United States for about 8-15 years. As we can see, the proportion of Asians in the 1984 data whose family income is less than 20K is consistently higher than those in younger generations.⁴ Moreover, this economic situation can also be mirrored in the household head unemployment rate. Table 3.1 indicates that those Asians in the 1984 data had higher unemployment rates than those of the 2008 data. An interesting question is whether the rate of economic progress accounts for partisan choice or partisan strength, but this empirical puzzle is beyond the scope of this study. In short, most descriptive statistics show that the economic situation and patterns of socioeconomic attainment for the respondents represented in the 2008 data is as good as or better than those of 1984. If economic advancement is the reason why Asian Americans are less likely than Latinos to identify as Democrats as Cain et al. (1991) argue, then the new wave of Asian immigrants and their subsequent generations should be as less likely to align with Democrats.

	Asian Co-ethnic Groups																	
	Chinese			Indian			Filipino			Vietnamese			Korean			Japanese		
	I	II	III	I	II	III	I	II	III	I	II	III	I	II	III	I	II	III
Family owns home	64	63	70	70	66	81	66	73	63	66	64	83	70	57	67	66	88	78
Family income less than \$20K (\$35K in 08)	25	0	20	3	5	13	11	3	0	27	9	8	20	7	0	7	6	5
Household head unemployed	3	0	0	2	8	6	3	0	5	4	9	0	5	7	0	1	1	2
Mean Income (1-8)	3.9	5.2		5.8	5.6		4.5	5.7		3.1	4.8		4.1	5.0		4.9	4.2	
Mean Education Attainment (1-12)	4.7	4.6		5.8	5.1		4.7	4.8		3.4	4.4		4.8	4.9		4.9	4.4	
N	1,198	35	10	984	100	16	521	74	19	705	11	12	597	14	6	286	122	128

Note: Figures reported are in percentages.
Data: 2008 NAAS

⁴ The value of \$20K in 1984 is roughly equivalent to \$35K in 2008.

Table 3. 2: Economic advancement of Asian co-ethnic groups

Table 3.2 digs deeper into Asian Americans' economic advancement by looking into Asian co-ethnic groups. The income level ranges from 20K to above 150K in 8 categories,⁵ and we can see that all Asians share similar patterns, that is, the second generation tends to have consistently higher income than the first-generation. The household income of the first generation usually is between 50k and 75K, and the second-generation counterpart is between 75K and 100K. Likewise, education is categorized into 12 levels with elementary school as the lowest level and doctoral degree as the highest. Major Asian co-ethnic groups also demonstrate a similar upward mobility pattern across these two generations. Most first generation Asian Americans receive between some-college and college-graduate level education, and the second generation is more likely on the upper side of the same category. Nonetheless, some slight variation does exist. Vietnamese immigrants tend to be the least educated group. Moreover, Indian is an exceptional case. First-generation Indians are more educated and have higher income than that of the second-generation. This is largely because Indian immigrants often work in high-tech sectors.

3.3.2 Foreign policy concerns

Foreign immigrants tend to keep in touch with friends and relatives in their native countries. Thus, the link to immigrants' countries of origin can be considered as a proxy for interest in US foreign policy concerns toward and political affairs of native countries. As Table 3.3 shows, the patterns

⁵ (1) Up to \$20K; (2) \$20K to \$35K; (3) \$35K to \$50K; (4) \$50K to \$75K; (5) \$75K to \$100K; (6) \$100K to \$125K; (7) \$125K to \$150K; (8) \$150K and beyond.

Educational attainment ranges from elementary school, middle school, high school, some college, college graduate, and postgraduate, which includes JD, MD and Ph.D.

of the 1984 and 2008 data are very close. Asian immigrants maintain strong ties with and send money to friends and relatives in their countries of origin. Moreover, these ties decline gradually over time as Asians live in the United States.

	Asians								
	Years in the U.S.								
	1984			CA			U.S.		
	0~7	8~15	16+	0~7	8~15	16+	0~7	8~15	16+
Keeps in touch with friends and relatives	90	77	64	89	84	66	91	86	63
Sends money to friends and relatives	43	29	30	34	40	29	38	43	27
N	58	69	50	132	424	1447	380	1181	3598

Note: Figures reported are in percentages.

Source: Cain et al. (1991) & 2008 NAAS

Table 3. 3: Immigrants' links to their countries of origin

	Asian Co-ethnic Groups																	
	Chinese			Indian			Filipino			Vietnamese			Korean			Japanese		
	I	II	III	I	II	III	I	II	III	I	II	III	I	II	III	I	II	III
Keeps in touch with friends and relatives	79	54	20	83	76	56	74	38	47	76	55	58	82	64	67	84	39	28
Sends money to friends and relatives	29	17	10	30	17	31	59	24	21	64	18	42	19	14	17	16	11	7
N	1,198	35	10	984	100	16	521	74	19	705	11	12	597	14	6	286	122	128

Note: Figures reported are in percentages.

Data: 2008 NAAS

Table 3. 4: Asian co-ethnic groups' links to their countries of origin

Table 3.4 shows that all Asian co-ethnic groups share similar trends in keeping in touch with foreign friends and relatives. The first generation tends to show more concern about the friends and relatives in the countries where they come from. This connection weakens over time. One thing seems to be common between keeping in touch and sending money to friends and relatives is that the countries where the economy is poorer, the stronger the connections. The Indian, Filipino and Vietnamese, thus, have stronger connections with their home countries than Chinese, Korean and Japanese.

3.3.3 Racial discrimination experiences

Most serious discrimination personally experienced:	1984		
	I	II	III
None	61	39	56
Social	22	47	36
Economic	17	14	8
Receive too few opportunities	9	10	2
N	162	59	36

Note: Figures reported are in percentages.

Source: Cain et al. (1991)

Table 3. 5: Personal discrimination experiences

Most serious discrimination personally experienced	CA			US		
	1 Gen	2 Gen	3 Gen	1 Gen	2 Gen	3 Gen
Unfairly denied a job or fired	9.3	8.7	6.4	9.7	6.5	6.2
Unfairly denied a promotion at work	13.0	9.8	6.4	14.3	10.2	4.9
Unfairly treated by the police	11.7	13.9	7.7	12.9	12.2	7.4
Unfairly prevented from renting or buying house	5.7	9.2	6.4	5.3	6.5	3.1
Treated unfairly or badly at restaurants or stores	17.4	30.6	28.2	18.3	29.2	29.0
Total	57.0	72.3	55.1	60.5	64.6	50.6
N	1,729	173	78	4,568	384	162

Note: Figures reported are in percentage

Source: 2008 NAAS

Table 3. 6: Types of discrimination in California and U.S.

Before turning to the multivariate regression analyses, it is important to compare and contrast the descriptive statistics among these two waves of Asian immigrants to make sense of the comparability in the key theoretical hypotheses employed in Cain et al.'s (1991) models. First, in Cain et al.'s (1991) work, the minority status hypothesis is that minorities tend to experience racial discrimination as they live in the United States. This experience in turn encouraged Asians to identify with Democrats. Cain et al.'s (1991) 1984 data include general economic and social discrimination questions, while the 2008 NAAS data provide a series of more specific social discrimination questions. Together, these two set of survey data offer an opportunity to compare

the experiences and perceptions of racial discrimination among Asian Americans in two different periods. For the sake of brevity, I use Roman numerals I, II and III to denote the first, second and their-generation.⁶ Also, I lump the third and later generations of Asian Americans into the category of third generation⁷. Because the number of respondents in the third and beyond generations of Asian Americans is relatively small in 1984, it is more efficient to combine them into one group. Indeed, comparing the 2008 survey data to those of 1984, it is obvious that the later generation of Asian Americans' perceived experience of social discrimination is less. In terms of economic discrimination, the experience of being unfairly denied a job or fired, or a promotion at work is about 10 percent across all generations in the 2008 data, while in the 1984 data, it was 17 percent in the first-generation, 14 and 8 percent for the second and third-generations. Moreover, in terms of social discrimination, the 2008 data show the percentage of those who report being unfairly treated by police; or unfairly prevented from renting or buying houses are roughly 13 percent. However, being unfairly treated at restaurants or stores is about 20 percent. Furthermore, similar to the 1984 data, the second-generation in 2008 is more sensitive to social discrimination, which is probably due to greater awareness of racial and social identity. Overall, the 1984 and 2008 data show similar patterns. That is, the second and third generations are less likely to suffer economic discrimination than foreign-born Asian immigrants, while second and third generations tend to perceive a higher likelihood of being discriminated. Moreover, differences between the first and second generations are statistically significant in all categories.

⁶ The rest of the chapter will follow the same notations.

⁷ The number of the fourth generation sample is rare in the 2008 NAAS data.

	Asian Co-ethnic Groups					
	Chin.	Indi.	Fil.	Viet.	Kor.	Jap.
Most serious discrimination personally experienced:	I	I	I	I	I	I
Unfairly denied a job or fired	12	12	9	10	6	5
Unfairly denied a promotion at work	19	17	14	11	8	8
Unfairly treated by the police	14	13	11	11	16	9
Unfairly prevented from renting or buying house	7	5	5	4	4	7
Treated unfairly or badly at restaurants or stores	19	22	18	6	22	29
N	1,198	984	521	705	597	286

Note: Figures reported are in percentages.

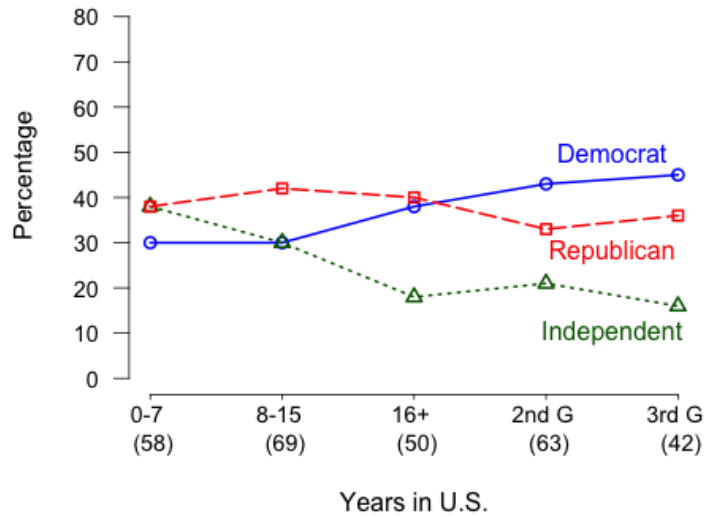
Data: 2008 NAAS

Table 3. 7: Personal discrimination experiences among Asian co-ethnic groups

Turning now to comparisons across different Asian subgroups we see in Table 3.7 that the first generations of these groups have basically similar experiences. There are no statistically significant differences across these subgroups, meaning that no co-ethnic group is statistically different from another. Unfortunately, there are not enough samples in the co-ethnic level that enable us to conduct the analysis on second and third generations. Still, these data hint strongly that there are differences between the first and second generations, even though there are no statistically significant differences across Asian co-ethnic groups.

3.4 Partisan orientation

Party ID Among Asian Americans, 1984



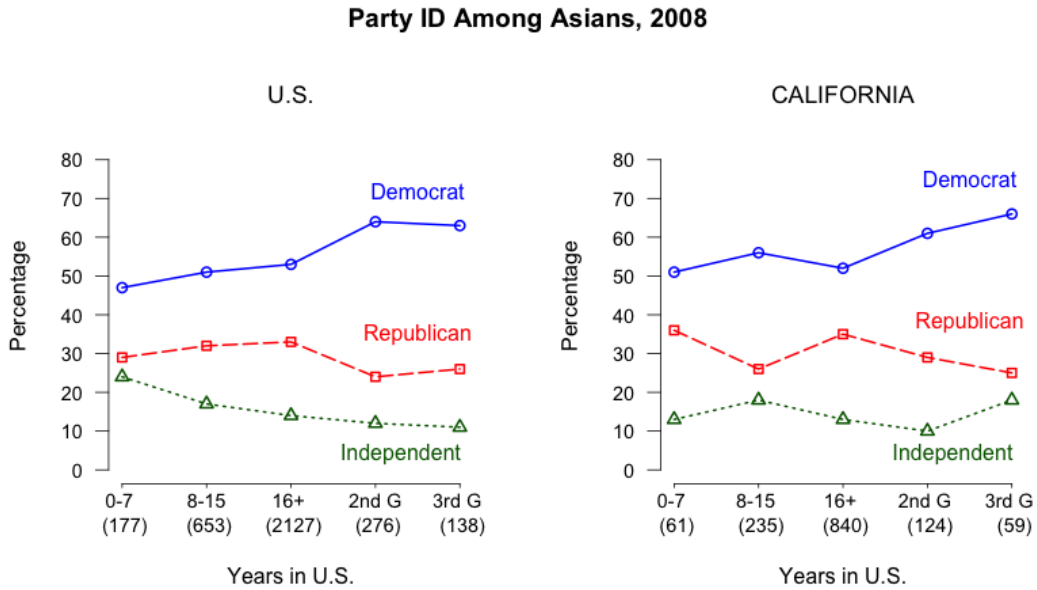
Source: Cain et al. (1991)

Note: Numbers of respondents upon which percentages are based are reported in parentheses.

Figure 3. 1: Party identification among Asian Americans, 1984

The similarities in experiences of racial discriminations, socioeconomic upward mobility, and connections with native countries between Asian Americans in the 1960s and 1970s and early 1980s and the recent generations are directly reflected in similar patterns of partisan attachment over time. As Figure 3.1 shows, the percentage of those who identified as Democrats was about 28 percent in 1984. This number remains unchanged for the first 7 years. However, it starts to increase rapidly after they have lived in the United States for 8 to 15 years. For the percentage of those who identified as Republicans, the initial value was about 38 percent, which is roughly 10 percent more than that of Democrats. This increases in the first 7 years of the length of residence, then consistently decreases afterward. The percentage among those who identified as Independent

was the same as that of Republicans, and this number decreases more rapidly as Asians live longer in the United States.



Source: 2008 NAAS

Figure 3. 2: Party identification among Asian Americans, 2008

Figure 3.2 shows that trends in partisanship among Asian Americans in the 2008 NAAS data are not much different than those in the 1984 data. The percent who identified as Democrats increased steadily over time, and the percentage of those who identified as Republicans experienced an increase during the first 16 years, then decreased afterward. Likewise, the percentage of those who identified as Independent decreases as they live in the United States. Examining California residents alone, the general patterns remain identical, except that the percentage of those who identified as Democrats, Republicans and Independent differ in initial values. That is, the percentages of those who identified as Democrats and Republicans are roughly 5 percent more, while the percentage of those who identified as Independents is about 10 percent less.

3.5 Asian immigrants and pre-migration characteristics

Different Asian sub-groups come to the United States at different periods of time and with different pre-migration experiences and partisan orientations. To show this I use 1960-2010 U.S. census data. I partition the post-1965 Asian American immigrants into two different waves. The first wave of immigration consists of many war refugee immigrants seeking asylum in the United States. The end of the Korean War in the 1950s and Vietnam War in the 1970s and the “Secret Wars” in Laos⁸ brought a wave of Asian American immigration from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Some of the new immigrants were war brides, who were soon joined by their families. Moreover, many Chinese who fled to Hong Kong, Macau or Taiwan, eventually moved to the United States. One common characteristic among this wave of immigration is that due to their pre-migration experiences, they had a strong anti-communism mentality, which nudged them to identify with Republicans. Figure 3.3 shows that before the 1990s, the wave of immigration mostly came from China, South Korea, the Philippines and Vietnam.

⁸ The United States decade-long bombing campaign in Laos from 1964 to 1973. The U.S. dropped about 2 million tons of ordnance in Laos during the bombing missions.

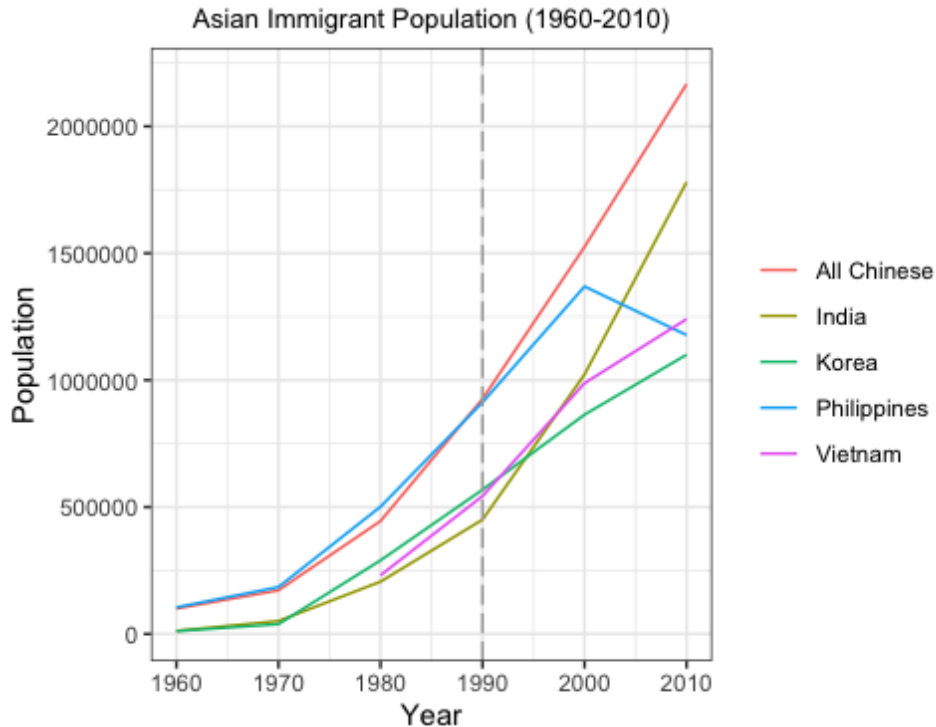


Figure 3. 3: Asian immigrant population (1960-2010)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population, 1850 to 2000 (Gibson & Jung, 2006), and the American Community Survey, 2010. For brevity's sake, immigrants from other South and Southeast Asian countries were omitted from Figure 3.3. For details, see Figure 3.A1 in Appendix 1.

The recent increase in Asian immigration starts from the 1980s, which comes with family-reunification-based immigrants from mainland China and technically skilled immigrants from India who entered the U.S. through H1 and H1B visas. Figure 3.3 shows the increase of Chinese immigrants including those from Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau increase since the late 1980s and the early 1990s. As U.S. census data indicates in Figure 3.3, from 1970 to 1990, the Chinese immigrant population doubled every 10 years. From 1990 to 2010, the number more than doubled. Indian immigrant growth trajectory shows a similar pattern as that of the Chinese. Indian immigrant population doubled from 1990 to 2000; by 2010 it had increased more than triple.

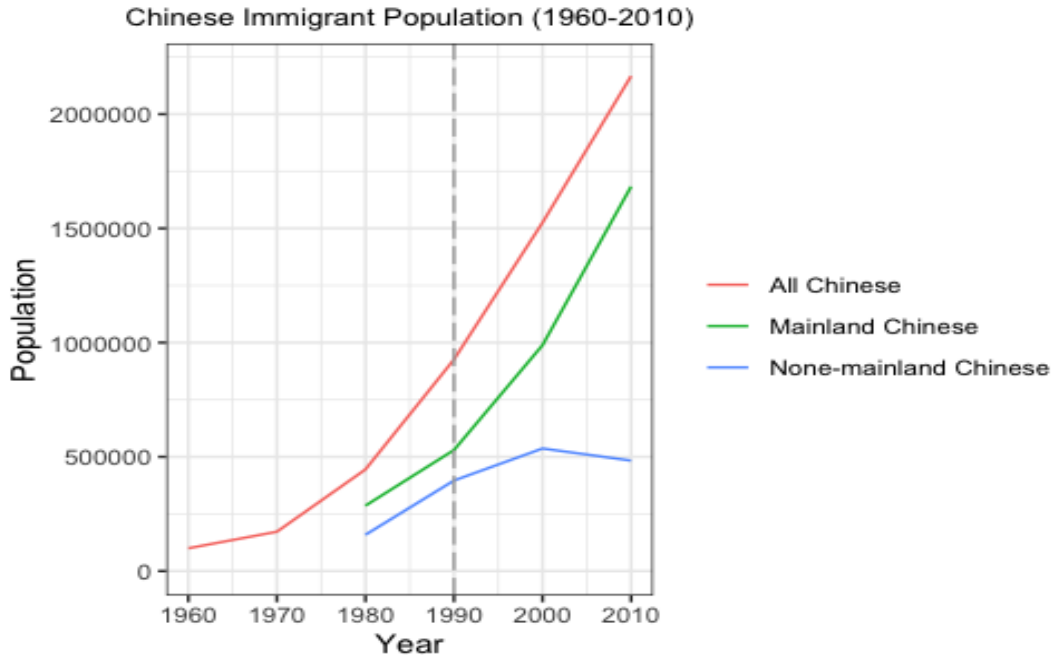


Figure 3. 4: Chinese immigrant population (1960-2010)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population, 1850 to 2000 (Gibson & Jung, 2006), and the American Community Survey, 2010. For brevity sake, immigrants from other South and Southeast Asian countries were omitted from Figure 3.4 Non-mainland Chinese include immigrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau from 1980-2000, whereas non-mainland Chinese immigrants in 2010 only include those from Hong Kong and Taiwan. For details, see Figure 3.A1 in Appendix 1.

Unlike Indians, who were apt to identify as Democrats, whenever they came to the United States, the dynamic among ethnic Chinese immigrants is different at different times. Since 1965 the United States had maintained separate immigration quotas for mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. As a result, prior to the 1980s Chinese migration into the United State came mostly from Taiwan. There were also a small number of Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong who originally came to the U.S. as college and graduate students.⁹ Immigration from mainland China was almost non-existent until the late 1970s, when China opened its economy to the world and removed restrictions on emigration leading to immigration of college students and professionals. According to Skeldon (1996), two significant policy developments occurred in China. First, in

⁹ Hong Kong and Taiwan used to send large numbers of students to the United States before the 1980s.

September 1985 China's People's Congress enacted the issuing of identity cards to all residents, which enabled them to move around domestically. Second, in November 1985, China's Emigration and Immigration Law was adopted which allowed the Chinese citizens to travel outside China and allowed those who wished to leave the country and move abroad. By the early 1990s, China became the leading source of foreign students in the United States, which accounted for 10 percent of all foreign students between 1993 and 1994 (Skeldon, 1996). Therefore, as Figure 3.4 shows, despite Chinese immigrants increasing rapidly since 1965, they have come from different places at different times—a mix of different Chinese before 1998 and mainly mainland China afterwards. In 2013, China surpassed Mexico to become the top country for immigrants to the United States.

Narratives of China's contemporary history are central to articulating the crucial distinction that constructs the pre-migration experiences between mainland Chinese *vis-à-vis* non-mainland Chinese. The consequence is that most non-mainland Chinese were similar to the earlier wave of Korean or Filipino immigrants, who were against communism and right-wing regimes, which had been the cornerstone for the support of the Republican Party. This demographic trend in Asian American population structure shows the composition of national origins and temporal political predispositions matters significant in terms of “anchoring effect” entrenched in partisan preference. I will elaborate these effects in the next section.

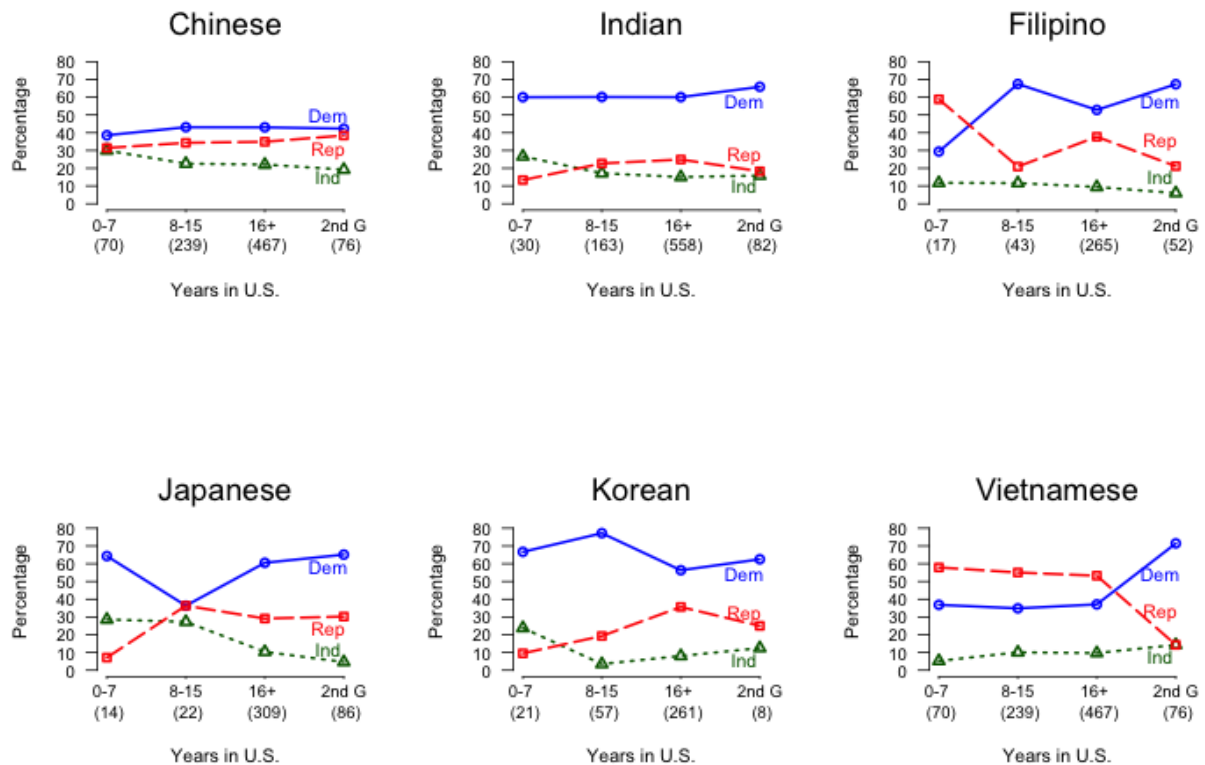
3.6 Partisan patterns among co-ethnic cohorts

Each of the Asian groups coming to the United States arrives with different experiences and hence different predispositions toward the two major American parties. It is therefore imperative to partition Asian Americans into different co-ethnic groups and examine their group-level variations in acquisition of partisanship. Figure 3.5 presents the evidence of this group-level variation. As

can be seen, Indian, Japanese, Korean and Filipino immigrants demonstrate a clear predilection for the Democratic Party; while the Vietnamese are strongly predisposed toward the Republican Party. Chinese immigrants present the most complicated case, as I suggested in the previous section. In this group, 40 percent identified as Democrats, while 30 percent identified as Republicans when they first moved to the United States. This ratio remains unchanged among different segments of immigrants. In general, this co-ethnic partisanship patterns illustrated in the post-1990 data are consistent with what Lien (2001a) finds in her study (See Table 3.A2 in Appendix 2), in which almost all Asian co-ethnic groups tend to demonstrate a partisanship shift toward the Democratic Party except for the Vietnamese.¹⁰

Groups vary in their stability. First-generation Chinese, Indian, Korean and Vietnamese tend to have highly stable partisan orientation in their first years in the US. But by the next generation there is a noticeable change as they shift towards the Democratic Party. As I argue in later chapters, the reason for this is that the second-generation tends to be exposed more to American politics and mainstream society and is more sensitive to racial hierarchy in American society. As a result, their social identity as a minority group tends to be strongly correlated with partisanship.

¹⁰ Lien (2001a) argues that there is no one clear pattern across the board based on Table 3A.2 alone. My conjecture is that this is because 1) she did not compare the patterns to any pre-1990 data. 2) The co-ethnic level sample sizes of some survey data are very small, such as 21, 24, 39 65. Nonetheless, if we focus on those N>250 samples, a clear pattern emerges, while in those N<250 samples, there are a lot of noises.



Source: 2008 NAAS

Figure 3. 5: Patterns of Asian co-ethnic group partisanship

Except for the Vietnamese, the comparisons between the 1984 and 2008 data do not demonstrate apparent discrepancies in terms of pre-migration social experiences between different generations of Asian Americans. Moreover, intra-group and inter-co-ethnic groups dynamics do not cause differing patterns in partisan direction; whereas the most important driving force for the rapid change in partisanship stems from the bias toward the parties at the time of arrival in the United States. In other words, the partisan predispositions embedded in demographic trends set the profound momentum for partisan identification, and Asians tend to further consolidate these predispositions as the years living in the United States increase. This finding echoes what Alvarez and Garcia Bedolla (2003) called “political integration process,” in which they argue that national

origin is so important in the sense that it serves as a proxy for each group's settlement experience among Latino Americans. It also affirms what Uhlaner and Garcia (2005) called "historical roots," in which they argue national origin has profound effects for Latino's partisanship direction.

A second important step to probe Asian Americans' partisan orientation is to understand how their life experiences as immigrants in the United States shape their partisan trend. The following regression analyses employ Cain et al.'s (1991) model with the 2008 NAAS nationwide and California samples.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
	84	08 CA	08 US	08 CA	08 US
Second Generation (G2)	-0.82 (0.62)	-0.36 (0.73)	0.14 (0.44)	-0.13 (0.75)	0.14 (0.45)
Third Generation (G3)	-1.00 (0.77)	-1.44 (2.60)	1.65 (1.44)	-2.16 (2.65)	1.03 (1.48)
Years in US, immigrant (G1 x t)	-0.01 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	-0.01** (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.01* (0.01)
Age, second gen (G2 x t)	0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01** (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.02** (0.01)
Age, third gen (G3 x t)	-0.01 (0.02)	0.02 (0.04)	-0.04 (0.03)	0.03 (0.05)	-0.03 (0.03)
Low family income	0.01 (0.17)	-0.05 (0.25)	-0.14 (0.17)	0.03 (0.25)	-0.14 (0.17)
High family income	-0.03 (0.18)	0.01 (0.15)	-0.02 (0.09)	0.16 (0.15)	0.11 (0.09)
Union household	-0.2 (0.18)	-0.02 (0.21)	0.04 (0.14)	-0.06 (0.22)	0.00 (0.14)
Head of household unemployed	-0.24 (0.23)	0.04 (0.34)	-0.18 (0.25)	0.12 (0.35)	-0.10 (0.25)
Republican won, immigrants (C1)	-0.19 (0.23)	-13.01 (449.20)	0.15 (0.64)	-13.57 (606.87)	0.24 (0.65)
Republican won, natives (C2, 3)	0.29 (0.28)	-0.08 (0.19)	0.11 (0.11)	-0.08 (0.20)	0.15 (0.12)
Anticommunist émigré (E)	0.08 (0.32)	0.29 (0.33)	0.10 (0.19)	0.03 (0.37)	-0.27 (0.22)
Years in US, émigrés (E x t)	0.02 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.02** (0.01)
<i>Co-ethnic Groups</i>					
Indian				-0.61** (0.29)	-0.57*** (0.16)
Filipino				0.11 (0.28)	-0.04 (0.19)
Japanese				0.28 (0.34)	-0.05 (0.21)
Korean				-0.64** (0.25)	-0.64*** (0.15)
Vietnamese				0.65*** (0.21)	0.66*** (0.14)
Other Asian				-13.88 (743.44)	-0.50** (0.24)
τ1		0.31 (17.12)	-21.57** (10.73)	-1.43 (17.71)	-20.71* (10.92)
τ2		0.92 (17.12)	-20.92* (10.73)	-0.80 (17.71)	-20.04* (10.92)
N	267	856	2,261	856	2,261

Note: DV: 3-point Party ID (Democrat=1, Independent=2, and Republican=3).

Partisan leaners are included to Democrat and Republican respectively.

Standard errors in parentheses. *** P<0.01, **P<0.05, *P<0.1

Table 3. 8: Party choice of Asian Americans (ordered logit)

Table 3.8 aims to compare Cain et al.'s (1991) 1984 California survey data with that of the 2008 NAAS data using the same model. Model 1 is Cain et al.'s original model, based on the statistical result, Cain et al. argue that because of foreign policy concerns, immigrants from China, Korea, and Southeast Asia become more Republican with increased exposure to American politics. However, perhaps due to small sample size, none of the coefficients in model 1 is statistically significant. Yet, we do not know whether the same argument still holds today or not. In model 2 to 5 I try to fit the same model with the 2008 NAAS data. Surprisingly, the model does not support the economic advancement hypothesis. That is, low income, high income and heads of households unemployed do not show statistically significant relationship with partisan choice. Moreover, the cohort effect (variable Republican won, immigrants and Republican won, native born), that is, the Republican Party won the first election in which Asian immigrants or their offspring were eligible to vote. Neither of these variables is statistically significant. Furthermore, the variable anticommunist is the dummy variable for those who came from China, South Korea, and Southeast Asian countries. "Year in U.S., emigres" ($E \times t$) is an interaction term between anticommunism and years they spent in the United States. This variable is statistically significant in model 5 when the sample is large, but not other models. That is to say, anti-communism attitude tends to have profound effect among immigrants who come from communist regimes.¹¹

The 1984 data do not predict that the years that Asian immigrants and their second-generation offspring spent in the United States are correlated with the identification with the Democratic Party. However, the 2008 NAAS data strongly predict this partisan affiliation. Thus, it is evident that experience-based partisanship acquisition is embedded in the time living in the United States.

¹¹ Cain et al.'s (1991) model doesn't show a statistically significant effect on this variable, mostly likely because their sample is too small.

In contrast, none of the variables in the 1984 model and California subsample of the 2008 NAAS data shows statistically significant. My conjecture is that long-term oriented and the subtle exposure foreign-born immigrants have had to a new political environment can only be mirrored in larger sample size survey data. As a result, using the 2008 NAAS nationwide data, we are able to see that the interaction terms between the length of residence and the status of the first and second generations of Asian Americans in the United States are correlated with the affiliation with the Democratic Party. That is to say, life experiences as immigrants and their subsequent generations are integrated with the passage of years.¹² This result is therefore opposite to what Cain et al. (1991) argued that the longer Asian Americans live in the United States, the more likely they tend to identify as Republicans.

In order to further examine the influences of demographic predisposition, the ordered logistic regression model in Model 5 includes six major sub-ethnic groups to gauge the effect of national origin on partisan orientation. These co-ethnic groups are Chinese, Indian, Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean and Japanese. Together they account for the vast majority of Asian American population in the United States. Moreover, in this model I use Chinese as a reference group, because the Chinese tend to be well-split between Democrat and Republican, that is, roughly 60 percent of respondents in the 2008 NAAS data are Democrats, and 40 percent are Republicans. As such, other co-ethnic groups who are on the left hand side of the Chinese will be Democrat, and on the opposite side they will be Republicans. Lien (2001a) argues in her work that dynamics and diversity among the Asian American communities prevent them from developing political consensus across communities. Asians socialized through different channels, carry their own political

¹² Note that for the second-generation Asian Americans, the length of residence is the same as their ages because they were born in the United States.

predispositions, and act as disjointed groups. As a result, Asians derive political preference from individual evaluation of group status and importance of community with their own political perspectives and identities (Lien, Conway, & Wong, 2003; Phan & Garcia, 2009; Tam Cho, 1999). Scholars of Asian American politics would not disagree that national surveys always have a hard time contacting Asian respondents (Cain et al. 1991). Seen in this light, the analyses of partisan direction on Asian subgroups not only further reinforce my argument on aggregate Asian American partisan orientation, but also illuminate other scholars' findings which suffer from insufficient sample size on subgroup level data.

As the test result shows in Table 3.8 (model 4 and 5), among these major Asian co-ethnic groups, only the Vietnamese tend to strongly and consistently align with Republicans. Unsurprisingly, as many scholars have mentioned, Vietnamese immigrants came to the United States after the end of the Vietnam War as refugees. This anti-communism attitudes driven apparatus of circulating bitter memories of having to flee their country remained strong. As a result, their intense aversion to the Vietnamese communist regime prompts them to support the "Hawkish" foreign policy that Republicans endorse (Cain et al., 1991; Hajnal & Lee, 2011; Lien, 2006; Nakanishi, 2003). In Cain et al.'s model, this foreign policy concern is not statistically significant, which in large part is because their sample size is too small, only 267. Using the 2008 NAAS data, the sample size is 2,261, and where émigré denotes those who come from the countries where they hold anti-communism attitudes. These countries include China, Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia and Laos. Coming from these countries alone may not nudge people to support Republican, it takes years for them to learn about the basic differences between the parties. To capture this time-dependent variation, I followed Cain et al.'s strategy, and created the interaction term between émigré x length of residence in the U.S. In model 5, this

variable is highly statistically ($p < 0.05$), this means that those who came from communist, former communist countries, or their home countries were threatened by communist countries become more likely to identify with the Republican Party as they have more experience living in the US.

Immigrants from other Asian nations do show an obvious tendency to correlate with the Democratic Party. National origins of India, Korea, and other Southeast Asian countries show very strong and statistically significant correlations with Democrats, while the Vietnamese remain strongly Republican. Despite other co-ethnic groups such as Filipino and Japanese who do not show statistically significant effects, the directions of their coefficients are pointed toward the Democratic Party. Therefore, we have strong evidence that where people come from is the most reasonable proxy for their partisan orientation.

3.7 Partisan intensity

Partisan strength provides another perspective from which we can examine how the length of residence as immigrants and the degrees of integration into the American society translate into the accumulation of political knowledge and interest among Asian Americans, thereby fostering partisan affiliation with either the Democratic or Republican Party. Prior to investigating the regression analysis, it is important to examine the degrees to which Asian Americans' acculturated into American society in both 1984 and 2008.

	Asians														
	1984					CA 2008					US 2008				
	0~7	8~15	16+	2G	3G	0~7	8~15	16+	2G	3G	0~7	8~15	16+	2G	3G
Less than high school	12	4	10	3	2	30	31	25	20	12	27	30	23	14	16
Speak foreign language	88	78	58	14	2	47	42	37	35	22	50	46	45	34	28
Reasonably well informed	15	36	62	70	76	36	38	41	46	46	36	39	44	48	51
U.S. Citizen	12	64	86	-	-	24	74	87	-	-	18	66	85	-	-
Intend to remain in U.S.	59	80	80	-	-	40	69	50	-	-	36	66	55	-	-
N	58	69	50	63	42	132	424	1447	173	97	401	1185	3573	574	382

Note: Figures reported are in percentages.

Source: 2008 NAAS

Table 3. 9: Education, information, and ties with the United States

	Asian Co-ethnic Groups																	
	Chinese			Indian			Filipino			Vietnamese			Korean			Japanese		
	I	II	III	I	II	III	I	II	III	I	II	III	I	II	III	I	II	III
Less than high school diploma	15	0	1	1	1	0	5	0	0	24	0	8	6	0	0	2	3	0
Speak foreign (group) language	38	29	30	82	58	44	25	5	16	13	18	42	51	21	67	24	8	10
Reasonably well informed	87	89	70	86	80	94	83	95	74	89	64	75	84	86	83	81	89	80
U.S. Citizen	75	100	100	79	100	88	81	100	79	88	100	92	77	100	67	44	100	93
Intend to remain in U.S.	72	-	-	50	-	-	55	-	-	71	-	-	56	-	-	47	-	-
N	1198	35	10	984	100	16	521	74	19	705	11	12	597	14	6	286	122	128

Note: Figures reported are in percentages

Data: 2008 NAAS

Table 3. 10: Education, information, and ties with the United States

Table 3.9 and 3.10 looks into the socioeconomic attainment, political awareness, and desire to live in the United States on a permanent basis. Through these indicators, we can examine Asian Americans' intent to assimilate into American society. Across the 1984 and 2008 data, we can find that those respondents in the 1984 data demonstrate more active assimilation than their 2008 counterparts. That is, Asian Americans in 1984, on average, were more educated, more informed about politics, and more intent to live in the United States. My conjecture is that the rapid economic development in East Asian countries, such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea and recently mainland China has offered more life opportunities, which in turn weakened many people's desire to remain in the United States and assimilate to the American society. As such, those who had less

desire to assimilate and to acculturate tended to retain their group languages and demonstrate indifference to American politics.

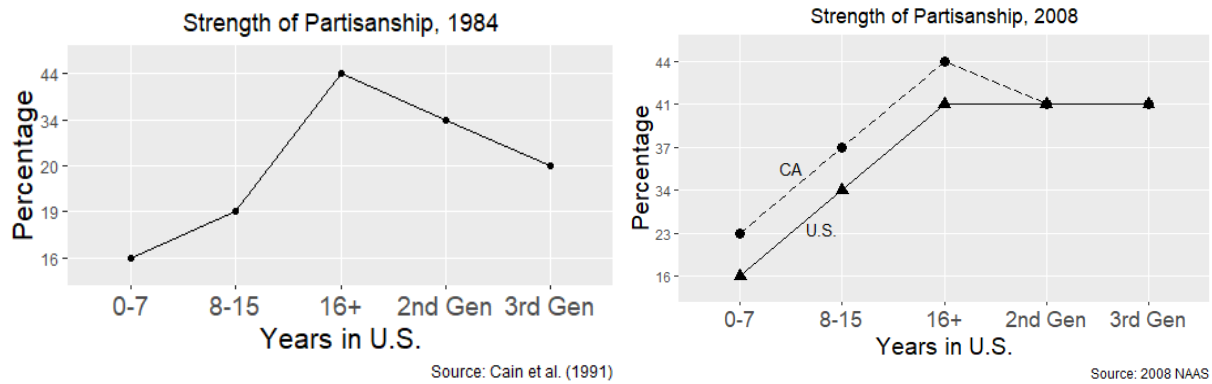


Figure 3. 6: Strength of partisanship

I begin analysis by looking at the dynamics of partisan strength on the basis of longevity in the United States. To do this, I partition the length of residence into five phases: the first phase is from 0 to 7 years; the second phase is from 8 to 15 years; and the third phase is from 16 years and beyond, the fourth and fifth phases are the second and third generations. Moreover, the strength of partisanship is the percent who say they strongly identify with their party. According to Figure 3.6, those who immigrated to the United States in the late 1980s and 1990s, there is a big rise in partisan strength during their first 16 years living in the U.S. It is during this critical period in which Asian immigrants were exposed to American politics. For example, J. Wong and Tseng (2007) argue that college-educated children of immigrants tend to introduce their partisan information to their parents. As a result, Asian immigrants start to be aware of political communications and politics. After living in the United States for 16 or more years, roughly 40 percent of Asian Americans will eventually become strongly partisan. This pattern of partisan intensity becomes even stronger for Asians living in California, which is about 5 percent more than the nationwide average. Therefore,

I argue that experiential political learning is not only an important force that drives partisan direction, but also a critical force that drives partisan strength.

The pattern is quite different from the immigrants in the 1984 study. While in the 2008 data the oldest immigrants are the strongest partisans, the strongest immigrants in the 1984 data appear to lose partisan strength. It remains perplexing as to why the second and third generations of Asian Americans in the 1984 data would be indifferent to politics and did not follow the imprint of their parents in partisan preference through socialization.

	84' Cain et al. Coef. (S.E)	2008 CA Coef. (S.E)	2008 U.S. Coef. (S.E)
Second Generation (G2)	.07 (.44)	.537 (.397)	.122 (.234)
Third Generation (G3)	.17 (.66)	-1.241 (1.403)	-1.553* (.867)
Years in U.S., immigrants (G1 x t)	.009 (.010)	.006 (.004)	.009*** (.003)
Age, second generation (G2 x t)	.001 (.008)	.000 (.006)	.001 (.004)
Age, third generation (G3 x t)	-.001 (.018)	.019 (.025)	.026* (.015)
Low education	.28 (.32)	.180 (.118)	.149* (.077)
High education	.19 (.15)	.014 (.104)	-.031 (.067)
Foreign Language	-.21 (.20)	.050 (.079)	.014 (.049)
Home ownership	.24 (.16)	.069 (.085)	.009 (.055)
Citizen	.09 (.21)	.213** (.107)	.234*** (.063)
Log Likelihood	-323.3	-944.328	-2410.117
N	267	1024	2635

DV: 3-point Party ID Intensity; 1=Independent 2=moderate Democrat and Republican, and 3= strong Democrat and Republican. Partisan leaners are included.

Table 3. 11: Trichotomous probit estimation of partisan intensity (ordered probit)

Table 3.11 shows that none of the variables in Cain et al.'s (1991) 1984 model has a statistically significant effect on partisan strength. Following the same variables, I fit the same model with the

2008 NAAS nationwide and California data respectively. I find that the interaction term between the length of residence in the United States and immigration status is statistically significant and in a strong partisan strength direction. On average, if Asian American immigrants live in the U.S. for one additional year, their ordered log-odds of being in strong Democrats or Republicans would increase by 0.009 while holding other variables constant. This means that for each additional year of residence, the odds of being in a higher level of partisan strength is multiplied by 1.009 for Asian immigrants. That is, in general each additional 10 year in the U.S. results in a 9 percent increase in the odds of being in a higher level of partisan strength for Asian immigrants. Likewise, the interaction term between age and the third generation is statistically significant, meaning that the older the third generation Asian Americans become, the stronger the partisan strength is. In contrast, the coefficient of the second generation is correctly signed, but not statistically significant. Cain et al. (1991) point out that family political influence is important in that if parents develop partisan attachment in the second generation's childhood, then we would expect to see strong political socialization in the second generation that follows the imprint of their parents. Furthermore, citizenship is also an important predictor for Asian Americans to develop partisanship with either the Democratic or Republican Party. I posit that strong partisans are more motivated to naturalize as US citizens so that they are eligible to vote in elections. Such motivation can also be derived directly or indirectly from the learning of and exposure to American politics as Asian immigrants live in the United States over time.

In short, the above analyses do not square with Cain et al.'s (1991) research on Asian American partisanship acquisition. The 2008 data have about 5,000 samples, while the 1984 data have only 267 samples. Hence the 2008 NAAS data illuminate the nebulous findings derived in 1984. The major difference in statistical findings is that the longer Asian Americans live in the U.S., the

greater percent they become strong partisans. Cain et al.'s (1991) 1984 data only include California residents, which could be the reason why they cannot detect any statistically significant findings on the patterns of Asian Americans' partisanship acquisition. After careful construction of the variables, I find that Asian Americans in 1984 and 2008 share identical patterns of socioeconomic upward mobility; however, this upward mobility alone does not account for the affiliation with Democrats or Republicans. Rather, the new waves of Asian immigrants were more predisposed to support the Democratic Party when they first arrive in the United States.

3.8 Discussion & conclusion

Cain et al.'s (1991) research is one of the earliest important studies of Asian Americans. The authors do great data analysis and have an eye for big questions. The paper is a classic that has influenced a generation of scholars. In general, they found that Asian immigrants and subsequent generations of Asian Americans exhibit no trends in either the direction of their partisan preferences or in partisan intensity. But Cain et al.'s study is based on 1) a very small sample, 2) from only one state, and 3) only a one-time period. This chapter revisits the model Cain et al. used in their classic study, estimating it on more adequate samples in the contemporary period. The results I get are quite different. Whereas Cain et al. found foreign policy concerns tend to nudge Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese and Filipino immigrants to identify with the Republican Party. Cain et al. did not find Asian American immigrants and their subsequent generations exhibit the trends in partisan direction of their party preferences or in partisan strength as they live in the United States over time.

Based on the 2008 NAAS data, I find that the longer Asian American immigrants and their subsequent generations have been in the United States, the more likely they are to identify as

Democrats, and become stronger in partisan intensity. Hence the picture of Asian Americans differs dramatically from that of Cain et al. Due to data limitations from the original study, I am not claiming that their study was wrong—the reality in the 1980s California might have been different than it is today. But, even from a perspective 30 years later, the model Cain et al. used correctly identified many of the key variables and concepts for understanding Asian Americans, so that my use of this model provides the basis for a valuable sketch of basic features of Asian American’s partisan attitudes.

Scholars tend to overlook the predispositions that foreign immigrants carry over to the new land. These different findings between Cain et al.’s and those of mine suggest that the country of origin and time of arrival in America shaped Asian Americans’ partisan direction. In contrast, varying degrees of acculturation into the American society, the cohort, generational and aging effects that are employed in American public opinion do not effectively explain Asian immigrants’ partisan orientation. The perceptions of the U.S. foreign policy in the international arena, along with domestic political climate in immigrants’ native countries, can profoundly shape Asian immigrants’ partisan predilection at the time of arrival in the United States. Individuals’ perception of political events is confined in a certain information environment and by the influence of life-cycle (Converse, 1969). It is similar to the foundations for American national identity which have roots in European political culture and values held by colonists, whereas they created and molded their own definition for the new territories to cope with the political issues and economic circumstance (Masuoka & Junn, 2013).

The consensus with regard to opposition to movements against communist and right-wing regimes had been the cornerstone for the support of the Republican Party. It is precisely in this evolving context in which feelings of political antagonisms are widely shared among people in

South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Vietnam, India, the Philippines (Nakanishi, 2003) and to some extent, mainland China. Therefore, the earlier generations of Asian Americans who immigrated to the U.S. in the 1960s, 1970s, and the early 1980s tend to have a strong tendency to succumb to Republican's foreign policy posture. This is why Cain et al. (1991) find that Asian Americans were less likely than Latinos to identify as Democrats in their study. However, since the end of the Vietnam War, the Communist threats in Asia have been diminished, and younger generations lack the bitter memories to sustain the antipathy toward the communist regimes. In particular, over the last two decades after East Asian countries have ventured onto the path of rapid economic growth, the sorrowful reality of political and ideological rivalries with competing communist regimes have begun to unravel. The demographic trends among the new waves of Asian immigrants directly or indirectly reflect the change in the partisanship acquisition trajectory. Therefore, I posit that those Asian immigrants who moved to the U.S. in the late 1980s and 1990s tend to shift their primary concern away from anti-communism foreign policy. In this sense, the temporal political predispositions embedded in demographic trends between the immigrants in the 1960s and 1970s differ substantially from those of later generations. This new partisan predisposition trend in turn generates the initial impetus for Asian immigrants to favor the Democratic Party upon their arrival, as well as a continuous predilection for it as they live in the United States over time.

On the dimension of partisan strength, both the 1984 data and the 2008 NAAS tend to show a similar story, whereas the 2008 NAAS data give much more statistical power to illuminate the effects because they have larger sample size. Hence, we have clear evidence that the longer immigrants are exposed to American politics, the more likely they become strong partisans. Moreover, there has been a temporal consistency across the 1984 and 2008 data. It is clear that these two waves of Asian immigrants share similar patterns in the experiences of economic and

social discriminations; connections with native countries, socioeconomic advancement, and acculturation to American society. Nevertheless, these similarities fail to warrant Asian Americans the same partisan trajectory toward the Republican Party. I argue that the way in which Asian immigrants develop their partisanship is grounded in their experiential political learning as they are exposed to American politics overtime. Converse (1969) pointed out decades ago that “sheer time” only serves as the proxy for exposure an individual has had to the political environment. Cain et al. (1991) also argue that for foreign-born immigrants and their native-born children, experience is measured by the longevity of residence in the United States. Nevertheless, in my account experiential political learning differs from the minority-specific models because I perceive the immigrant-specific experiences as different from those of native-born minorities. In particular, the perceptions of racial hierarchy and social exclusion may differ significantly from those of social and economic discriminations. Social exclusion is a long-term and steady feeling that is derived from lived experiences of being a racial minority in general and being Asians in particular in the American society, in which the learning processes of racial exclusion are integrated with time spent with people of other ethnic groups. In contrast, the feelings of social or economic discrimination can be short-term and sporadic reactions to the particular situations one encounters. For many Asian immigrants, they still need to overcome economic, language barriers and acculturation to come to realize the sense of social exclusion, pan-ethnic identity, and linked-fate, and turn them into an affective element of partisan choice. Therefore, foreign and native-born Asian Americans tend to distinguish one another subtly based on their life experiences. As shown in Table 3.5 and 3.6, foreign-born Asian immigrants are more concerned with economic discrimination, while US-born generations are more sensitive to social discrimination.

Appendix 1

	2010	2000	1990	1980	1970	1960
South & Southeast Asia						
India	1,780,322	1,022,552	450,406	206,087	51,000	12,296
Philippines	1,177,588	1,369,070	912,674	501,440	184,842	104,843
Burma		32,588	19,835	11,236		
Cambodia		136,978	118,833	20,175		
Indonesia		72,552	48,387	29,920		
Laos		204,284	171,577	54,881		
Malaysia		49,459	33,834	10,473		
Singapore		20,762	12,889	5,598		
Thailand		169,801	106,919	54,803		
Vietnam	1,240,542	988,174	543,262	231,120		
Sri Lanka		25,263	14,022	5,576		
Pakistan		223,477	91,889	30,774	6,182	1,708
Nepal		11,715	2,262	844		
Bangladesh		95,294	21,414	4,989		
East Asia						
Ethnic Chinese Combined	2,166,526	1,525,370	926,177	444,812	172,132	99,735
Mainland China	1,683,000	988,857	529,837	286,120		
Taiwan	358,460	326,215	244,102	75,353		
Hong Kong	125,066	203,580	147,131	80,380		
Macau		6,718	5,107	2,959		
Japan		347,539	290,128	221,794	120,235	109,175
Korea	1,100,422	864,125	568,397	289,885	38,711	11,171

Figure 3. A 1: World region of birth of the foreign-born population: 1960 to 2010

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population, 1850 to 2000 (Gibson & Jung, 2006), and the American Community Survey, 2010.

Ethnic Chinese from 1980 to 2000 combined people from mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau.

Appendix 2

	Chinese	Filipino	Japanese	Korean	Vietnamese	South Asian	Total
LATP, 1992-97 (registered to vote in Southern California)							
Democrat/Republican/Other	30/33/37	40/38/22	N.A.	44/47/9	24/61/14	N.A.	N.A.
N	378	375	N.A.	134	250	N.A.	N.A.
LASUI, 1993-94 (registered to vot in Los Angeles Country)							
Democrat/Republican/Other	15/33/52	N.A.	43/24/33	11/35/54	13/8/79	42/35/23	22/31/47
N	125	N.A.	21	65	24	69	304
APALC, 1998 (voters in Souther California)							
Democrat/Republican/Other	38/38/23	48/35/16	57/36/7	57/30/9	25/41/24	N.A.	42/34/23
N	516	525	321	303	294	N.A.	2100
ALC, 1996 (voters in San Francisco Bay Area)							
Democrat/Republican/Other	59/28/14	66/31/3	94/6/0	85/12/13	43/36/21	N.A.	62/26/12
N	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	550
ALC, 1994 (voters in San Francisco Bay Area)							
Democrat/Republican/Other	61/23/16	60/22/18	68/16/16	71/5/24	42/48/10	N.A.	62/22/16
N	288	441	38	24	35	N.A.	893
AALDEF, 1996 (voter in New York City)							
Democrat/Republican/Other	48/20/32	N.A.	N.A.	64/19/18	N.A.	74/11/16	54/20/27
N	2056	N.A.	N.A.	457	N.A.	490	3264
AALDEF, 1994 (voter in New York City)							
Democrat/Republican/Other	40/24/35	37/37/27	N.A.	53/20/27	N.A.	56/21/22	43/24/33
N	881	38	N.A.	71	N.A.	109	1105
AALDEF, 1993 (voter in New York City)							
Democrat/Republican/Other	38/23/30	24/38/26	N.A.	30/36/24	N.A.	62/16/13	N.A.
N	1206	82	N.A.	114	N.A.	189	1630

Figure 3. A 2: Percentage distribution of political partisanship among Asian Americans
 Source: Lien, 2001. For details see table 5.6 on p. 189.

CHAPTER 4

A Dual-Concept Measure: Typologies of Party Conceptualization and Politicized Identity

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to theorize the ways in which immigrants conceptualize politics. The traditional measure of political conceptualization, as developed in *The American Voter* (Campbell et al., 1960) focuses exclusively on how citizens think about political parties and their leading candidates for office. I argue that for Asian American immigrants the problem of how to conceptualize American politics involves more than just the parties and the candidates; it involves as well their understanding of themselves as Asian Americans and the relationship of Asian Americans to the party system. That is, understanding how American political system works is closely related to understanding how their group fits into the political system and American ethno-racial categories. A central question for immigrants coming to understand politics is figuring out whether Asian American like themselves belong in the Democratic Party or in the Republican Party. This is what I call the problem of politicized identity – whether individuals are more comfortable fusing their personal ethnic identity with the leftwing or rightwing of American politics. Going with the left would involve perceptions of discrimination and the need to self-consciously link fate with other ethnic groups to get representation through the Democratic Party. Going with the right might involve perceptions that immigrants are hardworking business

people who are best represented through the Republican Party. The choice might be especially difficult for business people who might be attracted to the Democratic Party on racial political commonality arguments and to the Republican Party based on its pro-business policies.

In its examination of how Asian Americans conceptualize politics, this chapter aims to study the origins and initial socialization processes that influence immigrants' political understanding of the parties with their politicized identity formation. It looks into a series of motivations which incentivize political perception and activate Asian American immigrants' politicized identity, that is, strength of cognitive commitment to the group.

This chapter shows two important findings. First, it shows how immigrants understand their political identities—that is, how they think that they fit into the political system—this varies from narrow and concrete to broad and abstract in the same way that party conceptualization does. Second, I show that, while party conceptualization and politicized identity can be measured separately, they are in practice closely related. People who have a concrete and narrow understanding of the party system have a similarly narrow and concrete understanding of how they, as immigrants, relate to that system. To capture the close relationship between the two concepts, I conduct parallel analyses of the cognitive and emotional stimuli factors that explain party conceptualization and politicized identity.

The level of party conceptualization¹ used in my study is an adaptation of the one put forth by *The American Voter* to measure ideological awareness and sophistication among the electorate (Campbell et al., 1960). In this chapter, I first apply this measure to differentiate Asian American immigrants' political conception based on the ascending ideological awareness of the parties,

¹ Throughout the remainder of this chapter, the terms “ideological awareness,” “level of party conceptualization,” and “conceptual sophistication” will be used interchangeably.

candidates and policies from absence of issue attitudes to ideological evaluation. That is, the lowest level of party conceptualization has little issue content, while the highest level is ideology.

The second concept is levels of politicized identity, which refer to the dimensions of people's self-concept defined by perceptions of similarity with some people and difference from others in the context of political relevance² (Citrin & Sears, 2014; Junn & Masuoka, 2008). Despite subtle differences that exist among social psychology literature, similar to Citrin and Sears' (2014) notion of a politicized group consciousness paradigm, politicized identity is central to group categories, hierarchies, politicized in-group/out-group differentiation.³ The levels of politicized identity aim to capture the process in which one's identity is gradually politicized as one is exposed more to American society and politics over time. That is, individuals who are in the lowest level of politicized identity see no political relevance in their self-perceived social identities, while those in the highest level conceptualize the racial identity with the parties by asserting social or group identities in politics (Junn & Masuoka, 2008). As Citrin and Sears (2014) point out, the politicized group consciousness paradigm emphasizes ethnic identification and interethnic competition, which lead to strong group consciousness among Latino and some Asian Americans (p.36). Therefore, I argue that political conceptualization among Asian American immigrants encompasses the developmental level in both party conceptualization and politicized identity in which increased exposure to American politics leads individuals to gradually change from thinking

² Junn and Masuoka (2008) use the term politicized racial group consciousness, in which they define racial group consciousness as "to understand more generally collective racial group attachment—that is, the willingness of an individual not only to identify with her racial group but also to work with the collective group." The fundamental idea is similar to a *politicized group consciousness* paradigm elaborated in Citrin and Sears's (2014) research.

³ As Citrin and Sears (2014) point out, "there are different theories about politicized group identities, besides the nuanced differences, they generally agree that group categories, group hierarchies, politicized in-group identity, antagonism toward out-groups, and intergroup competition are central to human psychology" (p.33).

in narrow and concrete terms to broad and abstract ones—that is, increasingly *congruence* with their preferred parties.

The relationship between party conceptualization and politicized identity lies in a politicized group consciousness paradigm. Within this paradigm, individuals perceive racial and ethnic minority groups as relegated to subordinate positions in American ethno-racial categories (Citrin & Sears, 2014; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; B. Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), and the resulting discrimination in such categories leads them to identify more firmly with the party that is deemed of more support for them. Seen in this light, politicized identity structures the patterns and modes of their political motivations and socialization among immigrants in their processes of learning this rigid hierarchy. Therefore, the notion of political learning encompasses the interplay between the cognitive understanding of politics and politicized identity formation. It renders an apparatus for *channeling* feelings of political commonality and racial consciousness, and *delineates* the contours of one's willingness to adhere to partisanship.

The empirical inquiry undertaken in this chapter relies on mixed methods, with evidence drawn from in-depth qualitative interviews and surveys. The chapter and the next provide a series of individual-level analyses of the development of political motivations and explains the variations in Asian Americans' party conceptualization and politicized identity, as well as their relationships. The findings derived from this analysis show a nuanced trajectory of cherished political socialization processes to build the bedrock for Asian American partisanship. The typologies are designed to capture the progression in both political consciousness and social identity consciousness among new, older immigrants and US-born generations. The progression is important because it is both a cause and effect of the acquisition of partisanship and, more

generally, effective engagement with American politics. I develop the typologies from qualitative interviews and original surveys.

4.2 The theory of experiential political assimilation

4.2.1 Political cognition and party conceptualization

Very little research has examined how immigrant populations understand political system and form politicized identity, and the factors that influence immigrants' attitudes toward the parties. Campbell et al. (1960) was the earliest systematic work about American party conceptualization. "Levels of party conceptualization" in their work show that for native-born Americans there is sharp variation in the sophistication of their understanding of politics, from no issue content (narrow and concrete) to ideological (broad and abstract). Whereas, the Campbell et al. (1960) scheme paid no attention to politicized identity, because most of their subjects had been born in the United States and could therefore be assumed to automatically think of themselves as just Americans.

Politicized identity is more important than political cognition for immigrant populations to develop party conceptualization. Dynamics in post-migration experiences unveils various channels and stimuli by which to shape immigrants' attitudinal elements. To be sure, these experiences are, by no means, unique to immigrants; the change of social environment and/or individual social status generates new stimuli for attitudinal change. As Campbell et al. (1960) argued, "a marriage, a new job, or a change in neighborhood may place a person under strong social pressure to conform to political values different from his own. Close personal relationships are usually associated with common political identifications in American society, and discrepancies tend to create strain, especially if the conflicting political views are strongly held"

(p. 150). Converse (1969) also revealed that “[T]he patterns of slow accumulating stability within new social forms reflect temporal processes of habituation or ‘socialization’ on the part of many factors involved” (p.140). The changes tend to be more profound among immigrant populations in that their social, cultural, political and economic environments can be very different from their home countries. In particular, for minority immigrants from Latin and Asian countries, the multi-racial social environment and racial hierarchy of American society tend to generate different perceptions of the parties and politics, and different incentives to engage them. From a similar vein, Handlin (1951) and Gordon (1964) in their studies of European immigrant incorporation argued that immigrants need to overcome their pre-migration perceptions of the government, political efficacy, and inherited political values to adapt and internalize the norms of American democracy. When an individual develops solid political concepts, he or she is more likely to possess a partisan orientation and participate politically. Therefore, in these accounts political concept formation is an outcome of unidimensional political socialization. That is, all political stimuli are central to bolster the understanding of the political system and adopt the political values.

More importantly, immigrants, especially new immigrants, do not automatically think of themselves as just Americans; so for them, developing a sophisticated understanding of politics is more challenging. They must both understand how the political system works and also how they, as immigrants, fit into that system. During this socialization process, changes in partisan attitudes may be classified according to the type of stimulus that produces them. Segura (2013) thoughtfully points out that immigrant political socialization and incorporation processes should be treated as continuous in that there are multidimensional socializations involved. They include differential ratios of pre-migration, post-migration social and political experiences. To some extent, these differential ratios of attitudinal incorporation, demonstrate the degrees of political socialization,

and the ways in which immigrants prioritize their issue concerns, learn about the racial categories, and nurture the sense of belonging to the United States.

4.2.2 Emotional commitment and politicized identity

Scholars in race and ethnic politics and social psychology have well documented that the concept of racial identity can be a key determinant for political behavior among immigrant and minority groups (Alvarez & Garcia Bedolla, 2003; M. A. Barreto & Segura, 2014; M. C. Dawson, 2001; Garcia Bedolla, 2005; Junn & Masuoka, 2008; Parker & Barreto, 2013). Yet, existing studies in race and ethnic politics has not paid serious attention to party conceptualization among immigrant populations. Social psychologists point out that individuals are naturally predisposed to define themselves in terms of group identity, and group members should consciously engage in a political struggle for a more inclusive political representation (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990; B. Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Nonetheless, how immigrants think about politics and how they understand the parties, policies and candidates remain unexamined. Party conceptualization and politicized identity are two distinct concepts, and the processes of conceptualizing them are also based on discrete socializations. For non-white immigrants and minorities, racial identity is an unescapable component of their social identity (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner & Reynolds, 2003). The sense of racialized group paradigm as argued by Citrin and Sears (2014) can be deeply instilled in inter-group relations. Hence, racial consciousness becomes part of the political consciousness that is instilled in the development of party conceptualization. As B. Simon and Klandermans (2001) point out, “politicization of collective identity and the underlying power struggle unfold as a sequence of politicizing events that gradually transform the group's relationship to its social environment.”

However, scholars tend to agree that there is substantial variation in racial consciousness among the immigrant populations (Junn, 2006a; Segura, 2013). These disparities are palpable among new and older immigrants. As Hajnal and Lee (2011) argue, identity ambivalence accounts for Asian and Latino immigrants' nonpartisanship. Yet, it is hard to deny the fact that the longer immigrants live in the United States, the more likely they are to be deeply assimilated into the racial categories, to adopt stronger racial identity, and to nurture stronger attachment to the party system. Junn and Masuoka (2008) find that racial identities have political relevance that are driven by context and are not as explicit and straightforward as other indicators. These studies, taken together, focuses more on the strength of emotional commitment to the group. Therefore, how the perception of racial identity is formed and how such perception is integrated into the political consideration has been an empirical puzzle. The extent to which information shapes immigrants' political conception, and how politicized identity shapes party conceptualization remained unexamined in the field of race and ethnic politics. In this chapter and the next, in terms of racial composition among Asian American immigrants integrate party conceptualization and politicized identity over time as they come to align their social identity with political concepts. Within these processes individuals realize that their life chances are interrelated with their social identity as a racial minority in the United States.

Politicized identity is grounded in experiences, which is correlated positively and roughly with the length of residence in the United States (S. K. Ramakrishnan, 2005; J. Wong et al., 2011). Despite the fact that the capacity to evaluate political issues is based on the awareness and basic knowledge of politics, social identities serve as a heuristic shortcut that guides their evaluations of politically relevant issues. Indeed, moving recently to the United States, new immigrants tend to experience cultural shock, economic hardship, language barriers, and so on. Realizing their

vulnerable situation, establishing financial security is their top priority; in contrast, political information is not conveniently accessible to them. Also, lacking English proficiency, new arrivals tend to hold low self-esteem in terms of political efficacy (J. Wong et al., 2011). Thus, the way they learn about social, political issues or the parties is the tendency to rely on passive news consumption or incidental exposure to political information on social media. Yet, to some extent, it is based on racial identities to help interpret and digest this information. J. S. Wong (2006) argues that at individual-level, early waves of Asian and Latino immigrants were similar to European immigrants in that socioeconomic attainment and acculturation were the threshold for new arrivals to engage in political socialization and incorporation. Whereas what set the early waves of Asian and Latino immigrants apart from European immigrants was that mainstream political institutions, such as political machines and local political organizations, had no incentives to mobilize and incorporate the formers toward politics. Moreover, political assimilation between whites and nonwhites also plays a critical role. Racial backgrounds create a major barrier to entry into American mainstream for first generation immigrants. The second generation of European immigrants had individual options to embrace American culture and leave the immigrant culture behind (Portes & Zhou, 1993), whereas for nonwhite US-born generations, such a barrier still has an enduring effect (S. K. Ramakrishnan, 2005). This is to say, racial consciousness is a dimension of socialization that differs from nonwhite immigrants and their subsequent generations.

4.3 A dual-concept measure & typologies

In this section, I want to thoroughly explain my typologies in the measures of party conceptualization and politicized identity. In essence, the level of party conceptualization is a categorization scheme, which is positively correlated with lived experiences. The scheme corresponds to distinct successive stages which are characterized by qualitative differences in both

political cognition and politicized identity. These measures evaluate two different concepts. The measure of the party conceptualization is to evaluate the overall breadth of understanding of American politics. In contrast, the measure of politicized identity is to evaluate the degree to which Asian American immigrants develop the self-perceived social identity that is relevant to the parties. That is, the more exposure to American politics, the stronger cohesion between social or racial identity and the parties. I hypothesize that the relationship between party conceptualization and politicized identity is positively correlated as illustrated in Figure 4.1.

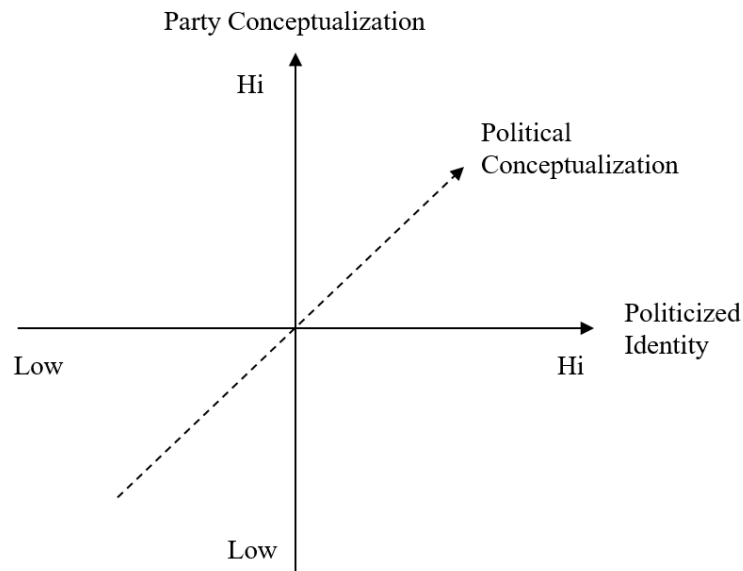


Figure 4. 1: Diagram of dual-concept measure

Party conceptualization	Politicized identity⁴
None issue content	Foreigners in America
Nature of the times	Recognition of groups
Group benefits	Issue-based group politics
Ideology	Politicized identity

Table 4. 1: Different levels of party conceptualization and politicized identity

For both of these measures, I distinguish and elaborate on four levels of the party conceptualization and politicization process from the lowest to highest as indicated in Table 4.1. The definitions of each level will be specified in the qualitative interview section. I suggest that politicized identity forms through a sequence of antecedent processes. I hypothesize that these levels are positively correlated.

4.4 Data and method

The data of this chapter are drawn from in-depth qualitative interviews and surveys (N=221). Respondents were asked about survey questions, but they were also given opportunities to express their open-ended opinions on those questions. The interviewers were instructed to probe extensively for further content on each of these open-ended questions. For example, when we asked respondents about their party identification, if they said “don’t know,” the interviewers would continue to ask them why they think they don’t know. Both of which were conducted, in part, by UCLA undergraduate students who enrolled in the courses of PS 191F Immigrant Political Incorporation among Latino and Asian Americans in Spring 2019, and PS 186 Race and Ethnic Politics in the U.S. in Summer 2019. These in-depth interviews and surveys were part of students’

⁴ These four levels of politicized identity are very similar to what Citrin and Sears’ (2014) politicized forms of ethnic group identification. The label that one applies to oneself, a sense of belonging to the group, positive and negative attitudes toward it, and participation or involvement in the group (p. 33).

research projects, whereas I (the instructor of these courses) provided students the interview protocol (see Table A4.1), and detailed instruction to conduct these interviews. Each student was required to conduct 3-5 semi-structured⁵ interviews with immigrant interviewees of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. The respondents were friends, relatives or strangers to the students. Interviewers were required to record the whole interview, should the respondents agree, and transcribe the full content of the interviews. If the interviews were conducted in foreign languages, they were required to be translated into English.⁶

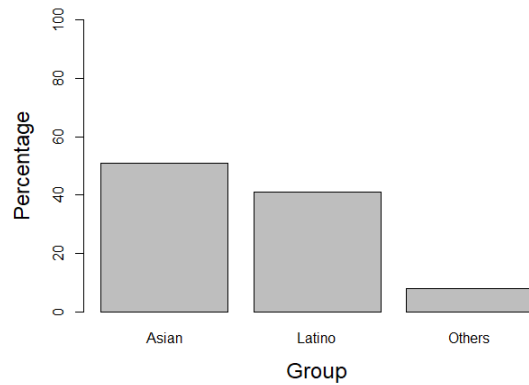


Figure 4. 2: Respondents' racial backgrounds

	Asian Americans	Hispanic	Total Sample
Age (average)	31	33	32
% Female	52	62	54
% Born in U.S.	33	33	34
If foreign born: Years in U.S.	17	19	18
% U.S citizen among foreign born	52	43	47
N of cases	108	89	221

Table 4. 2: Demographic characteristics

⁵ Semi-structured interview means that other than following the interview protocol, students can ask other questions that are related to their research projects.

⁶ Due to the large volume of information, it is impossible to attach recordings and transcriptions in the appendix, but they are available upon request.

In terms of racial composition, the majority of respondents are Asian and Latino Americans. As Table 4.2 shows, Asians account for 51 percent, and Latinos account for 41 percent, and people of other racial backgrounds account for 8 percent. The survey also asked respondents' national origins. Table 4.2 shows that the average ages across all groups are about 32, female respondents account for slightly more than 50 percent. About 33 percent of all respondents were born in the U.S. and the average length of residence in the U.S. among the foreign born is 18 years. About 47 percent of immigrant respondents have been naturalized as US citizens. In addition, Figure 4.3 shows the top 10 national origins of respondents. Among them, Mexico and China together account for the majority of national origins.

Although my theorizing in this dissertation has focused on Asian Americans, my arguments for the most part apply to Hispanic immigrants as well. Conceptualizations of politics and identity by members of the two groups were also very similar, as will be shown at the end of the chapter. But because the dissertation's focus is on Asian Americans, most of my discussion will continue to focus on this group.

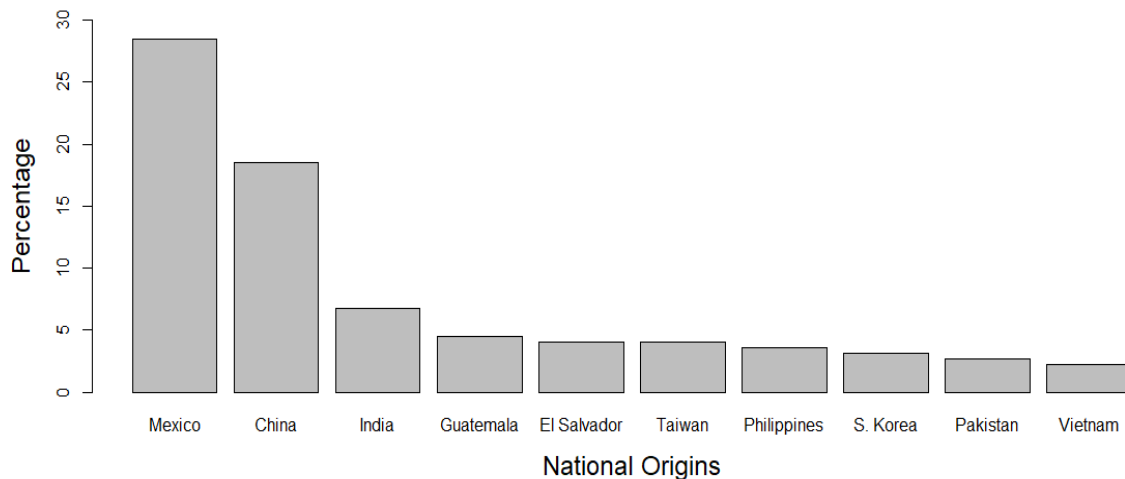


Figure 4. 3: Top 10 national origins

	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Political Knowledge	221	7.44	2.77	0	10
Political Interest	221	0.14	0.34	0	1
Socialization	220	2.44	1.29	1	6
Attention to Political News	220	2.5	0.87	1	4
Sense of Belonging	220	6.91	2.93	0	10
American Identity	219	6.81	3.44	0	10
Party Identification	218	2.83	1.48	1	7
Partisan Strength	218	1.51	1.12	0	3
Election Outcome Concern	207	0.68	0.31	0	1
Female	221	0.54	0.49	0	1

Table 4. 3: Descriptive statistics of major variables

Table 4.3 displays the descriptive statistics of the major variables. The variable of political knowledge is a construct of 10 basic political knowledge items, e.g. what party Donald Trump belongs to, and which party favors affordable healthcare. As we can see there is large variation in political knowledge and interest. The variable “socialization” asks respondents how often they discuss politics with friends, colleagues and family members. Most people reported that they usually do not talk about politics on a regular basis. Also, most of the respondents reported that they don’t pay much attention to American political news. The variables, the sense of belonging and American identity, are on a 10-point scale in which 10 indicates the highest degree. The values of sense of belonging and self-report American identity tend to be higher but there is still a large variation. Party identification is a 7-point scale with strong Democrat in the lowest value and strong Republican in the highest value. Most respondents reported to be in between moderate and weak Democrats. Partisan strength is a 4-point scale, and 3 indicates strong partisan. Most respondents reported that they are concerned about next election outcomes. Among all respondents, 54 percent of them are female.

Both the in-depth interviews and surveys investigate immigrants’ experiences as they are exposed to American society broadly. The survey relies heavily on qualitative interviews because

they afford more opportunity to respond to flesh out the opinions, because new arrivals might have difficulty in interpreting the survey questions; as a result, they may shy away from responding to the survey questionnaire or simply answer “don’t know.” Table 4.3 below shows the questions that were used in the measurement of party conceptualization and politicized identity.

4.5 Development of party conceptualization & politicized identity

Party conceptualization Questions
Do you know the differences between the Democratic and Republican Party?
What do you like about the Democratic Party?
What do you dislike about the Democratic Party?
What do you like about the Republican Party?
What do you dislike about the Republican Party?
How do you like Donald Trump?
How do you like Barack Obama?
How do you like Hillary Clinton?
Politicized Identity Questions
How did you learn the differences between the Democratic and Republican Party?
How much do you feel you belong to this country and how did you develop this feeling?
How much do you feel that you have equal opportunities in this country as a minority? Any personal experiences?
How much do you think your ethnic group shares political interests with blacks and Latinos? How did you learn that?
How much do you think your ethnic group shares political interest with whites? How did you learn about it?
How much do you think your ethnic group shares political interest with Asians? How did you learn about it?
How did Obama’s election as the president make you feel as being an immigrant?
How do you feel when Donald Trump criticized undocumented immigrants?

Table 4. 4: Open-ended interview protocol⁷

The coding of the party conceptualization and politicized identity measures is based on the open-ended answers from these questions. On the basis of a holistic reading of these answers, I classify each respondent as being in levels 1, 2, 3, or 4 on party conceptualization, and separately as being in levels 1, 2, 3, or 4 on politicized identity. The coding was done by three UCLA undergraduate student coders. The average inter-coder reliabilities ⁸ between party

⁷ See the interview consent form in Appendix 1.

⁸ The reliabilities for party conceptualization coding are .78, .81 and .81. reliabilities for politicized identity coding are .75, .82 and .74. Some respondents might not directly answer the questions, for example, some native-born respondents didn’t want to talk about their personal racial discrimination experiences, but they talked about their immigrant parents’ experiences extensively. From these kinds of interviews, we feel a strong sense of connection between the social identity as a minority group and the parties.

conceptualization coding is .80, and the average reliability of the politicized identity is .77. These reliabilities indicate a substantial agreement between coders. See Appendix 2 for the detailed coding rule for these measures. Since each concept was coded by 3 coders, the measures party conceptualization and politicized identity are the means of these three measures. The distributions of the raw values are 1, 1.33, 1.67, 2, 2.33, 2.67, 3, 3.33, 3.67, 4. Based on these values, I reconstruct a 4-point scale for summary statistics and ordered logistic regression analysis.

4.6 Levels of party conceptualization

In this section, I will show that respondents fall into 1-4 categories on party conceptualization. That is, the development of party conceptualization among Asian Americans range from absence of issue content to ideological sophistication. The categories were designed to reflect the hierarchical distinctions in conceptual sophistication; hence, each of these levels come with distinct lived experiences and political motivations.

4.6.1 Level 1: Absence of issue content

The level of no issue content refers to the stage in which individuals lack cognitive understanding of politics and feel overwhelmed by various political information. Political conception involves processing and storing information, and organizing them in useful ways (Newcomb et al., 1965). Whereas people who are at this conceptual level have impoverished political understanding and are unable even to discriminate between the Democratic and Republican Party, or the meaning of liberal and conservative.

Individuals in the category of no issue content can be further partitioned into two types: Indifferent to politics, and unable to understand politics. First, indifferent to politics accounts for many Asian Americans' nonpartisanship. People in this category have little cognitive understanding about the parties or express little interest in politics. Their priority is pre-occupied by financial and job security. This group of immigrants are those who have little political information about and interest in the parties. Lacking interest in politics and knowledge, many immigrants have no idea how to organize the political information they are randomly exposed to. Therefore, their political image of the candidates they saw on television or the Internet were of someone they recognize, but they do not have the political knowledge and interest to connect this information as a stimulus for their political reasoning and motivation. Therefore, the parties are poorly discerned, and the comments of the politicians are based on personal characteristics and popularity.

This group of Asian immigrants is difficult to sample by most survey research. Because of the aforementioned reasons, they work long hours, they do not speak English, and most importantly, they still know little about American politics. Even if we do successfully sample them, their responses are highly unstable in the sense that their survey answers can hardly be driven by consistent opinions. Indeed, this group of people makes up the vast majority of uneducated recent immigrants. The lack of consistent rationale in their attitudes toward social issues and politics, their preferences on many issues are contingent upon many random factors, which demonstrate that there are no issue implications or concerns in the perceptions of the parties. For example, a male respondent in his 40s, who lives in Santa Monica, CA conveys:

MODERATOR: Do you know the major differences between the Democratic and Republican Party?

MALE: *I have lived in California for 7 years, I don't know the differences between Democratic and Republican Party at all, not a bit. I don't have interest in politics, particularly American politics because I don't know English; when I turned on the television, I had no idea what they were talking about.*

MODERATOR: *Did you watch ethnic news channels to learn about American politics?*

MALE: *Occasionally, but rarely pay attention to it.*

Another female discussant was in her 30s, who has been in the United States for 8 years. In the past 8 years, her cognitive understanding of politics has changed little, simply because there has been no motivation for her to learn the parties.

MODERATOR: *Do you know the major differences between the Democratic and Republican Party?*

FEMALE: *I don't know any of them to be honest. I don't know what is this and what is that. I've been here for 8 years, and 6 years I was a student. I didn't even have a TV or looked at the news or anything. So I'm far away from all that to be honest.*

Another type of individuals in the category of no issue content are those who are unable to understand politics or are uncertain about political information they are exposed to due to the lack of English language ability. Quite often, there are factual inaccuracies looming large in immigrants' political perceptions that cannot be consistently or systematically categorized as preferences. The English language barrier is a critical obstacle for new immigrants to understand political information and engage with political activities, even though they have a desire to express what they want from the local government. This group of people tend not to have English proficiency to be interviewed or surveyed, or they cannot fully comprehend survey questions. In particular, when asking about the political ideology and partisanship, people in this category usually are unable to interpret these terms and their underlying policy implications. As a result, they tend to shy away from this kind of question by simply answering "don't know." Many new

immigrants are in this category. For limited English proficient new immigrants, language access is an integral part of their political socialization.

Mr. Zhang, a senior resident in west Los Angeles, and his wife are both permanent residents of the U.S. who moved to the United States from Guangzhou, China to live with their only daughter. Mr. Zhang is well educated, and has a strong interest in politics, and he regularly reads Chinese-language newspapers on the Internet or smartphone. Although Mr. Zhang's concerns are mostly about Chinese politics, he also has an interest in Sino-American relations. This general political interest is a cornerstone for him to learn about American politics, whereas the major barrier is English. Despite the fact that he has heard the Chinese names of the Republican and Democratic Party on the mass media a lot, he does not know anything about American politics, thus he cannot discern them. Without the knowledge of the parties and their policies, his evaluations of the parties are completely based on the existing values that he holds.

MALE: I heard the names of these parties all the time on television and newspapers, but I just cannot tell which one is which one.

A male discussant in his 30s who recently immigrated to Monterey Park, CA with his wife expressed his feeling of confusion when commenting about politics. Their confusion lies in their unfamiliarity with American culture, the U.S. political system, and basic political knowledge.

MODERATOR: Do you know the major differences between the Democratic and Republican Party?

MALE: I don't know anything about politics. We are Chinese, none of the politics is our business. Honestly, many things still seem very new and strange to us.

In short, the above interviews show typical experiences of how new immigrants perceive politics. Lack of lived experiences in American society, new immigrants tend to have little frames of reference which help them interpret the political events. Those who are in the category of none

issue content tend to have a hard time discerning the parties, policies and candidates. Low self-esteem and a low sense of political efficacy are attributed to the language barrier, economic anxieties and uncertain career future. Together these factors seem to prevent many new immigrants from stimulating their interest in American politics. As a consequence, despite the fact that they are chronically exposed to political discourse, they are unable to turn political information to which they are exposed into coherent and consistent political consideration relevant for political evaluations. There are no consistent conceptual tools to motivate and help them navigate the way through the chaos of political information. Therefore, their nonpolitical responses demonstrate no issue content or haphazard issue attitudes.

4.6.2 Level 2: Nature of times

Individuals in the second level of party conceptualization do not have solid perceptions of group interest, and do not have any sense of a structure of ideological concepts. However, what distinguishes the individuals in this category from those of no issue content is the sense of vague reference to the parties in their responses. This category encompasses nebulous mood and isolated specific perception, as such, people in this category do not have consistent policy preferences or partisan attitudes, and the issue content in this category tends to be sparse with each respondent, and are subject to big variations. However, different from people in the category of no issue content, immigrants in this category have been in the United States for some years and have accumulated some lived experiences; they exhibit the inception of the cognitive understanding of the parties. Yet, the prevalent type of respondents in this category demonstrate that their political reasoning varies more or less between absence of issue content and group interest but are still quite remote from the concept of ideology. The typical sample of response in this category is a man who is in his 30s and lives in Los Angeles, he expressed his views on the parties.

MODERATOR: *Do you know the major differences between the Democratic Party and Republican Party?*

MALE: *I rarely pay attention to politics, but from time to time, I heard my colleagues talk about Hilary Clinton in the last election. They told me if Trump won, he would try to remove Obamacare. Therefore, I learned that not only Hilary Clinton but also Obama try to help many uninsured people. I believe that is a good thing. Since then, I started to pay attention to politics. But since I don't know much English, my knowledge about the parties is very limited.*

Although some of these individuals might exhibit a sense of party-oriented perceptions, the conscious connections between the parties, candidates and policies remain weak. Usually, people in this category are unable to suggest how the parties differ in their policy stances. Another respondent, a male from Orange County, CA, has been in the U.S. for 18 years. He told us how he perceived the parties. His evaluation is more about the personal characteristics of the president. Whereas his evaluations of the parties or candidates are still remote from ideology or group consciousness.

MODERATOR: *Is there anything you like about Donald Trump?*

MALE: *No, I don't like anything about him because he's immature, unprofessional, acts like a 5-year-old, has horrible policies in terms of social issues, he doesn't think before he speaks and that's not what the president should do--you need to be calculated and strategic and calm and he is none of those things. I guess I would say the one thing I like about him in regards to the fact that I don't like his policies is that he is doing exactly what he said he would do during his election and I find that a lot of presidents tend to lie and not go through with what they say they will do and Trump has been very consistent in what he said he would do and what he is doing, even though I don't agree with what he is doing or what he said he was going to do I appreciate that he is honest and staying loyal to his voters, if that makes sense.*

MODERATOR: *Is there anything you like about Barack Obama?*

MALE: *Uhm yeah, he was a pretty chill dude. I was like 8 years old when he was elected so I can't tell you a lot of specific policy things, but he tried really hard with the ACA which was super good for healthcare. And he just kind of like kept his cool and acted as I believe a President should act. Like regardless of what his policies were, his figure as the President did that job well and I think that's one of the most important things you can do in office because realistically you don't have like a ton of influence over policy but like, the way you come off to the world is how we're going to be treated by other countries so I think he just did that well. He didn't make U.S. look like, stupid.*

MODERATOR: *Is there anything you like about the Republican Party?*

MALE: *I think there is just a sense of judgment and it's just too much of an extreme so it doesn't necessarily follow religious ideals either so there's good and bad in it when it comes to privacy and stuff like that, personal matters.*

MODERATOR: *Is there anything you dislike about Donald Trump?*

MALE: *He's very racist, very sexist, just not very politically correct, he doesn't have much political experience so while he's a great businessman I just think representing my country is just a completely different job and I just don't think he's fit for that role.*

MODERATOR: *Is there anything you dislike about Barack Obama?*

MALE: *I really like him just as a person and I like his charismatic manner. He really represented himself to American as a guy who you can just go and have a beer with and have that connection with, whereas Donald Trump is really put on this platform as like a Godly, above person but I think Barack was just very liked by the people and did his best in trying to keep that relationship with his country as someone that they can count on.*

In this category, the association between the politics, the parties and policies remain quite simple and weak. The connections between the party and candidate are based on the nature of the times. That is, when people are exposed a lot to mass media, they pick up some of the image of the politicians. Simply put, people in this category still have weak cognitive mechanisms to understand abstractions that allow them to uphold coherent and consistent views of remote events. As a result, they are easily confused by the interplay between the amount of conflicting information, personal experiences, and the perceptions of group interests.

4.6.3 Level 3: Group benefits

Evaluation of the political objects is in terms of their response to interest of visible groupings in the population. This category refers to a cognitive state individuals are aware of the major differences between the parties, their political interests and their association with the parties. Hence, respondents in this category evaluate the parties or candidates with references to both group benefits and issues. Quite often, the emergence of political cognition in this stage comes with the sense of group consciousness—social classes, racial and ethnic groups, etc. Together they form

the underlying organized motivations for political awareness. One of characteristics of responses in this stage is that group interest is increasingly integrated into the evaluation of the parties and the candidates. At this level, respondents operate with a fairly clear sense of the group interest, but the liberal-conservative continuum is still on the fringe. A prominent type of response in this category involved racial consciousness in the cognitive understanding of the parties. A female discussant in her 50s from west Los Angeles conveyed that she sometimes disagrees with the Democratic Party on social issues, but racial consciousness is particularly strong and ambiguous.

MODERATOR: *Is there anything you like about the Democratic Party?*

FEMALE: *Yes, I do like how accepting it is of so many different races and it really represents the minorities throughout America giving us a platform to be able to speak and not be shunned to the side. Also just policy wise I feel like it is just a lot more accepting and forgiving versus the Republican Party is very strict in punishment like the death penalty. I don't support anything like that.*

MODERATOR: *Is there anything you dislike about the Democratic Party?*

FEMALE: *I'd say that there are a few things I believe religiously that don't necessarily align with the Democrats. For example, like with abortion I know there are Democrats who believe it should be acceptable under any situation and I don't necessarily agree with that like I think there should be limitations with it not just because an accident happened and then I'm trying to think of what else. I think that in a way it is beneficial to help people who are in need but I think there has to be good restrictions to it because people can take advantage of the aid that they are getting from the government and manipulate it too much and not work. So I think there has to be a balance between the Democratic and Republican ideals when it comes to the economy.*

MODERATOR: *Is there anything you like about the Republican Party?*

FEMALE: *Nothing that I can say off the top of my head.*

MODERATOR: *Is there anything you dislike about the Republican Party?*

FEMALE: *I hate how sometimes it feels like many of their beliefs are based on their religion, I just feel like that clouds a lot of the bills that they come up with. So there is no separation of the church and the state it feels like.*

MODERATOR: *Is there anything you dislike about Donald Trump?*

FEMALE: *I dislike how when you really think about the way he acts and the way he talks he isn't very professional and because he has a lot of money, he just thinks that he can get away with anything he wants.*

MODERATOR: *Is there anything you like about Barack Obama?*

FEMALE: *I like how he was very inspirational to people of color. And I liked how he kind of instilled hope into the American population. There was a lot of backlash by like republicans, but I think he just kept trying to work with all of the other politicians and he remained composed and collected. I think that the fact that he was a person of color himself and was able to achieve such a high position in American politics showed that everything is possible, and America was moving towards inclusivity.*

MODERATOR: *Is there anything you dislike about Barack Obama?*

MALE: *I don't really like that everyone has really emplaced is Barack Obama deported ten times the amount, or no he deported the amount of immigrants that the ten presidents before him did combined, just in his two terms. So he deported an insane amount of immigrants and it was kind of covered up because he has this charismatic cool personality so people didn't really highlight it so I don't appreciate that because although it's a big issue with Trump and his uhm like building the wall thing I just think people should also acknowledge that Obama did a lot of damage in deporting and separating certain people.*

In short, respondents in this category demonstrate the clear group consciousness in forming their preferences on many political issues. Even though it is still not based on ideology to differentiate the issue positions and preferences, its policy preferences are rooted in the ways in which people perceive the obvious associations between political issues and group interests. Different from individuals in the preceding level, political attitudes in this level demonstrate a consistency and coherence in political preference. Indeed, as immigrants live in the United States longer, with an increase in exposure to politics, their attitudes are becoming increasingly stable.

4.6.4 Level 4: Ideology

People in this category demonstrate the highest level of party conceptualization. Individuals' comments of the parties imply the kinds of conception of politics assumed by ideological interpretations of political behavior and political change (Campbell et al., 1960). Sophistication of

party conceptualization is manifested in ideological discrimination between various political issues, cognitive elaboration, and high partisan attachment. One way to define subjects in this level is through partisan loyalty, political knowledge and ideology. A functioning democracy requires citizens to be able to know and express their individual interests and do so in the context of the broader public interest (Carpini & Keeter, 1996). Respondents in this category demonstrate one explicit or implicit ideological mention and make some reference to issues and group benefits. Hence, I expect that those who have been in the U.S. for a long period of time and are US born will be the majority in this group. People in this group are well aware of general American politics and policies, and tend to have consistent opinions on many issues that are in agreement with their party identifications. A male interviewee from Los Angeles conveys his high level of party conceptualization.

MODERATOR: *Do you know the major differences between the Democratic and Republican Party?*

MALE: *I would say a lot, because I feel like overall, they're fighting the same issues, but as it's stated, or at least from the majority who have been ones that have been more vocal about it, Republicans tend to be more conservative, tend to view things more in a certain light whereas Democrats tend to be much more liberal and much more open to creating this idea of equality to a certain extent.*

MODERATOR: *Is there anything you like about the Republican Party?*

MALE: *No*

MODERATOR: *Is there anything you dislike about the Republican Party?*

MALE: *The conservative aspects that they try push towards society and being very conservative about it. Like same sex marriage, abortion and everything, it feels like taking away the autonomy or the free right of someone to have the right to choose what they want to do with their life.*

Another male discussant conveys his opinions on the parties, in which his comments not only demonstrate this ideological differentiation between the parties, but also his racial consciousness along with the parties.

MODERATOR: *Do you know the major differences between the Democratic and Republican Party?*

MALE: *The way that they address issues--well what their viewpoints on certain issues are. So democrats being more liberal and republicans being more conservative.*

MODERATOR: *Is there anything you like about Donald Trump?*

MALE: *No--period.*

MODERATOR: *Is there anything you dislike about Donald Trump?*

MALE: *Everything. The way he talks, the language he uses to address certain issues-- I guess thinking about him during his first campaign "grabbing her by the pussy", excuse me? Trying to push a certain agenda, like recently with Pride month and everything, he put out a tweet that was like, really? You held the LGBT flag upside down too. Like you don't, you're not aware of what you're doing but you can do it, so you can garner some kind of support from communities.*

MODERATOR: *Is there anything you like about Barack Obama?*

MALE: *He's descent. Yeah, he's good. At least from the standpoint of just being an American, yeah he's good and I like that whole ideology of like, a person of color can hold that position of power.*

MODERATOR: *Is there anything you dislike about Barack Obama?*

MALE: *I believe he was the person that had the highest number of deportations in presidency. So I think that was something else that people don't really address.*

MODERATOR: *How do you like the Democratic Party?*

MALE: *I like their liberal attitudes toward new things, such as affordable health care, I think many people, particularly the working class need.*

MODERATOR: *Is there anything you like about the Republican party?*

MALE: *I think I may agree with some of their economic stuff, but like also capitalism is bad but like, I don't know our whole world is based on capitalism, so moral of the story: I like it because it works, but it's also like super bad. So mixed feelings, I don't know if I would consider it a like. The Republican party is a far more capitalistic party in our system because they are much more on like lassie fair, free regulation of the market and that's what capitalism is. So um... yeah. I don't know why they tend to like this, but it seems to go with the rest of their ideologies. Everybody is on their own kind of thing and don't want the government to get in their business unless it's about reproductive rights, then yeah.*

MODERATOR: *Is there anything you dislike about the Democratic Party?*

MALE: *um... this may just be more about parties in general, but I think that they could be a little more progressive. Just because in America the Democratic party isn't that liberal compared to other countries. In other countries, a party that would be equivalent to the Democrats would be a lot more radical I guess, but I feel like they're still, although they're supposed to be like the more*

progressive party they tend to get stuck in like old tradition and stuff and it's still primarily dominated by old white men.

By and large, in discussing the importance of political issues, the importance of ideology in producing political subjectivity is obvious among those respondents in this category. In general, post-migration experiences consist of different stages of political socialization. These stages exhibit an ordering dimension to which the perception of political issues is differentiated, and the degree of political consciousness are clearly distinguished. From the low political conceptions, the lack of an organization dimension, the new arrivals usually have little or vague party conceptions, which explains why their preferences on the parties, the candidates or policies are capricious. As immigrants live in the United States longer and are exposed more to American politics, growth of party conceptions leads to greater consistency in preference. Taken together, the qualitative interviews illustrate the multifaceted experiences among Asian immigrants: a trajectory from absence of issue content, nature of the times, group benefits and ideology.

4.7 Levels of politicized identity

In this section, I will show that politicized identity is developed not so much by reasonably objective factors as economic status, or political knowledge, but rather by more subjective factors: the evaluation of one's social identity, ideological proclivities, and level of political and racial consciousness. The process of politicized identity formation is demonstrated from a no racial or group consciousness embedded in the ways in which individuals view the parties to high politicized social identity in which individuals self-perceived political interests are intertwined with the social identity.

4.7.1 Level 1: Foreigner in America

Foreigner in America refers to the level in which individuals lack of the social or racial identity consciousness that is attached to the United States. This is prevalent among newly arrived immigrants, who tend to see themselves as foreigners in a mass of *undifferentiated* Americans. The lack of any forms of social identity explains their indifference to American politics, their self-concept social identity tends to be confined to national origin identity, which has no political relevance. One of the female discussants at UCLA campus articulated her and her friends' experiences in the last three years.

FEMALE: We normally don't pay attention to American news, because on the one hand we don't know what they are talking about; on the other hand, it has nothing to do with our lives. We learn American politics through domestic (Chinese) news outlets, or from entertainment sources, such as the scandals of the president.

A female discussant who lives in Culver City, CA came from mainland China and had been in the United States for 7 years. She said during those past 7 years she and her husband worked 6 days a week in a nearby restaurant. They do not have time and interest to know American politics and social issues other than making money. On the social and emotional attachment side, they still see themselves as foreigners or outsiders of American society. This is, in part, because there are uncertainties lingering around their future. The female discussant conveys her anxieties and uncertainties:

FEMALE: We still have no idea how long we will stay in the United States. If the economy is bad, we might move back to China, who knows. We have some friends who have moved back to China, and they did much better there than they did here. It is a lot easier to make money in China nowadays. But more of our friends chose to stay in here simply for the sake of the children. Growing up in the United States is much better than in China, because they have more opportunities here. Unlike us, we don't know English, we don't have any opportunities.

Other than language and cultural barriers, another prevalent characteristic for immigrants in this category is that they tend not to have a conception of racial identity other than national origin identity. This is, in large part, because they have not been socialized into a racialized spectrum of social hierarchy, thus they do not have a solid sense of self-perceived racial identity that is associated with the parties. A male discussant in his 30s, who have been in the U.S. for two years conveys:

MALE: People in the United States have too many racial backgrounds, and are too complicated. Other than white and black people, I don't know how to tell the differences between Mexican, Middle Eastern people, and others. To me they look basically the same.

In short, those who are at the level of foreigners in America tend to represent the majority of new immigrants. Similar to the level of party conceptualization, lack of lived experiences in American society, new immigrants in this stage do not have the motivations that stimulate their interest in politics. Being self-perceived as a stranger in a foreign country, it is difficult for them to conceptualize their relevant experiences with social identity. That is, without the frames of ethno-racial categorical references, new immigrants have little motivation to be aware of their identities and their association with politics.

4.7.2 Level 2: Recognition of groups

The transition from being self-perceived as an outsider to being accepted as a neighbor spurs the sense of belonging. Immigrants' experiences involve attitudinal incorporations that are led by social identity formation, such as pane-ethnic identity. Simple group identification describes individual' understanding that they are characterized as part of a certain group.

As immigrants live in the U.S. longer, they start to face a set of complicated concerns, such as public safety, racial composition, public transportation, affordability of housing, and quality of

public school. The exposure to American society, respondents begin to demonstrate vague consciousness of the group recognition in policies, neighborhoods, economic and political interests. As a result, the dynamic interplay between issue concerns, neighborhood contexts, intergroup relationship, as well as socioeconomic status shape many individuals' politicized identity to American society. Yet, despite the emerging recognition that groups go hand-in-hand with racial consciousness, it is not to the level that shapes their views on the parties and candidates. A woman in her 50s in San Francisco, CA commented how she changed her perception as being an outsider to a part of the community in her neighborhood in the Bayview District—a predominantly African American neighborhood, which is also infamous for high crime rates in the city. As the female discussant said, housing prices have been skyrocketing over the past fifteen years. Many Asian and Latino immigrants as well as whites started to move into the Bayview District, because the housing prices and rents are the most affordable in the city.

FEMALE: When we first moved to Bayview 10 years ago, there were many troubles. Cars were often damaged by someone in mid-night. You know these blacks didn't want us to move into their neighborhood. However, after about six months, things became better, once they saw me every day at the bus stop, they started to accept us. Now we have lived for ten years, we haven't seen many problems. Many black neighbors on this street recognize me and say hello to me whenever we meet.

The transition from being self-perceived as an outsider to being accepted as a neighbor spurs the sense of belonging. Immigrants' experiences involve attitudinal incorporations that are led by social identity formation. According to Newcomb et al. (1965), attitude change is involved in role-playing, that is, it is relevant to commitment or participation. The general principle of attitude change indicates that attitudes toward objects change when new information brings change in the perceived content of the objects (p.109). In part, because an attitude toward an object is frequently associated cognitively with other social attitudes toward the same object. Many studies have shown

that the individual will evaluate an attitudinal position differently according to what groups or individuals are associated with the position. As Newcomb et al. (1965) point out, “a person tends to have similar attitudes toward objects that he considers to belong together.”

Another female discussant introduced her experience when she and her family immigrated to the United States about six years ago. Her 8-year-old daughter needed to take a school bus. They lived in Silver District in San Francisco, where there were many Asian, Latino and black residents. Her daughter could not speak English at that time. She was so worried that other kids would bully her daughter. However, 12 months later, nothing had happened to her daughter, and later she did not worry about the safety anymore. More than that she knew two African American and one Mexican neighbor, because they met regularly in a nearby bus stop, and at the public library where they all took their kids on Saturdays noon. Of course, due to the language barrier, she could not communicate much with them, only a friendly smile to each other.

A more advanced level of emotional motivation is driven by social identity. Not all political issues are of equal significance for minority immigrant groups; they are apt to use an abstract group concept to evaluate and perceive salience of an issue. In particular, among minority groups, racial identity is the most accessible social identity that one is initially judged upon in American society (Enos, 2010). Racial stereotype traits contour people’s evaluations on political issues, which predominantly reflect the racial hierarchy and its dynamics (Hero, 2010; Masuoka & Junn, 2013). Thus, accumulated lived experiences in the United States is a racial consciousness exploration, thereby they form and consolidate a sense of belonging and American identity along with the knowledge acquisition of social and political systems. This social identity, once it is established, can become a heuristic shortcut to shape issue concerns.

A Chinese female discussant in Monterey Park, CA expressed that she did not have an interest in politics, but she knew that she supported the Democratic Party.

MODERATOR: *Do you know the major differences between these two parties?*

FEMALE: *I was told that the Democratic Party is the party that represents the interest for the poor. Almost all of my friends and neighbors always vote for Democrats, and so do I. We are immigrants. We work hard but don't make a lot of money. Democrats are the party that is more friendly to us, for example, Obamacare really helped me and my friends a lot. This is all I know.*

MODERATOR: *How do you like the Republican Party and how do you like the Democratic Party?*

FEMALE: *I don't know much about it. I feel that they are very complicated. I only know Donald Trump belongs to the Republican Party, and Obama belongs to the Democratic Party. My neighbors and colleagues talked about them from time to time. Particularly Obama, because a black guy became the president was a big conversation topic.*

Nonetheless, the trajectories of partisan development are not always linear. Despite the fact that the political information new immigrants receive is not necessarily true or accurate, respondents in this category start to pay attention to American domestic politics and policies, and some information is retained in their mind for rudimentary consideration. Lacking an organization dimension in their partisan evaluations, many of them can easily be confused, which is exhibited in their inability to connect the consistent partisan preferences and issues. A woman in Monterey Park, CA who has been in the United States for 10 years, has little knowledge of the parties or politics. The exposure to political information or rumors start to inflict some impact on her perception of the parties or candidates.

FEMALE: *People that I know always criticize Donald Trump, I agree Trump is a crazy man, but one thing I agree with him is that he tries to restrict undocumented immigrants in the United States. We work so hard and pay taxes, and those undocumented immigrants don't pay taxes and they take away a lot of job opportunities and lower our wages, this is unfair to us.*

Although the respondent speaks basic English, she seems to realize that her personal interests are somewhat connected to the president and his policy advocacy. Issue concerns which coincide

with weak political knowledge loomed large in her political conceptions. Yet, the sense of belonging, American identity, and political awareness seems emerging nebulously—through her subconscious differentiation between “us” versus “them,” when she was expressing her opinions on the undocumented immigration issues. Therefore, the politicized identity is the underlying force for immigrants in this category to start to nurture the motivation to learn American politics and form partisan attitudes.

4.7.3 Level 3: Issue-based group politics

Subjects in the category of issue-based group politics recognize political issues involving different ethnic groups, but only at the level of particular issues. Different from simple group recognition in the previous category, respondents in this category start to demonstrate a sense of group consciousness, which assumes that individuals come to realize that their individual life chances are interrelated with those of their group (Junn & Masuoka, 2008). Although there is no overarching understanding of groups and politics, individuals’ evaluations indicate that they start to differentiate the parties or candidates based on vague perceptions of group interest. That is, the ways in which Asian Americans perceive race related issues come with obvious political relevance. The level of political awareness that is instilled in politicized identity exhibits important motivational components to attend to political stimuli. As Citrin and Sears (2014) point out, scholars in American public opinion have overlooked the psychological foundation of group consciousness paradigm.⁹ For those who possess strong in-group consciousness, their political reactions are more likely to be motivated or influenced by group-specific perception. I argue that

⁹ In Citrin and Sears’ (2014) account, the politicized group consciousness paradigm views all racial and ethnic minority groups as relegated to subordinate niches in a rigid American hierarchy, and the resulting discrimination leads them to identify more powerfully with their own in-group.

the complexity of an individual's behavior is contingent upon not merely his or her capacity to retain information in his or memory, but it is also dependent on the extent to which the stored information is organized in practical ways—in terms of social identity. In particular, when the growing politicized identity to the United States encounters social exclusion phenomena that looms large in the perceptions between the parties, and it eventually nudges Asian immigrants to lean toward the Democratic Party.

Social identities refer to an individual's multidimensional self-concept, which is defined by perceptions of similarity with some groups and difference from others, thereby categorizing people into in-group and out-group (Citrin & Sears, 2014). In one way or another, post-migration experiences as a whole is a way to develop the dimensions of self-concept in the American ethno-racial categories (Garcia Bedolla, 2005; Hero, 2010). Racial consciousness is the product of social and political processes, which defines a new racial identity associated with racialized social identity (Espiritu, 1992; Lopez & Espiritu, 1990). As Lien (2001a) points out, new immigrants who were not aware of the history of Asian Americans, usually are not aware of pan-ethnic consciousness and the nature of pan-ethnic politics.

How does racial consciousness loom large in the partisan differences? For older Asian immigrants and US-born generations, the frustration is, as scholars point out, Asian Americans tend to be treated as permanent aliens (Kuo et al., 2016; S. K. Ramakrishnan, 2005; J. Wong et al., 2011). This means that they might encounter varying degrees of social exclusion. For US-born Asian Americans, these experiences are an inseparable part of pre-adult socialization. Whereas for their foreign-born counterparts, they must learn this racial consciousness through their personal experiences or observations. In the politically aware stage immigrants become more aware of the specific activities of the government and politics, and whether these activities or policies affect

their interests. This is particularly important for those who have been in the United States for some years and have children in the U.S. Their interest in American politics and social issues start to be driven by both the cognitive understanding of the parties and emotional attachment. In other words, with additive life experiences in American society and exposure to politics over time, many immigrants' opinions on major political issues tend to be gradually stable. The interview of a male discussant in San Francisco shared his experience in learning the ethno-racial category:

MALE: When I moved here [San Francisco], I was afraid of blacks, all of them, because we learned from televisions and movies, black people are bad guys. Whenever I mention this to my uncle, my uncle and aunt, as well as my friends who have been here for a long time, always correct me immediately that many black people are very nice. Don't be a racist. Black youths might cause some trouble in some bad neighborhoods, but others black people are very nice.

MODERATOR: What do you mean by "very nice"?

MALE: They understood that we were immigrants, we faced the same discrimination that they have had faced in one generation to another. My uncle told me that our yellow people (Asians) are considered to be the bottom of the society, who could work in menial jobs. Whites look down upon our yellow people. In the American society, blacks are ranked higher than us; they were treated a lot more favorably than us, because the government always takes care of them first.

The above example illustrates the differences between new arrivals and old immigrants in terms of racial consciousness. For new immigrants, identity is a contested and multidimensional concept. Yet, temporality is an intrinsic property for identity centrality. Identity centrality refers to a collective self-concept deemed to be the most explicit endorsement of an identity to the self among the multidimensional identities (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Rosenberg, 1979), which is usually measured and manifested in one's sense of belonging to a social identity group (Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Helton, & Smith, 1997; Settles, 2004; Settles, Jellison, & Pratt-Hyatt, 2009). Having learned the ethno-racial categories and how they affect life opportunities, older immigrants tend to perceive political interest with other minority groups. Hence, racial identity centrality dominates minority immigrants' self-concept. The extent to which identity

centrality is salient is dependent on the context of the situation. For immigrant groups the story can be a little more complicated. As Janelle Wong (2006) states, for immigrants, the status of minority immigrants provides an impetus for participation in the United States, as they are most concerned about the issue of citizenship or racial discrimination. Built on this, immigrants' shared experiences may form cumulative social forces and diffuse from older immigrants to new arrivals. Social psychologists who study identity tend to have a consensus with race and ethnic politics scholars, and provide more empirical evidence. Cameron (2004) finds that identity centrality is positively correlated with individuals' in-group interpersonal ties and favorable attitudes toward in-groups. Hence, identity centrality is closely associated with behaviors and attitudes that are consistent with this identity.

The formation of social identity as a racial minority is a not straightforward one. For many Asian American immigrants, being Asians is not just skin color, it is a social status. Therefore, I expect that those who established careers and families in the United States, their mentality is different from new arrivals, they start to pay attention to policies that directly or indirectly affect their own lives and their children. A marriage, a new job, or change in neighborhood may put people under social pressure to conform to political values. Thus, close personal relationships are usually associated with common partisan preference (Campbell et al., 1960). In this light, some people would start to critically evaluate the policies and their influences on their personal interests, such as the quality of education for their children, gun control for family and public safety and so on.

The following is a personal interview of a female discussant done in the San Francisco Bay Area. Miss Yu immigrated to San Francisco when she was a teenager; she was indifferent to politics because she had no idea what they were about. After she got married, she started to care

about policies that directly influenced her family. For example, she complained that she and her husband paid too much in taxes last year. However, in speaking of healthcare, she firmly supported Obamacare, because that helps the working class and the poor.

FEMALE: I support Obamacare because it really helps a lot of low-income new immigrants. You know there are so many new immigrants who face a lot of financial hardship. I remembered when I first moved to the United States, my whole family hadn't had insurance for almost 10 years, and every time I got sick, I was so afraid to see doctors. But I can only say that I was so lucky. We don't know when we would get ill, the insurance can give us a basic safety net. Therefore, even though I am not very happy with the Democrat on many issues, such as affirmative action, in general they are still better than the Republican Party for minorities.

It is almost impossible for anyone to deny his or her racial identity to any degree. The underlying principle is that people identify themselves as a member of a group that entails a sharing of common feelings, values, and interests (Sniderman & Piazza, 2002). Thus, stereotyping is not merely a product of individual cognition but also a reflection of how the history of a society has laid out the racial categories and in-group and out-group relations, in which in-group preferences and out-group exclusion evolve (Bobo & Massagli, 2001; Masuoka & Junn, 2013). This frame is even more complicated when race and class are highly intertwined in a racial hierarchical system (Massey, 2007). A female discussant introduced her experience.

FEMALE: I live in a white middle class neighborhood, and I can feel that some white women are unfriendly to me. I never had this feeling before when I lived in San Francisco, because there are so many Asians, and most of my friends are Asians, so I didn't notice this. Based on my experience, I think white Americans seem to see Asians appearing in their neighborhoods as a form of cultural threat. There was one occasion in which my kids and I were playing in the park. We fed the ducks with breads, suddenly two white women approached us, and told us not to feed wild animals. Of course, I realized that I should not do that, but the way the woman talked to me doesn't seem to be a friendly reminder. When they left, they yelled at me, go back to China if you can't follow the law in this country.

MODERATOR: How do you take this experience?

FEMALE: In many white people's eyes, we are no different from blacks or Mexicans. But if we were blacks, they wouldn't dare to talk to us so rudely. I understand why black people were so

easy to get mad, because this kind of experience happens a lot to them, and they know how to fight back. Sometimes Asians should be tough like blacks.

The experience of xenophobic attitudes can easily evoke the feeling of social exclusion. Particularly Donald Trump's anti-immigrant rhetoric during the 2016 presidential election left a deep imprint among the minority immigrant communities. Recognizing the xenophobic and racist underpinnings of the current Republican Party's general policy advocacy widening the perceptions between the Democratic and Republican Party, minorities and immigrants might become the victims of stigma against undocumented immigrants, regardless of their actual citizenship status. Because of this background, anyone who is a visible racial minority may be subject to anti-immigrant stigma. A woman in her late 20s who works near Korean Town in Los Angeles shared her feeling:

MODERATOR: *How do you feel when Donald Trump criticized undocumented immigrants?*

FEMALE: *I am not particularly interested in politics, nor do I like the Democratic Party. I am independent. But growing up in Southern California, I just cannot stand Republicans. Whenever I heard Donald Trump talked about building the wall, undocumented immigrants, etc. my heart becomes very heavy. He seems to signal that immigrants are bad people. I believe that Trump said that was not for no reason. It just reminds us that this kind of anti-immigrant rhetoric is still very appealing to many racists and ignorant Trump supporters.*

In short, despite subjects in this level perceiving political issues encompassing different ethnic groups, it is only at the level of particular issues. There is no overarching understanding of groups and politics. The prevailing interpretation of the episode, understandably, illustrates the same antithetical characteristic of the partisan perceptions on racial issues. Asian immigrants in this category tend to be able to discern the differences between the parties on the basis of conceptualization of ethnicity, even though their evaluations of the parties are unsophisticated and subjective, and sometimes are naïve. This kind of experience-based policy evaluations can easily

give way to ethnic-based social values to take the lead and shape their initial perceptions of the parties. Hence, policy-based political cognitive development is hard to disentangle from social identities.

4.7.4 Level 4: Politicized identity

Individuals in this category actively participate in politicized identity. Sufficient involvement in politics may act as a fair surrogate for racialized identity in providing more efficient modes of organizing political perceptions. People in this kind of collective identity that are engaged when they perceive themselves as self-conscious members in a power struggle on behalf of their group. As Campbell et al. (1960) noted, the involved citizen with an opinion on broad questions of policy makes a choice of party that will best fulfill his own belief (p.185). When the identified member is aware of these positions, he is likely to espouse the goals urged by his party. A male discussant explained why he supported the Democratic candidate. One way to exemplify the highest level of politicized identity is the degree of congruence between individual opinion, Asian American identity, and party policy. For many Asians in this category, being an Asian American is the same as being a Democrat, which means their identity has been fully politicized.

Yao is a 47-year-old computer software engineer in Silicon Valley, a strong Democrat. Yao was born and raised in China. He earned his graduate degree in the United States 12 years ago and now is a U.S. citizen. When he was asked what he liked about the Democratic Party, he responded that the Democratic Party is the party that is more open to new ideas, and holds lenient attitudes toward immigrants and minorities, and their overall policy positions make a lot more sense than those of the Republican Party. Unlike other interviewees in previous conceptual levels, to whom politics is a remote and abstract political object, Yao demonstrates his political sophistication in

his vision of policy changes and impacts resulting from the electoral outcome. And his antipathy to anti-minority rhetoric subconsciously unveils his desire for inclusion.

MALE: I didn't like Hilary Clinton at all. I still voted for the Democratic Party, because in the two-party system I didn't have other options. But I know I will always vote for Democrats. I believe that even if it was not Donald Trump, there will be another Republican candidate who just loves to play the race card. Deep in their heart, they just don't like minorities. Today they picked blacks, tomorrow they will pick Latinos, then they will pick Asians, or Muslims. Because that's what many conservative and ignorant Republicans like to hear.

Of course there might be some for whom politicized Asian American identity means being a Republican. One of the discussants, James, is a good example. James is a second-generation Chinese American who was born in San Francisco, his parents came from Hong Kong. James is an owner of a bike shop in Culver City, CA. He is interested in politics and pays close attention to it as well. James is a strong Republican and a big fan of Donald Trump. James does not like the Democratic Party's policies, and he can go on for hours complaining why their policies and ideology are so naive. For example, he conveys,

MALE: What did Obama do over the last 8 years? Nothing! If Hilary Clinton became the President, she will basically follow Obama's policies. Obamacare made premiums increase by 20 percent, and eventually insurance companies will pass on this cost to middle class Americans. Obamacare can't be a long-term policy; it will fail.

Undeniably, James' strong opinions on the Democratic Party and its policies exhibit his enthusiasm for politics. What we see in James' case is that his politicized identity to this country is imbued deeply with a strong sense of partisan loyalty. His strong belief in the Republican's ideology and values are integrated in his evaluations of the parties, candidates and policies. Hence, similar to many conservative Republicans, James has a very strong racial resentment against African Americans. Most likely, his resentment perhaps is due to his disagreement with the

Democratic Party's tax and redistributive policies. When asked about racial commonality questions, he quickly conveys:

MALE: Look, the way blacks want to achieve equality is to take whatever you have in your pocket. What your parents taught you and my parents taught me, all Asian parents taught their children is to put their heads down and work hard. We achieve equality through self-reliance.

In sum, politicized identity formation plays a different yet underpinning role by enduring the enthusiasm for politics. Therefore, in this highest level of politicized identity subjects view themselves as closely intertwined with their view of politics and parties. How they describe themselves and their Asian ancestry—that is, their identities—is closely related to their view of political parties. Considering the Democratic Party as an agent for overall economic and political ideology advocacy, general policy agreement with the Democratic Party seems to be the *bedrock* for some people's partisan congruence with the Democrats. To the extent that the partisan preference is the source of political attitude centrality, there would be policy congruence in issue concerns between party and individuals. The epitome of such political and racial consciousness is deeply rooted in Asian Americans' social identity formation. In the process of fighting for inclusion, many Asian immigrants come to be aware that Asians do share common political interest with other minority groups, and see the Democratic Party simply as a better option. This finding is consistent with what Junn and Masuoka (2008) found in their research in politicized racial group consciousness, as well as what J. S. Wong (2006) found in her study that both Asian Americans and Latinos tend to be racialized as non-White minority groups and that this racialization will remain far into the future. Unlike European immigrants and their subsequent generations, the non-White minority status of Asian Americans prohibits them from fully assimilating into mainstream American society. For new Asian Americans immigrants, they learn this politicized racial consciousness in their post-migration experiences, which are widely shared in common within

their social networks, and are likely to be cumulative and become a social force, i.e., when these experiences are sufficiently intense.

4.8 Summary statistics

Table 4.6 shows the proportion of respondents by different levels of party conceptualization and politicized identity. The distributions of the proportions of total samples and Asian samples are basically equivalent. The underlying theoretical basis for a dual-concept measure is a basic cornerstone by which immigrants acquire interests in learning about the parties and motivations to engage with politics, because for immigrant citizens, they need these two measures to become effective citizens. Among party conceptualization measures, about 18-22 percent of respondents in level-1, 25-30 percent in level-2, 43-45 percent of respondents in level-3, and 8-9 percent in the level-4. This distribution actually is quite close to the study conducted by Campbell et al. (1960) (see Table 4.5). That is, most respondents are in the level-2 and level-3, and only a small proportion of respondents have sophisticated political knowledge that can use ideology to differentiate the parties, policies and candidates.

	Proportion of Total Sample	Proportion of Voters
Level 1. No issue content	22.5	17.5
Level 2. Nature of the times	24	23
Level 3. Group Benefits	42	45
Level 4. Ideology	11.5	15.5

Source: Campbell et al. (1960), p. 249.

Table 4.5: Distribution of levels of conceptualization

For politicized identity measures, the distribution is slightly different. Around 16-19 percent of respondents in level 1, 12-14 percent in level 2, 45-47 percent in level 3, and 22-25 percent in level 4. Compared to party conceptualization measures, political identity tends to be easier to

acquire. In particular, in level 4 of these two measures, there was a larger proportion of respondents in politicized identity measures than those in party conceptualization. This disparity indicates that political politicized identity is apt to have more profound influence on political evaluation.

	Political Conceptualization		Politicized Identity	
	Total Sample %	Asian Sample %	Total Sample %	Asian Sample %
Level 1	18	22	16	19
Level 2	30	25	14	12
Level 3	43	45	45	47
Level 4	9	8	25	22

Table 4.6: Proportions of respondents

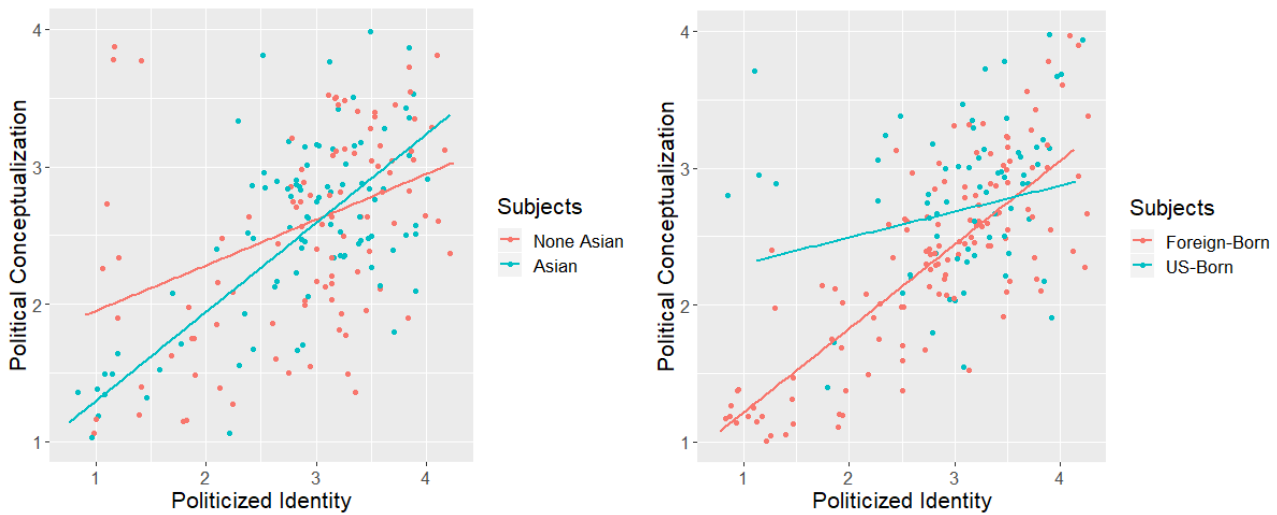


Figure 4.4: Scatterplot of party conceptualization and politicized identity

Figure 4.4 shows two bivariate relationships between party conceptualization and politicized identity. To further examine the relationship, subjects are also separated between Asian and Non-Asian, as well as US-born and foreign-born. In general, party conceptualization and politicized identity tend to have a strong positive correlation. This relation is similar between Asian and non-Asian subjects. In Figure 4.4, the blue color represents Asian samples and the red color represents

the none Asian samples. The least square lines highlight the positive correlation between the levels of party conceptualization and politicized identity. That is, $r=.69$ and $p\text{-value}<.001$ for none Asian subjects and $r=.76$ and $p<.001$ for Asian subjects. Therefore, high identifiers of politicized identity tend to have a higher level of party conceptualization. Another plot on the right hand side tries to separate subjects into foreign-born and US-born. As we can see, the positive correlation between party conceptualization and politicized identity are still stronger among foreign-born Asians than their US-born counterparts.

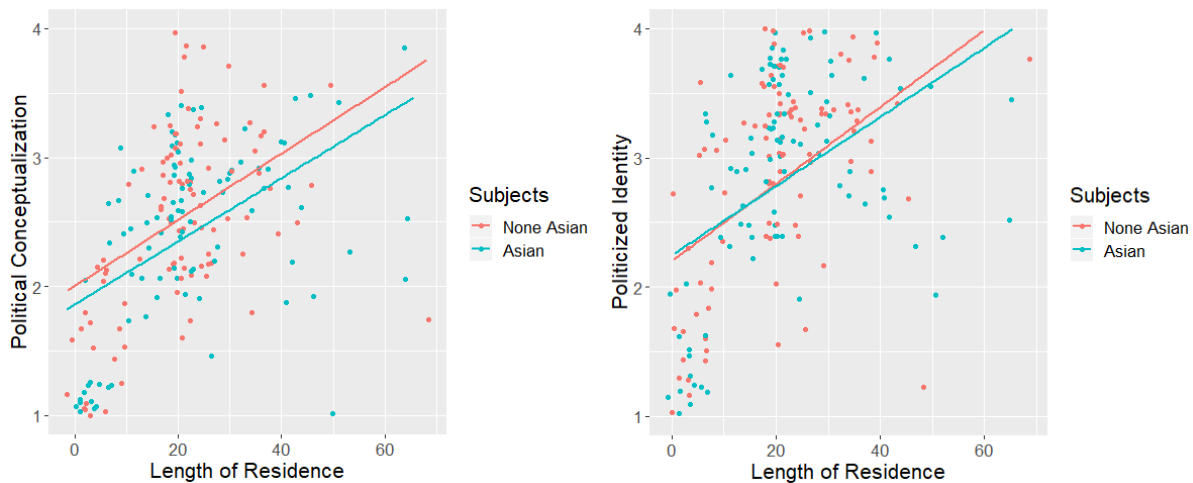


Figure 4.5: Party conceptualization and politicized identity measures over time.

Indeed, the longer Asian American immigrants live in the U.S., the more likely they are to acquire party conceptualization and form politicized identities. Figure 4.5 supports this point. Moreover, politicized identity tends to be easier to form and more concentrated in higher levels, while despite the fact that party conceptualization also demonstrates a positive linear trend, the rate of growth is slower and is concentrated more in the lower levels. This is to say, political identity tends to be easier to learn, while party conceptualization is harder and takes a long time. This, in large part, is because political sophistication, e.g. ideology requires individuals' cognitive

abilities. In *The American Voter*, Campbell et al. (1960) show that political cognitive abilities are positively correlated with individuals' educational backgrounds. Those in the highest level of party conceptualization tend to have college education.¹⁰ In contrast, Hajnal and Lee (2011) point out that Asian and Latino immigrants tend to have fewer opportunities to learn basic facts about American politics and understand the fundamental political concepts that flow through partisan discourses.

In contrast, emotional attachment to the United States plays a different role. As scholars in race and ethnic politics point out, the longer immigrants live in the United States, the stronger they hold American identity, the stronger the sense of belonging to the United States, as well as the awareness of the political election outcomes (Jones-Correa, 1999; S. K. Ramakrishnan, 2005; J. Wong, 2013; J. Wong et al., 2011).

Political Conceptualization	American Identity			Politicized Identity	American Identity		
	Low	Medium	High		Low	Medium	High
Level 1	17	1	5	Level 1	15	1	4
Level 2	2	6	13	Level 2	2	1	3
Level 3	2	7	36	Level 3	2	6	28
Level 4	0	1	11	Level 4	2	6	31

Table 4.7: Distribution of American identity
Note: All entries are in percentage

Political Conceptualization	Sense of Belonging			Politicized Identity	Sense of Belonging		
	Low	Medium	High		Low	Medium	High
Level 1	10	7	7	Level 1	8	6	6
Level 2	1	6	15	Level 2	1	2	3
Level 3	2	2	40	Level 3	2	7	27
Level 4	0	0	11	Level 4	1	5	33

Table 4.8: Distribution of sense of belonging
Note: All entries are in percentage

¹⁰ 32 percent of respondents in the highest level of party conceptualization have college education, while for those who have grade school and high school education, they only account for 5 percent and 10 percent respectively. See p.250 in *The American Voter*.

Political Conceptualization	Awareness			Politicized Identity	Awareness		
	Low	Medium	High		Low	Medium	High
Level 1	3	7	14	Level 1	2	6	13
Level 2	3	6	16	Level 2	1	3	6
Level 3	7	10	26	Level 3	8	12	25
Level 4	1	2	6	Level 4	3	4	18

Table 4. 9: Distribution of political awareness

Note: All entries are in percentage

In addition, the increasing pattern also exhibits in the relationships between the levels of party conceptualization and politicized identity and other key emotional and cognitive variables. Tables 4.7-4.9 show a clear ascending pattern among the sense of belonging and self-perceived American identity, the sense of belonging and political awareness among the different levels of party conceptualization and politicized identity. In general, all these tables show positive correlations with both levels of party conceptualization and politicized identity, and they impose varying degrees of influence on Asian Americans' overall political conceptualization. Although the above tables only show Asian American samples, Latino immigrants tend to share similar patterns.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter encompasses the study of political conceptualization among Asian American immigrants by introducing the processes of forming party conceptualization and politicized identity. It transgressed the traditional boundaries of political socialization by focusing on a dual-concept measure and typologies for party conceptualization and politicized identity. Based on qualitative interviews, this chapter has shown that party conceptualization and politicized identity are two forms of political thinking. Party conceptualization accounts for how Asian American immigrants think about basic political parties and candidates. Politicized identity accounts for how Asian Americans think about themselves in relation to the party system. The next chapter shows how immigrants develop these two basic and important concepts.

Appendix 1

Interview Protocols and Data Collection Procedures

Respondent Number: _____

Hi, I'm [] and I'm a student at UCLA. I'm part of a team doing immigrants' political socialization project for the Political Science Department here. It's part of our study to increase public understanding of how immigrants learn about American politics and acquire partisanship. Would you have about 30 minutes to answer an anonymous survey? A few minutes of your time would help us a lot. . .

This survey is anonymous. Do you agree to participate in this interview? If you do, may I record you, or do you want me to just write out your comments.

Consent to participate

Recorded Comments

Written Comments

1. Were you born in the United States? Yes___ No___
2. [Foreign born] Can you tell me in what year you first arrive in the United States? ___
Or, how long have you been to the United States?___
3. Are you a US citizen ____, permanent resident____, international student____, or others ____?
- 3A. (If not a citizen) Do you plan to live here permanently or move to your home country someday?
Yes ____, No___

4. How much are you interested in politics?

Extremely interested

Strongly interested

Moderately interested

- Slightly interested
- Not interested
- Don't Know

5. (If US-born) What's your ethnic origin? _____

6. How often do you talk about politics with friends, family members, and colleagues?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often
- All the time

7. Did you vote in the last presidential election?

- Yes__ No__

8. (If R was not eligible to vote) Would you want to vote if you were eligible?

- Yes__ No__

8.a. Have you participated in any political or social activities? This includes but is not limited to signing a petition, sending a letter to congressmen, participating in protest, donating to political organization, volunteering in your community, supporting women's rights, gay rights, black-lives-matter, me-too movement.

- Yes__ No__

If yes, what were some political/social activities you were engaged in? Why did you participate?

9. How close do you follow American political news?

- Never
- Sometimes
- Often

__All the time

10. Is it via ethnic or English media?

Ethnic__ English__

11. How much do you know the differences between the Democratic and Republican Party?

__Nothing

__Some

__A lot

__A great deal

12. Are you concerned about the next presidential election outcome?

Not at all__, Some, __ A lot__, A great deal__

Why is that? _____

13. How and when did you learn the differences between the Democratic and Republican Party?

14. When it comes to political ideology, do you consider yourself

Very liberal__

Moderate liberal__

Neutral__

Moderate conservative__

Very conservative__

Don't know __

15. (If foreign-born) How much do you know about American politics or the parties before you

move here?

16. Nothing__ Some__ A lot__ A great deal__

17. (If foreign-born) In general, how were the Democratic Party portrayed over the mass media in your home country before you move here?

Negative___ Neutral ___ Positive___ Don't know___

18. (If foreign-born) In general, how were the Republican Party portrayed over the mass media in your home country before you move here?

Negative___ Neutral ___ Positive___ Don't know___

19. In terms of political identity, do you consider yourself:

Strong Democrat___, Moderate Democrat___, Weak Democrat___, Independent___

Weak Republican___, Moderate Republican___, Strong Republican___, Don't know___

20. If you think you are an independent, do you feel

Closer to Democratic Party ___

Closer to Republican Party ___

Pure independent ___

21. What do you mean by independent?

22. If you think you are a nonpartisan, what do you mean by nonpartisan?

Political Efficacy

Based on your experiences, can you tell me:

23. How much do you think the government officials care about what people like you think?

Not at all___ A little___ Some___ A lot___

24. How much do you think people like you can influence local and national policies?

Not at all___ A little___ Some___ A lot___

25. How much do you trust US government is doing what is right for this country?

Not at all___ A little___ Some___ A lot___

Policy Attitude

In the following, I will ask you some policy attitudes, you can tell me how much you agree or disagree with them:

26. The federal government should guarantee access to health care for everyone in the U.S.?

Strongly disagree___, Disagree___, Neither___, Agree___, Strongly Agree___

27. Should abortion be legal in all cases?

Strongly disagree___, Disagree___, Neither___, Agree___, Strongly Agree___

28. Should Same-sex marriage have the same legal rights to marriage?

Strongly disagree___, Disagree___, Neither___, Agree___, Strongly Agree___

29. Should the American government increase defense spending?

Strongly disagree___, Disagree___, Neither___, Agree___, Strongly Agree___

30. Should stricter gun control laws be enacted to ensure public safety?

Strongly disagree___, Disagree___, Neither___, Agree___, Strongly Agree___

31. Should middle-class families get a tax cut by having the wealthiest families pay a little more in taxes?

Strongly disagree___, Disagree___, Neither___, Agree___, Strongly Agree___

32. Should the US federal government take actions to slow the effects of climate change?

Strongly disagree___, Disagree___, Neither___, Agree___, Strongly Agree___

Political Knowledge

In the following questions, I want to ask some questions about political knowledge.

33. Do you know which party Donald Trump belongs to?

Democrat___ Republican___ Don't know ___

33. Which party Barack Obama belongs to?

Democrat___ Republican___ Don't know ___

34. Which party Hilary Clinton belongs to?

Democrat___ Republican___ Don't know ___

35. Which party the governor of California belongs to?

Democrat___ Republican___ Don't know ___

36. Which party former president George W. Bush belongs to?

Democrat___ Republican___ Don't know ___

37. Which party do you think it is friendly to immigrant and minority communities?

Democrat___ Republican___ Don't know ___

38. Which party favors affordable healthcare?

Democrat___ Republican___ Don't know ___

39. Which party favors less government regulation and spending?

Democrat___ Republican___ Don't know ___

40. Which party favors bigger military?

Democrat___ Republican___ Don't know ___

41. Do you happen to know which party has the most members in the U.S. Senate? If yes: Which party is that?

Democrat___ Republican___ Don't know ___

Self-report Identity

In the following I will ask you some questions about self-categorization identity. You can tell me the number from 0 to 10. "0" means completely disagree and "10" means totally agree.

42. How much do you think yourself as an American?

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10

Why do you say that? _____

Party Images

Now I'd like to get your feelings *in your own words* about the parties. [Note emphasis]. I could write down your words, but it would be easier and quicker if I could record them. Remember that the survey is anonymous. May I record you, or do you want me to just write out your comments.

__ Recorded Comments

__Written Comment

- 43. Is there anything you *like* about the Democratic Party?
- 44. Is there anything you *dislike* about the Democratic Party?
- 45. Is there anything you *like* about the Republican Party?
- 46. Is there anything you *dislike* about the Republican Party?
- 47. Is there anything you *like* about Donald Trump? IF YES: Anything else?
- 48. Is there anything you *dislike* about Donald Trump? IF YES: Anything else?
- 49. Is there anything you *like* about Barack Obama? IF YES: Anything else?
- 50. Is there anything you *dislike* about Barack Obama? IF YES: Anything else?

Racial Consciousness

In the following, I will ask you some racial consciousness questions. You can use the scale 0-10 to indicate your feeling. “0” is very negative, or disagreement, and “10” means very positive, or agreement.

51. How much do you feel that you belong or don’t belong to this country? [In the scale of 0-10]

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10

Why? _____

52. How much do you feel that have equal opportunities in this country?

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10

Why? _____

53. How did Obama’s election as the president make you feel as being an immigrant?

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10

Why? _____

54. How do you feel when Donald Trump criticized undocumented immigrants?

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10

55. In terms of politics, how much do you think your ethnic group shares political interest with whites?

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10

Why? _____

56. How much do you think your ethnic group shares political interest with blacks?

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10

Why?

57. How much do you think your ethnic group shares political interest with Latinos?

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10

Why?

58. How much do you think your ethnic group shares political interest with Asians?

0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10

Why?

59. When thinking about economic opportunities in the United States, what does it mean to you to be a minority in this country?

Thank respondent and hand him/her the consent statement.

Interviewer records responses to following questions:

Gender: M__ or F__

Ethnicity: White Black Hispanic Asian Native American Other

Approximate Age: _____

English Proficiency [foreign-born]: Not at all __, Little __, Basic __, Good __, Fluent __,
Unaccented__

Apparent level of political information: Very High Fairly High Average Fairly Low Very
Low

Interviewer also dictates notes of open-end into recorder.

To close out this interview: Go to audio file (whether used for likes/dislikes or not) and dictate comments about anything notable in interview, such as use of strong (e.g. racist) language,

lengthy comments by R, indications that R was not paying attention or didn't understand, or other relevant information. Do not bother with irrelevancies such as appearance etc.

To set up the next interview: Put a number on the next questionnaire and create an audio file for use with likes/dislikes.

Other notes:

Appendix 2

Coding Rules

Each respondent should be assigned two numerical values, one that indicates her Level of Party conceptualization and another that indicates her Level of Politicized Identity. These measurements should be based on the coding rules described below.

Measurements of Party conceptualization should be made from responses to a set of eight questions that ask about the political parties, Donald Trump, Barack Obama, and Hillary Clinton. Measurements of Politicized Identity should be made from a separate set of eight questions that mainly focus on groups in American politics.

Party conceptualization

Level 1: Absence of issue content

Subject seems unable to discriminate between the Democratic and Republican Party, or the meaning of liberal and conservative. Subject does not comment on any national political issue or public debate. A subject who comments on a non-partisan issue or irritation could still be classified

at this level. Those who fail to comment on parties and candidates in politically meaningful ways or show indifference to politics should be included in this category.

Example:

“I don’t have any interest in politics, and I can’t think of a thing about the parties.”

“I don’t know any of them to be honest. I don’t know what is this and what is that. I’ve been here for 8 years, and 6 years I was a student. I didn’t even have a TV or looked at the news or anything. So I’m far away from all that to be honest.”

Level 2: Nature of the times

Responses are based on the conditions of the country, the general success or failure of the country’s leadership, or any nebulous mood or feeling. If a party is mentioned, it is only to blame or credit the party for national conditions. Respondents in this category generally do not otherwise mention parties, issues, or ideology. Respondents might have specific comments on the personalities, traits or characteristics of candidates, parties, or ideologies, but those comments focus on the goodness or badness of the times rather than any policy or value.

Example:

“Like regardless of what his policies were, his figure as the President [Obama] did that job well and I think that’s one of the most important things you can do in office because realistically you don’t have like a ton of influence over policy but like, the way you come off to the world is how we’re going to be treated by other countries so I think he just did that well. He didn’t make U.S. look like, stupid.”

Level 3: Group benefits

Respondents make simple evaluations of political objects in terms of visible groupings. Parties and candidates are seen as good or bad for particular groups, or as having a natural affinity or

repulsion for particular groups, but there is little or no ideological or policy justification for their views.

Example:

“The Democratic Party is more favorable to minorities and immigrants.”

“...the Republican Party is hostile to the working class.”

Level 4: Policy and ideology

Respondents evaluate political objects in terms of policies and ideology. They either mention the liberal-conservative continuum in a meaningful way or cite policy preferences that are consistent with their party identifications. The most sophisticated respondents demonstrate partisan loyalty, political knowledge and concern for policies and ideology, but such high levels of conceptualization are not necessary for classification in Level 4. Respondents need only to be generally aware of general American politics and policies and make coherent references to party policies and ideologies.

Example:

“I think the Republican is more conservative; they are not so subject to radical change.”

“I like the Democratic Party because I like their liberalness.”

Politicized Identity

Level 1: Foreigners in America

Individuals lack a social or racial identity consciousness attached to the United States. They see themselves as foreigners in a mass of undifferentiated Americans. Their concept of social identity tends to be rooted in their country of origin.

Example:

“People in the United States have too many racial backgrounds, and are too complicated. Other than white and black people, I don’t know how to tell the differences between Mexican, Middle Eastern people, and others. To me they look basically the same.”

“We still have no idea how long we will stay in the United States. If the economy is bad, we might move back to China, who knows. We have some friends who have moved back to China, and they did much better there than they did here. It is a lot easier to make money in China nowadays. But more of our friends chose to stay in here simply for the sake of the children. Growing up in the United States is much better than in China, because they have more opportunities here. Unlike us, we don’t know English, we don’t have any opportunities.”

Level 2: Recognition of groups

Subjects see themselves as members of an ethnic group like many others in the United States. This may include a perception of conflict between their group and other groups. They may also recognize a connection between ethnicity and politics, but only vaguely. For example, they may see one of the parties as better for their group or other groups, but cannot explain why.

Example:

“I was told that the Democratic Party is the party that represents the interest for the poor. Almost all of my friends and neighbors always vote for Democrats, and so do I. We are immigrants. We work hard but don’t make a lot of money. Democrats are the party that is more friendly to us, for example, Obamacare really helped me and my friends a lot. This is all I know.”

Level 3: Issue-based group politics

Subjects in the category of issue-based group politics perceive a clear link between parties and groups and cite a specific issue or policy to explain it. Their responses are thus rooted in their own view of how American politics works. Their view of groups and parties is nonetheless narrow, based on some particular issue and lacking any overarching political or ideological anchor.

Example:

“I support Obamacare because it really helps a lot of low-income new immigrants. You know there are so many new immigrants who face a lot of financial hardship. I remembered when I first moved to the United States, my whole family hadn’t had insurance for almost 10 years, and every time I got sick, I was so afraid to see doctors. But I can only say that I was so lucky. We don’t know when we would get ill, the insurance can give us a basic safety net. Therefore, even though I am not very happy with the Democrat on many issues, such as affirmative action, in general they are still better than the Republican Party for minorities.”

Level 4: Politicized identity

Respondents perceive their ethnic identity as closely intertwined with a political party or ideology. Individuals at this level of party conceptualization may also believe that there exists a power struggle between different groups in America and that one of the parties takes their group’s side in the struggle. Given such views, a respondent’s ethnic identity may largely dictate their partisanship. They may also consider one of the parties as an agent for overall economic and political betterment of America.

Example:

“I didn’t like Hilary Clinton at all. I still voted for the Democratic Party, because in the two-party system I didn’t have other options. But I know I will always vote for Democrats. I believe that even if it was not Donald Trump, there will be another Republican candidate who just loves to play the race card. Deep in their heart, they just don’t like minorities. Today they picked blacks, tomorrow they will pick Latinos, then they will pick Asians, or Muslims. Because that’s what many conservative and ignorant Republicans like to hear.”

CHAPTER 5

A Dual-Concept Measure and Statistical Analysis

5.1 Introduction

I have explained the typologies of party conceptualization and politicized identity measures with specific examples and introduced the descriptive statistics in the preceding chapter. The qualitative evidence suggests that party conceptualization and politicized identity coexist in the formation of Asian immigrants' political conceptualization. The primary aim of this chapter is to identify and test the dual-concept measure, by which I mean a single measure that combines both party conceptualization and politicized identity in a single and more general measure, political conceptualization. This is important because the dual-concept measure illuminates the underlying mechanism for immigrant populations to understand and conceptualize politics, as well as the psychological determinants of partisan preference. Drawing the data from open-ended survey responses as well as closed-ended survey data, and applying multivariate analysis, a Multiple Indicator Multiple Causes (MIMIC) model and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), this chapter analyzes the properties of the dual-concept measure and its interrelationship with a set of variables. This chapter proceeds with three procedures. First, it examines the determinants of party conceptualization and politicized identity, along with other controlled variables. Second, as an intermediate procedure, I use a MIMIC model to combine econometric-based and psychometric approaches to examine whether the same set of variables collectively predict a common factor which is constructed by party conceptualization and politicized identity. Third, I analyze the latent

structure of the survey data using SEM to examine the relationship between party conceptualization, politicized identity, and other political cognitive and emotional variables.

This chapter finds that the motivational underpinnings of political conceptualization are central to understanding Asian American immigrants' stimuli to acquire partisanship. Political conceptualization among immigrant populations is an emotion and identity driven political learning outcome. Both party conceptualization and politicized identity formation impose important influence on the ways in which Asian American immigrants understand American politics. Specifically, political conceptualization may not necessarily be driven by political cognitive factors as scholars argued (Campbell et al., 1960; Nie, Verba, & Petrocik, 1976; E. R. A. N. Smith, 1980). Past studies on political conceptualization did not distinguish party conceptualization and politicized identity, in large part, this was because their survey samples focus mostly on native-born white Americans. For Asian American immigrants, to repeat a central argument that I made in the previous chapter, political conceptualization among Asian American immigrants consists of a dual-concept measure: party conceptualization and politicized identity formation. Yet, while party conceptualization and politicized identity are positively correlated, they are two distinct measures. For Asian American immigrants, understanding how the American political system works is closely parallel to understanding how their social identity fits into the political system and American racial hierarchy. A process for immigrants coming to understand politics is sorting out whether they are more comfortable with a left-wing politicized identity or a right-wing politicized identity. This chapter further argues that these two measures play different roles. The development of political conceptualization is shaped not so much by such cognitive factors as political knowledge or mass media; but by emotional stimuli such as American identity

and sense of belonging. Therefore, the way Asian American immigrants learn about or understand American politics goes together with politicized identity formation.

5.2 The regression models

Before examining the properties of the dual-concept measure, I begin data analysis with a simple ordered logistic regression to examine the basic determinants of party conceptualization and politicized identity. In this analysis, I show that party conceptualization and politicized identity share numerous similarities in terms of multivariate relationship with key predictors.

5.2.1 Variables

There are two dependent variables and seven independent variables to be analyzed in the following regression analysis. The two dependent variables are party conceptualization and politicized identity, which are 4-point categorical variables. The variation from low to high levels represents the ordering dimensions of party conceptualization and politicized identity. The independent variable of political knowledge is a construct of 10 basic political knowledge items, e.g. what party Donald Trump belongs to, and which party favors affordable healthcare (See survey instrument for items 33-41 for details in Appendix 1 in chapter 4). Both the American identity and sense of belonging variables are on a 10-point scale. The American identity question in the surveys asks, “How much do you think of yourself as an American?” The sense of belonging question in the surveys asks, “How much do you feel that you belong or don’t belong to this country?” The score of 10 indicates the most American identity or have the strongest sense of belonging. The variable of “information” asks respondents how often they follow American political news. I also added two new controlled variables. “Socialization” asks respondents how often they discuss politics

with their parents, friends, colleagues, etc. “Information” asks how closely they follow political news.

5.2.2 The models and results

Ordered logistic regression was applied to analyze the relationship between dependent variables and independent variables. This model aims to test whether party conceptualization and politicized identity share a similar set of predictors, and what the major variables are that predict them. Table 5.1 includes 6 models; the first 3 models test the determinants of party conceptualization. Model 1 is an aggregate model which includes all respondents. Model 2 includes only Asian samples, and Model 3 includes only Hispanic samples. Model 3-6 test the determinants of politicized identity with aggregate, Asian and Hispanic samples.

	Party Conceptualization			Politicized Identity		
	(1) All	(2) Asian	(3) Hispanic	(4) All	(5) Asian	(6) Hispanic
Political Knowledge	0.201*** (0.065)	0.315*** (0.104)	0.128 (0.106)	0.141** (0.061)	0.290*** (0.095)	0.138 (0.112)
Length of Residence	0.0607*** (0.015)	0.0550*** (0.019)	0.0642** (0.032)	0.0649*** (0.016)	0.0667*** (0.020)	0.0949*** (0.034)
American Identity	0.287*** (0.064)	0.316*** (0.110)	0.246** (0.101)	0.179*** (0.060)	0.047 (0.102)	0.225** (0.102)
Sense of Belonging	-0.053 (0.059)	-0.066 (0.105)	0.004 (0.087)	-0.053 (0.057)	0.070 (0.097)	0.001 (0.092)
Awareness	-0.634 (0.506)	-0.187 (0.746)	-1.000 (0.883)	-0.245 (0.476)	-0.334 (0.695)	-0.197 (0.903)
Socialization	0.038 (0.121)	-0.071 (0.185)	0.142 (0.205)	0.054 (0.125)	0.070 (0.188)	0.167 (0.226)
Attention to News	-0.011 (0.196)	-0.164 (0.291)	-0.042 (0.332)	0.210 (0.196)	0.033 (0.275)	0.149 (0.348)
English Media	-0.018 (0.310)	-0.073 (0.501)	-0.124 (0.508)	0.014 (0.300)	0.857* (0.484)	-0.453 (0.538)
Female	-0.295 (0.289)	-0.458 (0.437)	-0.089 (0.456)	0.369 (0.282)	-0.071 (0.425)	0.705 (0.484)
Cut1	1.552** (0.671)	2.225** (0.979)	0.727 (1.122)	1.525** (0.638)	2.735*** (0.966)	1.185 (1.132)
Cut2	3.929*** (0.731)	4.452*** (1.085)	3.715*** (1.215)	2.829*** (0.664)	3.939*** (1.010)	3.646*** (1.231)
Cut3	6.916*** (0.811)	7.842*** (1.218)	6.350*** (1.309)	5.464*** (0.735)	6.923*** (1.148)	6.711*** (1.379)
N	202	101	80	202	101	80

Standard errors in parentheses
 *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 5. 1: Determinants of party conceptualization and politicized identity

Regression analysis reported in Table 5.1 strongly demonstrates that party conceptualization and politicized identity share a set of predictors. As we can see political knowledge, length of residence and American identity are statistically significant. These patterns are consistent across all models in Table 5.1. These patterns lend us the confidence that the driving factors for political thinking are centering around the lived experience in the United States and exposure to politics. That is, the longer immigrants live in the United States, the more likely they are to develop the sense of American identity. Both Asian and Latino samples share similar patterns. Note that the sense of belonging variable is not statistically significant in these models. The reason for this is two-fold, 1) the sense of belonging comes with a fair amount of variance; 2) the sense of belonging, American identity and length of residence share a moderate amount of covariances. As a result, including them together in a model results multicollinearity.¹ Therefore, to handle this issue we will need to correct the error variances using SEM, which I will discuss in detail later.

In addition, the variables socialization, information, and English media consumption are not statistically significant. The ambiguous nature of these variables poses important empirical problems. In part, because these variables are elusive in the sense that it is difficult for individuals to pinpoint how often they discuss politics with friends, colleagues, or family members, and how much they actually pay attention to English media. Likewise, it is hard to define and separate meaningful political discussions. This in turn means that many respondents simply gave ambiguous survey answers such as “often.” As a result, these variables usually vary little

¹ If I omit American identity and length of residence in the model, the sense of belonging will be highly statistically significant, for the tests, please see Table 5A.1. in Appendix 1.

themselves, share little covariances with other variables, and ultimately, they are difficult to have statistically significant results in regression analysis.

5.3 A MIMIC model and political conceptualization

The regression models reported in Table 5.1 show that party conceptualization and politicized identity share a set of common predictors. This implies that party conceptualization and politicized identity tend to share a common latent factor. Despite the fact that this latent variable is a hypothetical construct and not directly observed, it has operational implications for structural relationships among measured variables. Hence, if party conceptualization and politicized identity are correlated, but two distinct measures, we should expect to see both measures have equivalent and statistically significant factor loadings that are influenced by a common latent factor. Since it is impossible to test a latent variable directly in a regression model, I will apply a MIMIC model, which consists of multiple indicators and multiple causes of a single latent variable (F1). MIMIC models exhibit a combination of econometric-based and psychometric-based approaches (Joreskog & Goldberger, 1975). The latent variable y^* is linearly determined by a set of exogenous variables. x_1, \dots, x_k :

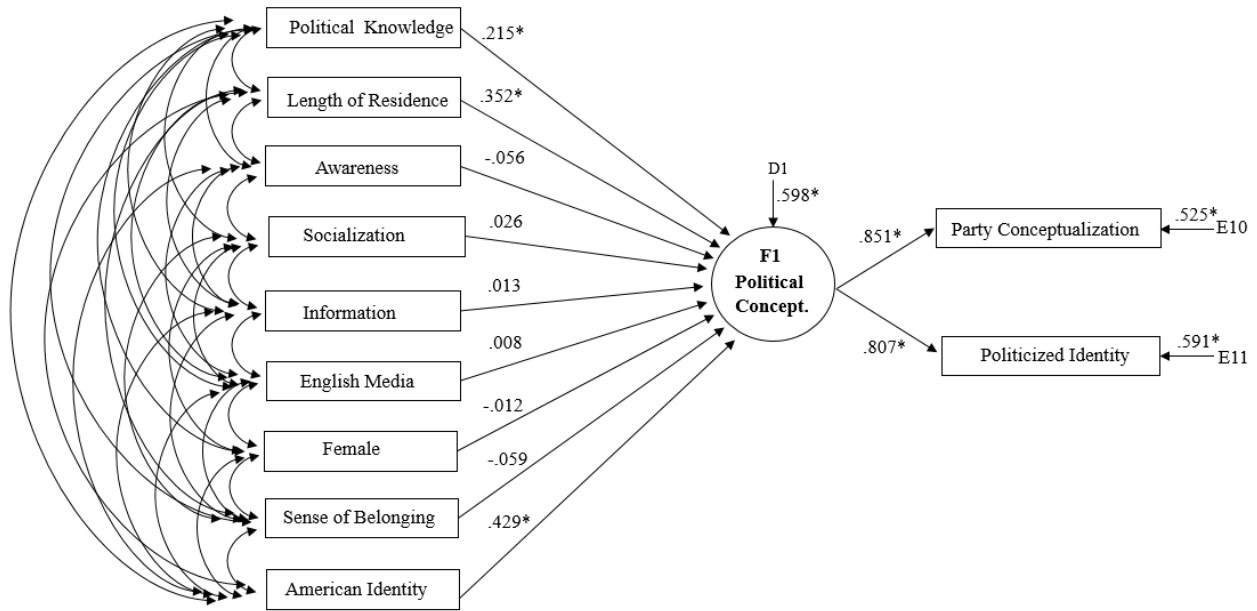
$$y^* = a_1x_1 + \dots + a_kx_k + \epsilon$$

The latent variable determines linearly a set of endogenous indicators y_1, \dots, y_m :

$$\begin{aligned} y_1 &= \beta_1y^* + u_1, \\ &\vdots \\ y_m &= \beta_my^* + u_m, \end{aligned}$$

Where the disturbances are all mutually independent with unknown variances, $\epsilon \sim N(0, \sigma^2)$.

Figure 5.1 is a diagram of a MIMIC model, in which political conceptualization is a latent variable and a dependent variable that is constructed by party conceptualization and conceptualized identity, which is also predicted by a set of measured predictors. All independent variables on the left of the diagram are the predictors in the model, and all of their error variances are allowed to freely correlate among themselves, as they do in regression models such as in Table 5.1. The variances and covariance of all independent variables are all free parameters. The variables on the right of the path diagram are two measured indicators—party conceptualization and politicized identity. The dependent variable is a latent variable (F1) representing what party conceptualization and politicized identity share in common, which explains the correlation between these variables, but is not explained in separate regressions. However, in this model a given predictor, say, political knowledge has only one effect, its effect on political conceptualization (F1). So instead of two separate coefficients, there is one to estimate and interpret. Of course, as in the regression model in Table 5.1, any predictor also affects the dependent variables party conceptualization and politicized identity, but the effect is indirect. Thus, if the MIMIC model is consistent with the regression model in Table 5.1, we should expect to see the factor loadings of measured variables on the left of the path diagram are somewhat close to those in Table 5.1 in terms of magnitude, direction and statistics significance. And the product of factor loadings of party conceptualization and politicized identity should account for the correlation between them.



Statistics significant at the 5% level are marked with *

Figure 5. 1: A MIMIC model of party conceptualization and politicized identity

The result of the MIMIC model shows that political conceptualization was effectively predicted by a set of variables, and it also determined party conceptualization and politicized identity. More importantly, the latent factor political conceptualization successfully explains the shared variance between party conceptualization and politicized identity as evident by high standardized factor loadings .851 and .807 ($p < .05$) after correcting the error variances. As Table 5.2 shows, the correlation between party conceptualization and politicized identity is precisely explained by the model as evident by the .000 standardized residual. The correlations between the predictor and criterion (party conceptualization, politicized identity) variables are also precisely explained by the model, with the largest standardized residual correlation being .077, which is still close to zero. This means that these two-concepts are distinctive measures. Moreover, from the other end of the spectrum, political knowledge, length of residence and American identity are statistically significant predictors for the latent factor (F1). In terms of values, coefficient direction and statistical significance, they are roughly consistent with those reported in the regression

model in Table 5.1. This suggests that these variables are key predictors for political conceptualization as immigrants live in the United States over time, and they ultimately indirectly shape both party conceptualization and politicized identity.

	Political knowledge	Length of Residence	Sense of Belonging	Awareness	Female	Socialization	Information	English Media	American Identity	Party Conceptualization	Politicized Identity
Political Knowledge	0.000										
Length of Residence	0.000	0.000									
Sense of Belonging	0.000	0.000	0.000								
Awareness	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000							
Female	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000						
Socialization	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000					
Information	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000				
English Media	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000			
American Identity	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000		
Party Conceptualization	0.002	-0.011	0.013	-0.022	-0.059	-0.012	-0.029	0.006	0.007	0.000	
Politicized Identity	-0.002	0.014	-0.017	0.028	0.077	0.015	0.038	-0.007	-0.009	0.000	0.000

Table 5. 2: Standardized residual matrix

Consistent with the standardized residual matrix, the chi-square test statistic that is derived from maximum likelihood estimator is 8.627 based on 8 degrees of freedom, which yields a p-value=.374. This suggests that the sample covariance structure is highly equivalent to the model-implied covariance structure. Thus, the model is extremely likely to be a plausible one, and we cannot reject the null hypothesis. Moreover, other goodness-of-fit indices lend us extra confidence. Bentler-Bonett’s (1980) normed fit index (NFI) is .986, Bentler’s (1990) CFI is 0.999 and RMSEA is 0.020 (See the full goodness-of-fit indices in Appendix 3). Based on the MIMIC model, we can see that political knowledge, the length of history in the U.S., exposure to American politics, and so on, can indirectly shape party conceptualization and politicized identity formation. For immigrant Americans, coming to understand who they are, how American politics works, and how they fit into American politics is all part of the same learning process. Nonetheless, the regression result needs to be further examined, because regression models do not correct for error variances, meaning the measurement errors can easily mask the true variances.

	Political knowledge	Length of Residence	Sense of Belonging	Awareness	Female	Socialization	Information	English Media
Political Knowledge								
Length of Residence	12.111							
Sense of Belonging	2.502	16.045						
Awareness	0.116	0.097	-0.105					
Female	-0.071	0.056	-0.063	0.02				
Socialization	0.716	1.758	0.246	0.102	0.001			
Information	0.565	2.988	0.126	0.088	-0.003	0.451		
English Media	0.263	0.309	0.18	-0.001	-0.001	0.019	0.028	
American Identity	4.632	29.867	4.978	-0.020	0.033	0.58	0.864	0.369

Table 5. 3: Covariances among independent variables

In addition, Table 5.3 shows the covariances among independent variables. In order to be consistent with regression models, the MIMIC model allows all error variances to correlate among each other. As we can see, the variances of length of residence, political knowledge, American identity and the sense of belonging are highly correlated. Collinearities explain why the sense of belonging coefficient is negative and not statistically significant. In order to see a better picture, we need to correct the error variances, and the only method that can handle this problem is SEM.

5.4 Measurement in party conceptualization and politicized identity

To examine the properties of the dual-concept measure we must consider the latent structure of both respondents' level of party conceptualization and politicized identity formation. In this section, I argue that post-migration experience among immigrants consists of two general currents of stimuli: Cognitive stimuli and emotional stimuli. Each current injects common political conceptualization experiences in American politics. Such learning experiences eventually indirectly affect party conceptualization and politicized identity formation. However, emotional stimuli tend to have more profound impacts on overall political conceptualization than cognitive stimuli.

Thus far, qualitative interview data in chapter 4 strongly suggest that the concepts of party conceptualization and politicized identity are the two distinct measures in forming Asian Americans’ political conceptualization, and they are positively correlated. A natural question after considering the qualitative interviews is how quantitative data are in accord with them, and how we validate these measures statistically. Political conceptualization is a multidimensional political learning outcome; it might consist of components that are positively correlated. Indeed, the method of measuring political conceptualization has been controversial due to measurement errors (E. R. A. N. Smith, 1980). To mitigate these concerns, this section examines whether the typologies capture these two concepts, and how reliable we should expect the measurement to be. In doing so, I employ structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the underlying structural relationship between a series of cognitive stimuli variables, emotional stimulus variables, and the latent variables constructed by them.

Correlations Among Items								
	P. Interest	P. Know.	S. Belonging	Awareness	Eng Med	Am ID	P. Conc	P. Identity
Political Interest	1.000							
Political Knowledge	0.223	1.000						
Sense of Belonging	0.039	0.308	1.000					
Awareness	0.256	0.135	-0.102	1.000				
English Media	0.044	0.201	0.134	-0.003	1.000			
American Identity	0.124	0.478	0.483	0.008	0.224	1.000		
Party Conceptualization	0.059	0.440	0.318	-0.028	0.127	0.622	1.000	
Politicized Identity	0.065	0.412	0.275	0.019	0.111	0.575	0.687	1.000

Table 5. 4: Correlation matrix

The statistical analysis starts with a correlation matrix, which was developed for the 8 measured variables. As Table 5.4 shows, the correlations between party conceptualization, politicized identity, American identity, and political knowledge are greater than .40. Whereas other correlations across the different variables are less than .30, implying relatively little shared variance among them. Thus, a serious statistical question is whether the low correlations are

significantly different from 1.0, or if they differ from 1.0 by chance. Indeed, the observed low correlations are actually not the real correlations of interest. These correlations might be low due to measurement errors, which in turn lower the reliability. Thus, analysis of correlation implies ignoring information about variances of the variables. This may not be appropriate if our research interest is to measure their nuanced structural relationship. What we are concerned about is whether the variables correlate significantly from 1.0 after being corrected for reliability. In doing so, I apply confirmatory factor analysis, in which a model with latent variables (factors)² that have had the influence of random error corrected and examine how the latent factors correlate. However, statistical correctness is not the only issue to be concerned with.

My hypothesis is that there are latent variables behind these measured variables. SEM approach to confirmatory factor analysis allows us to test not only about how many factors might exist, but also about which variables might be good indicators of a given factor, and about which variables cannot be indicators of a factor. As compared to the traditional regression model, an appropriate latent variable model can yield a basis for correct inference with measured variables per construct while providing more information, since a measurement model may be contained within a complete structural model. That is, a measurement model provides information on the factor loadings that relate the indicators and the latent constructs as well as on the variances and covariances of measurement errors and of the constructs. Therefore, the task of the following analysis is to test whether such as theory might be correct.

As noted in Figure 5.2, each variable was included as an indicator of a particular factor. Altogether there are 8 measured variables, leading to an 8×8 covariance matrix that is to be

² I use the term latent variable and latent factor interchangeably, but they are the same concept.

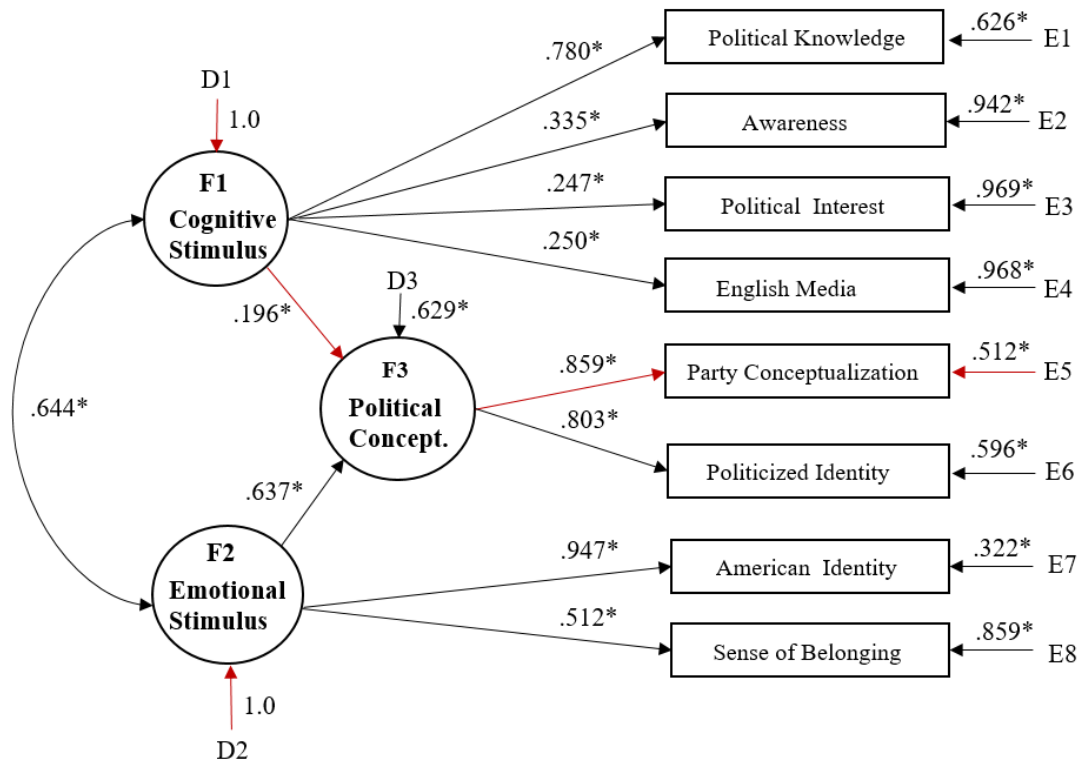
modeled in terms of latent factors. The complete set of equations for the model thus includes the first 8 measurement equations that express the measured variables in terms of factors and residuals. Using these variables, I create a SEM model to account for that relationship. In this SEM model, I include cognitive measured indicators and emotional measured indicators to construct two latent factors: Cognitive stimulus factor and emotional stimulus factor. The cognitive stimulus factor (F1) is constructed by four measured variable indicators: political knowledge, political interest, socialization, and information. Political interest asks respondents how much they are interested in politics. The emotional stimulus factor (F2) is constructed by American identity and the sense of belonging. The two factors F1 and F2 are presumed to generate the correlations among the measured variables: political knowledge, political interest, awareness, English media consumption, American identity and sense of belonging.

Moreover, I also create a third factor—political conceptualization factor (F3)—to capture the common effect of both cognitive and emotional stimulus factors. This latent factor is constructed by party conceptualization and politicized identity and, simultaneously, it is also predicted by cognitive stimulus factor (F1) and emotional stimulus factor (F2). Since political conceptualization (F3) is a common factor between F1 and F2, it is presumed to generate the correlations among party conceptualization and politicized identity.

The analysis was conducted using statistical software EQS,³ in which every variable has a one-way arrow aiming at it is a dependent variable. The remaining variables are independent variables and may have variances and covariances. As Figure 5.2 shows, all parameters of factor loadings are free to be estimated, except for the ones connecting cognitive stimulus factor (F1) and political

³ All SEM notations and jargons used in this research follow Bentler & Weeks model, which is different from those of LISREL. For the sake of brevity, I refrain from getting too much into technical details; those interested readers can read Bentler (2006).

conceptualization (F3) is fixed at 1.0, and variances of F1 and F2 are fixed to be 1.0 for the identification purpose. Moreover, when factors are used as independent variables to estimate dependent variables, the parameter estimates always come with unique or error variances E_i . Likewise, when factors are used as dependent variables, the parameter estimates always come with factor residual variances D_i .



Statistics significant at the 5% level are marked with *
 Red color means the variable is fixed at 1.0 for identification purpose

Figure 5. 2: A SEM model path diagram⁴

⁴ In this model I chose maximum likelihood estimator instead of reweighted least squares or generalized least squares, because the results of them are very similar. Moreover, covariance matrix and standard deviation of the measured variable indicators are included in Appendix 2. Technically inclined readers can turn the covariance matrix into correlation matrix, and replicate the result in R package Levaan or EQS without the actual data. Whereas robust standard errors cannot be calculated without raw data, because it cannot perform the bootstrapping method to calculate standard error.

Path diagrams such as Figure 5.2 are used to create equations in a rather direct manner, in which 8 variables were selected to represent 3 latent constructs. The factor loadings, error variances and factor residual variances reported in Figure 5.2 are standardized, so that we can compare the magnitudes between them. Among those indicators which construct cognitive stimulus factors, only political knowledge has a high factor loading .78, other indicators tend to have low factor loadings. These low factor loadings are due to unreliability in the measures, which is evident in their large error variances. That is, individuals' chronic exposure to English media and self-report interest in politics would not predict very well for cognitive stimulus factor (F1). In contrast, American identity and the sense of belonging to the United States tend to have high factor loadings on emotional stimulus factor (F2). This implies that these emotional or identity variables are strongly correlated.

The critical substantive questions of interest lie in four key parameters: The factor loadings between F1, F2, and F3, as well as the factor loadings between F3 and party conceptualization, and between F3 and politicized identity. Note that I choose to hold the variance of F1 and F2 fixed at 1.0 for identification purposes. Such constraints are not used in general, but they are needed here to reduce the number of parameters to be estimated. The interrelation between F1 and F2 is .644, meaning that cognitive stimuli and emotional stimuli are moderately correlated. The factor loading between politicized identity (F2) and political conceptualization (F3) is .637, which is also moderately high. This indicates that emotional stimulus factor can effectively predict political conceptualization. In contrast, the factor loading between cognitive stimulus factor (F1) and political conceptualization factor (F3) is .196 and factor residual variance is small .629. This suggests that the effect of cognitive stimulus factor (F1) and political conceptualization (F3) are not highly related. By and large, we can see that emotional stimuli, such as the sense of belonging,

American identity and politicized identity offer cumulative and steady support for nurturing overall political conceptualization. Most importantly, party conceptualization and politicized identity are both excellent indicators of overall political conceptualization. Yet, despite being highly correlated,⁵ they are not identical; they do measure something separate from the factor. This lends us the statistical evidence that party conceptualization and politicized identity are two distinct concepts.

The model was estimated by the methods of maximum likelihood (ML) and reweighted least squares (RLS). These methods fit the 8×8 covariance matrix of the measured variables. An evaluation of the sample statistics on the measured variables reveals that Mardia's (1974) kurtosis test of the hypothesis of normality failed to reject the variables as normally distributed, because Mardia's coefficient is 5.79 and normalized estimate is 3.34. Despite these statistics alone are not harmful to the overall parameter estimation, given the sample is about 200, the maximum likelihood method might not be the most appropriate estimator, because it is bias against small sample sizes when $N < 400$ (Arruda & Bentler, 2017; Bentler, 2006; Jalal & Bentler, 2018; Zheng, 2020). Thus, I also used RLS estimator as implemented in EQS, which is an asymptotically distribution-free estimator, and provides highly consistent parameter estimates across different sample sizes and distribution free (Arruda & Bentler, 2017; Browne, 1974; Zheng, 2020).

⁵ The correlation between party conceptualization and politicized identity can be calculated according to their factor loadings, that is, $.859 \times .803 \approx .69$.

	Standardized Residual Matrix							
	P. Interest	P. Know.	Belonging	Awareness	Eng Med	Am ID	P. Conc	P. Identity
Political Interest	0.000							
Political Knowledge	0.024	0.000						
Belonging	-0.076	0.035	0.000					
Awareness	0.107	-0.019	0.037	0.000				
English Media	-0.033	0.017	0.033	-0.158	0.000			
American Identity	-0.055	-0.012	0.000	0.042	0.062	0.000		
Party Conceptualization	-0.080	0.003	-0.003	0.013	-0.019	0.002	0.000	
Politicized Identity	-0.068	0.009	-0.028	0.076	-0.030	0.000	0.000	0.000

Table 5. 5: Standard residual matrix

How well does the model implied covariance matrix fit the sample covariance matrix? The standardized residual matrix shows the differences between a model-implied covariance structure to a sample covariance structure. Table 5.5 shows that most residuals are close to zero, meaning that the sample covariance structure is well reproduced according to the model. However, the covariance residual between awareness and political interest, and awareness with English media consumption tend to be greater than .1. This means that these pairs of variables are not correlated very well.

It is evident that the model fits the data quite reasonably well. The χ^2 goodness-of-fit test based on maximum likelihood method is 21.006 based on 17 degrees of freedom, together they yielded a p-value=.1366. The χ^2 goodness-of-fit test based on RLS is 20.061, and p-value is .1696. This means that the model-implied covariance structure is satisfactorily reproduced by the sample covariance structure. Thus, the model cannot be rejected, since it is extremely likely to be true. Other goodness-of-fit indexes lend us stronger confidence. Bentler-Bonett's (1980) normed fit index (NFI) is .951, Bentler's (1990) CFI is .99, and RMSEA is .033 (See appendix for complete goodness-of-fit indexes and output).

The generalizability of findings can be examined from model specifications and model fit. The number of quality indicators of some factors may be inadequate to permit easy detection of

misspecifications related to those factors, and hence the measurement status of indicators is critical to draw reasonable conclusions about a model. The basic model specification is such that we have selected only part of the data to be analyzed. The matrix to be analyzed will differ from the input matrix if we hold some measured variables fixed for identification purposes, or free some variables, resulting in adding and dropping parameters. Therefore, it is valuable to check different model specifications to be sure that the rearrangement is accomplished correctly. Equivalent models have identical model fit. Hence, if these variant models are equivalent, they should produce identical model fit indices.

Goodness-of-Fit Tests for Variants of SEM Models										
Variance	Variable	Covariance	<i>df</i>	χ^2_{ML}	<i>P-value</i> (ML)	χ^2_{RLS}	<i>P-value</i> (RLS)	NFI	CFI	RMSEA
F1, F2=*	Party Conceptualization=1	F1, F2=*	15	21.006	0.137	20.063	0.170	0.951	0.985	0.043
F1, F2=*	Politicized Identity=1	F1, F2=*	15	21.006	0.137	20.062	0.170	0.951	0.985	0.043
F1, F2=1	Politicized Identity=1	F1, F2=1	16	21.006	0.178	20.061	0.217	0.951	0.988	0.038
F1, F2=1	Party Conceptualization=1	F1, F2=1	16	21.006	0.178	20.061	0.217	0.951	0.988	0.038
F1, F2=*	Politicized Identity=1	F1, F2=1	16	21.006	0.178	20.061	0.217	0.951	0.988	0.038
F1, F2=*	Party Conceptualization=1	F1, F2=1	16	21.006	0.178	20.061	0.217	0.951	0.988	0.038
F1, F2=1	Politicized Identity=1	F1, F2=*	17	21.006	0.226	20.061	0.271	0.951	0.990	0.033
F1, F2=1	Party Conceptualization=1	F1, F2=*	17	21.006	0.226	20.061	0.271	0.951	0.990	0.033

Note: *=free to be estimated; 1=fixed

Table 5. 6: Goodness-of-fit tests for variants of SEM models

To evaluate this proposition, variants of SEM models were resubmitted to EQS with different modifications. As Table 5.6 shows, variance, variable and covariance of interest can be free to be estimated as indicated by “*”, or held fixed at the value of 1.0. As we can see, the program produced optimal estimates for the remaining free parameters under different model specifications. What interests us more is the chi-square statistic, which remains stable across all models. The p-values derived from RLS tend to be slightly larger than those derived from ML, and all of the p-values clearly > .05. Other fit indices such as NFI, CFI and RMSEA remain highly equivalent across all models, and collectively they show a reasonably good fit. Therefore, all these suggest that the model reported in Figure 5.2 is an optimal one.

By and large, the qualitative data in the previous chapter is well upheld in the present analysis. The structural equation model in Figure 5.2 supports the hypothesis that political conceptualization is the combination of political cognition and emotional variables, which indirectly affect party conceptualization and politicized identity formation. In these concept measures, politicized identity tends to play a more important role in the formation of political conceptions. Indeed, lacking pre-adult political socialization, political conceptualization among Asian immigrants is experience-based. In particular, in the context of immigrant attitudinal incorporation, the longevity of residence is crucial for politicized identity formation.

5.5 Discussion & conclusion

Campbell et al. (1960) and E. R. A. N. Smith (1980) maintained that the level of political conceptualization was primarily determined by cognitive abilities. They assumed that cognitive abilities are mainly permanent traits, and that to the extent that they influence the level of conceptualization, they should be fairly stable over time. Moreover, past studies have documented that cognitive limitations are the basis for ideological sophistication, because low cognitive respondents might not be able to use ideological tones in their responses (Nie et al., 1976; E. R. A. N. Smith, 1980). In particular, we must be aware that tapping the ideological tones that the evaluations take after they have been formed, rather than the actual processes of evaluation (E. R. A. N. Smith, 1980). That is, due to the environmental contextual effects, e.g. exposure to presidential campaigns, people can adopt symbolic ideological rhetoric from the mass media. Likewise, some individuals might be unaccustomed to thinking in terms of liberal-conservative distinctions (Field & Anderson, 1969).

However, the findings in this chapter rub against their arguments. This chapter extends the study of political conceptualization among immigrant populations by further differentiating party conceptualization and politicized identity. Scholars in political psychology and political behavior tend to agree that most members of the mass public do not have elaborative hierarchical cognitive structures about politics; rather, individuals respond to political issues and the parties based on noncognitive and compartmentalized effects (Huddy et al., 2015a; Lau, 1986; Sears et al., 1986). Moreover, scholars have focused on political cognition to understand political conceptualization but have paid less attention to both party cognition and politicized identity bases of partisanship acquisition. The present chapter has argued that the dual-concept measure elicits the processes of political conceptualization that integrates party conceptualization and politicized identity over time as Asian immigrants come to attach their social identity formation to political concepts. Within these processes, individuals realize that their life chances are interrelated with their social identity as a racial minority in the United States. Social identity theory provides a strong foundation for the study of partisanship and political involvement (Green et al., 2002; Huddy, Mason, & Aaroe, 2015b). A politicized identity involves a subjective sense of American identity, belonging, and a party by learning or unconscious assimilation to varying degrees. Once identified with a party that represent their group interests, individuals are encouraged to support their preferred party's status and electoral leverages as a way to sustain and credit their party's positive distinctiveness (Campbell et al., 1960; Huddy et al., 2015b; Newcomb et al., 1965).

Thus far, in-depth interviews and data analyses offer a vantage point into an experience-based political conceptualization trajectory from uncertainty and ambivalence to awareness and full-fledge partisans as Asian immigrants' experiences in the United States unveil over time. Together these narratives help constitute a political conceptualization paradigm with which we can evaluate

the socialization processes. At one level, it is difficult to differentiate party conceptualization and politicized identity in the way that Asian and Latino immigrants learn about the parties—particularly, at a time when partisan preference and racialized social identity have come into alignment in the form of partisan and social identity sorting. Ordinary American citizens are very much less interested in politics, and their awareness of politics is limited (Campbell et al., 1960; Carpini & Keeter, 1996). Asian American immigrants are not much different from native-born ordinary Americans. What differentiates immigrants from nonimmigrants is the diffusion of cognitive and politicized identity among Asian American immigrants brought about by experiences. Lacking a solid political conceptualization, new immigrants usually do not have reference points to interpret or evaluate political issues. As a result, their attitudes toward social and political issues are vague, capricious, and often confused. Quite often, they are either hesitant to express preferences on social issues or perceive various social issues through the lens of pre-migration perspectives and experiences.

These arguments are quite in accord with the statistical estimates. As the statistical results indicate, politicized identity tends to play more critical yet subtle roles in political conceptualization. Statistical analysis in this chapter shows that Asian and Latino immigrants are more likely to rely on politicized identity to develop their political conceptualization. Due to the language barrier and unfamiliarity with American culture, many immigrants cannot conveniently acquire political information; thus, interpreting political information for political evaluation is not easy for immigrant populations. Indeed, cognitive abilities among immigrants are constrained by language barriers; instead, they learn about the parties and politics on the basis of daily experiences. Instead, they prefer to take identity as a heuristic shortcut. This experience-based political conceptualization takes the lead in political socialization, and emotional stimuli play a

critical role in accounting for political engagement (Brader, 2006; Damasio, 1994; Huddy et al., 2015b). Thus, the heightened politicized identity has accompanied biased party learning, and partisan sorting. These findings seem to be consistent with what Sears et al. (2016) found in their research on Latino partisanship acquisition that Latinos tend to have consistent partisan preference toward the Democratic Party even when they have little information about the parties. These findings also illuminate Hajnal and Lee's (2011) argument that information uncertainty and identity ambivalence account for immigrants' partisan choice as nonpartisan. However, this chapter shows that information is not the most important factor for immigrants to learn about the parties. Instead, emotional stimuli such as politicized social identity tend to have more profound effects on party images and on development of political conceptualization among Asian immigrants, as well as other immigrant populations. As such, these two mechanisms embedded in lived experiences in the United States over time tend to increase the consistency and coherence of political attitudes in the parties, policies, and candidates. Therefore, as Asian immigrants live in the United States longer and acquire more exposure to American politics, the growth of party conceptions leads to greater consistency in preference.

Appendix 1

	Party Conceptualization	Politicized Identity
Political Knowledge	0.288*** (0.059)	0.236*** (0.057)
Sense of Belong	0.135*** (0.050)	0.113** (0.051)
Awareness	-0.747 (0.486)	-0.353 (0.452)
Socialization	0.027 (0.112)	-0.002 (0.117)
Information	0.248 (0.180)	0.459** (0.182)
English Media	0.045 (0.284)	0.009 (0.282)
Female	-0.154 (0.269)	0.406 (0.269)
Cut1	1.531** (0.611)	1.785*** (0.604)
Cut2	3.319*** (0.649)	2.824*** (0.622)
Cut3	5.927*** (0.716)	5.068*** (0.686)
N	206	206

Table 5.A 1: Regression models with American identity and length of residence omitted

Appendix 2

Covariance Structure Specification

In SEM, the population covariance matrix Σ has a hypothesized structure $\Sigma = \Sigma(\theta)$, where $\Sigma(\theta)$ is a model implied covariance matrix, and θ contains a vector of free parameters. If our hypothesis is plausible, the covariance structure ought to be reproduced by the model implied covariance structure. Specifically, since the sample covariance matrix S is an unbiased estimator of the population covariance matrix, an objective function $F[\Sigma(\theta), S]$ measures the discrepancy between $\Sigma(\theta)$ and S . Therefore, to estimate $\hat{\theta}$, we minimize a real objective function $F[\Sigma(\theta), S]$. At

minimum, $\hat{\theta}$ will contain all the parameter estimates.

In classical covariance structure analysis and based on multivariate normally distributed variables, the maximum likelihood (ML) and generalized least squares (GLS) are the most common methods to obtain the test statistics for evaluating the goodness-of-fit. In this study we use ML discrepancy function T_{ML} (Jöreskog, 1969) to derive the goodness-of-fit test statistic. As equation 1 shows, the model implied covariance matrix $\Sigma(\theta)$ is fitted to the sample covariance matrix S using the Wishart likelihood function.

$$F_{ML}(\theta) = \log|\Sigma(\theta) - \log|S| + tr(S\Sigma(\theta)^{-1}) - p \quad (1)$$

$$\hat{\theta}_{ML} = \text{argmin } F_{ML}(\theta) \quad (2)$$

As equation 2 shows, at the minimum of the fit function $F_{ML}(\theta)$, $\hat{\theta}_{ML}$ contains parameter estimates $\hat{\Lambda}$, $\hat{\Phi}$, and $\hat{\Psi}$, where $\hat{\Lambda}$ is a matrix of estimated factor loadings, $\hat{\Phi}$ is a estimated factor covariance, and $\hat{\Psi}$ is the covariance matrix of error variables. Through these parameter estimates, we can reproduce the covariance matrix of the observed variables, that is, $\Sigma(\hat{\theta}) = \hat{\Lambda}\hat{\Phi}\hat{\Lambda}' + \hat{\Psi}$.

Appendix 3

Goodness-of-Fit Indices for 3-Factor Model in Figure 5.2

```
/EQUATIONS
V2 = *F1 + E2;
V1 = *F1 + E1;
V8 = *F1 + E8;
V4 = *F2 + E4;
V9 = *F2 + E9;
V5 = *F1 + E5;
V11 = 1F3 + E11;
V12 = *F3 + E12;
F3 = *F1 + *F2 + D3;

/VARIANCES
D3 = *;
E2 = *;
E1 = *;
F1 = 1;
F2 = 1;
E8 = *;
E4 = *;
E5 = *;
E9 = *;
E11 =*;
E12 =*;

/COVARIANCES
F1, F2=*;

/PRINT
EIS;
FIT=ALL;
TABLE=EQUATION;
/END
```

GOODNESS OF FIT SUMMARY FOR METHOD = ML

INDEPENDENCE MODEL CHI-SQUARE = 431.385 ON 28 DEGREES OF FREEDOM

INDEPENDENCE AIC = 375.385 INDEPENDENCE CAIC = 253.269
 MODEL AIC = -8.994 MODEL CAIC = -74.413

LOG LIKELIHOOD BASED ON THE STRUCTURED MODEL = 4518.139
 AKAIKE INFORMATION CRITERION (AIC) BASED ON LOG LIKELIHOOD = 4562.139
 BAYESIAN INFORMATION CRITERION (BIC) BASED ON LOG LIKELIHOOD = 4636.088

CHI-SQUARE = 21.006 BASED ON 15 DEGREES OF FREEDOM
 PROBABILITY VALUE FOR THE CHI-SQUARE STATISTIC IS 0.13663

THE NORMAL THEORY RLS CHI-SQUARE FOR THIS ML SOLUTION IS 20.061.
 PROBABILITY VALUE FOR THE CHI-SQUARE STATISTIC IS 0.16962

FIT INDICES

 BENTLER-BONETT NORMED FIT INDEX = 0.951
 BENTLER-BONETT NON-NORMED FIT INDEX = 0.972
 COMPARATIVE FIT INDEX (CFI) = 0.985
 BOLLEN'S (IFI) FIT INDEX = 0.986
 MCDONALD'S (MFI) FIT INDEX = 0.986
 JORESKOG-SORBOM'S GFI FIT INDEX = 0.977
 JORESKOG-SORBOM'S AGFI FIT INDEX = 0.945
 ROOT MEAN-SQUARE RESIDUAL (RMR) = 0.061
 STANDARDIZED RMR = 0.046
 ROOT MEAN-SQUARE ERROR OF APPROXIMATION (RMSEA) = 0.043
 90% CONFIDENCE INTERVAL OF RMSEA (0.000, 0.083)

RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS

 CRONBACH'S ALPHA = 0.676
 RELIABILITY COEFFICIENT RHO = 0.844

Goodness-of-Fit Indices for a MIMIC Model in Figure 5.4

```

GOODNESS OF FIT SUMMARY FOR METHOD = ML

INDEPENDENCE MODEL CHI-SQUARE          =      610.771 ON      55 DEGREES OF FREEDOM

INDEPENDENCE AIC =      500.771   INDEPENDENCE CAIC =      263.816
MODEL AIC =      -7.373           MODEL CAIC =      -41.839

LOG LIKELIHOOD BASED ON THE STRUCTURED MODEL          =      7073.059
AKAIKE INFORMATION CRITERION (AIC) BASED ON LOG LIKELIHOOD =      7189.059
BAYESIAN INFORMATION CRITERION (BIC) BASED ON LOG LIKELIHOOD =      7380.938

CHI-SQUARE =      8.627 BASED ON      8 DEGREES OF FREEDOM
PROBABILITY VALUE FOR THE CHI-SQUARE STATISTIC IS      0.37471

THE NORMAL THEORY RLS CHI-SQUARE FOR THIS ML SOLUTION IS      8.444.
PROBABILITY VALUE FOR THE CHI-SQUARE STATISTIC IS      0.39130

FIT INDICES
-----
BENTLER-BONETT      NORMED FIT INDEX =      0.986
BENTLER-BONETT NON-NORMED FIT INDEX =      0.992
COMPARATIVE FIT INDEX (CFI)          =      0.999
BOLLEN'S            (IFI) FIT INDEX  =      0.999
MCDONALD'S          (MFI) FIT INDEX  =      0.998
JORESKOG-SORBOM'S  GFI  FIT INDEX  =      0.992
JORESKOG-SORBOM'S  AGFI FIT INDEX  =      0.937
ROOT MEAN-SQUARE RESIDUAL (RMR)      =      0.031
STANDARDIZED RMR          =      0.015
ROOT MEAN-SQUARE ERROR OF APPROXIMATION (RMSEA) =      0.020
90% CONFIDENCE INTERVAL OF RMSEA (      0.000,      0.086)

RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS USING DEPENDENT VARIABLES ONLY
-----
CRONBACH'S ALPHA          =      0.812
COVARIATE-FREE ALPHA      =      0.298
COVARIATE-BASED ALPHA     =      0.514
RELIABILITY COEFFICIENT RHO =      0.812
COVARIATE-FREE RHO        =      0.290
COVARIATE-BASED RHO       =      0.522

```

CHAPTER 6

Formation of Party Schemas and Perception of Inclusiveness

Once a person has acquired some embryonic party attachment, it is easy for him to discover that most events in the ambiguous world of politics redound to the credit of his chosen party.

-- The American Voter (1960:165)

6.1 Introduction

In the last two chapters, I demonstrated the socialization experiences and political stimuli of Asian American immigrants embedded in different levels of party conceptualization and politicized identity formation using both qualitative interview and survey data. Using political conceptualization inductively, this chapter examines the ways in which Asian American immigrants' political and emotional motivations shape the formation of political schemas of the Democratic and Republican Party. Parallel to political conceptualization, applying schematic processing theory in Asian American context I show that political learning is demonstrated in the processes by which individuals acquire party schemas. Drawing data from the 2016 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey (CMPS),¹ and survey experiment embedded in them, I argue that despite the fact that individuals are exposed to a variety of political communications and

¹ As one of the contributors to the CMPS data, I was allowed to use these data.
https://cmgsurvey.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/cmgs_contributor_list.pdf

experiences, political learning is based on a set of political schemas to filter and sort the political information, as well as retain those of most interest and concern. Therefore, more socialization experiences and more information exposure are correlated with higher consistency of party schemas and partisan preferences. In return, greater post-migration experiences lead to greater consistency of political attitudes and deeper attitudinal assimilation that comports with their cognitive social and group identity. Moreover, as a racial minority group, discrimination experiences are an important part of post-migration socialization among Asian Americans. The association between the Democratic Party and the collective sense of inclusiveness becomes one of key domain-specific schemas, thereby nudging Asian Americans to align with the Democratic Party.

Existing research in immigrant political assimilation and incorporation tends to overlook the underlying party-schematic processing among Asian immigrants and their subsequent generations. To fill this void, this chapter relies on two analytical frameworks: conscious & unconscious information processing and political schematic thinking. The former examines the mechanism by which individuals are exposed to political information and categorize the information based on long-term memory to activate and link the short-term working memory. In contrast, the schema-based information processing is based on how the party images are formed and retained in the political knowledge structures, and how such political knowledge structures guide the party information processing. Despite these analytical frameworks shedding significant light on how people process information, there remains an important theoretical and empirical puzzle regarding the extent these mechanisms work for immigrant populations in the United States and how they learn about the parties. Due to pre-migration predispositions, immigrants possess different attitudes toward the variety of social, political and economic issues. Whereas lacking coherent

cognitive structures as a harness that links these capricious attitudes to a systematic political preference these attitudes will not become a cohesive political motivation. Partisan schemas therefore serve as a *cognitive map* that incorporates these attitudes into knowledge structures in the process of navigating the new political and social environment.

Using observational data alone is difficult to reveal the finer grain of stored cognition, much less cognitive processes (Kuklinski, Luskin, & Bolland, 1991). To support my argument, this chapter uses a survey experiment embedded in the 2016 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey (CMPS) data. To measure the party schemas, the survey experiment relies on open-ended responses about the self-report images of the Democratic and Republican Party. To tease out the effect of the post-migration racial consciousness, subjects were randomly assigned into control and treatment groups. The treatment is racial discrimination experience questionnaires in the United States. This experiment shows an obvious variation among Asian American population: People who have been in the United States the longest have stronger party schemas, whereas they are also less likely to respond to the racial discrimination primes, because extra information does not change their attitudes. Meanwhile, people have been in the United States the shortest time do not associate the Democratic Party with discrimination experiences, because they do not know enough about American politics yet. As a result, they do not respond to the primes either. In contrast, people in the middle range of time in the United States are most sensitive to the inclusion issue, thus they are most responsive to the primes. These findings illuminate our understanding of the mechanism through which Asian American immigrants learn about American politics and the parties.

This chapter is organized into four sections: In the first section, I will review the major social and cognitive psychology theories that shed light on party perceptions among Asian American

immigrants. In the second section, I will introduce the experimental design, party schema measures, and post-experiment treatment. Third section discusses the statistical and the results of the experiment. The last section is discussion and conclusion.

6.2 Theory: Cognitive information processes & party schemas

6.2.1 Unconscious thinking

Categorization is one of the most basic mechanisms for individuals to simplify the information processing procedure in human cognition (Kuklinski et al., 1991; Lau, 1986; Lodge & Hamill, 1986; Lodge & Taber, 2013; Rahn, 1993). The categorization acts involve two sub-mechanisms: Implicit and explicit. Scholars in cognitive psychology, political psychology, and social psychology generally agree that the ways in which humans categorize information, the cognitive structures—so to speak—can be broadly divided into two systems when processing information: unconsciousness and consciousness (Lodge & Taber, 2013), pre-consciousness and post-consciousness (J. A. Bargh, 1994; J. A. Bargh, Chaiken, Govender, & Pratto, 1992), spontaneous and deliberate thinking, or implicit and explicit (Mendelberg, 2001; Perez, 2016), or explicit/implicit cognition, which is characterized by level of the awareness (Posner & Snyder, 1975; Shiffrin & Schneider, 1977). Conscious and unconscious processes represent an explicit and implicit information dual process to handle the familiar and unfamiliar information, in which the basic rationale is a set of crystallized predispositions that is contingent upon the level of familiarity of the subjects that individuals face. Social and political stereotypes have profound influence on public opinion formation and information processes (Lippmann, 1922).

Lodge & Taber's (2013) *John Q. Public* (JQP) model comprehensively accounts for how implicit attitudes influence people's political information processing and their behavior.

Unconscious thinking tends to be spontaneous and impulsive forms of thinking, which is based on prior knowledge or long-term memory (Lodge and Taber, 2013; Olson and Fazio, 2009). From a slightly different angle, post-conscious automaticity works similarly like preconscious thinking, which requires recent experiences as stimuli to activate the post-conscious process (J. A. Bargh, 1994). The rationale for categorization varies according to the degree of familiarity. Individuals tend to unconsciously choose the subjects that they are most familiar with to start with. When someone faces completely unfamiliar information, both consciousness and unconsciousness information processes do not work, then, the issues that are closely related to what one is familiar becomes an initial cue that evokes unconscious thinking. Indeed, for many immigrants, moving to the United States, they are not familiar with American politics, yet the basic foreign policy outlooks that the parties uphold become an initial cue that they categorize the parties, as to which one is more likely to be acceptable.

6.2.2 Conscious thinking

The existence of an opinion on an issue is based on both the cognitive and affective factors (Campbell et al., 1960; Lau, 1986; Newcomb et al., 1965). Cognitive factor refers to working memory capacity, while the affective factor involves psychological impacts such as anxiety, anger, depression, enthusiasm, etc. That said, for individuals to be responsive to political communications, they must have both the cognitive and affective factors to associate with the parties. Conscious thinking therefore serves as a systematic funneling mechanism which turns capricious feelings and attitudes into political reasoning. In the study of implicit racism, Mendelberg (2001) finds that the cognitive factor exists in implicit messages when the respondents were not aware, while the affective factor tends to be easily evoked in explicit messages, or the activation of working memory that individuals experienced. For the cognitive and affective factors

to work, individuals must be exposed to political discourses and understand their implicit political implications. The differences between conscious and unconscious thinking are whether the recent events or experiences can evoke a certain feeling toward some issues. The former contains all thoughts, memories, feelings and wishes of which we are aware at any given moment. This includes our memory, which is not always part of consciousness but can be retrieved easily and brought into awareness. The puzzle is that it is usually hard to distinguish whether it is consciousness or unconscious thinking affects individuals' behavior.

For immigrants, if they are not sensitive to politics or experienced with racial discrimination in the United States, they are not responsive to negative affective-charged effects, e.g. racial micro-aggression. In this case, they have to rely on pre-migration predispositions to navigate the initial evaluation of the parties or simply shirk identifying with any partisanship. Seen in this light, for those who do not have sufficient exposure to American society and politics, their evaluation of the parties will be anchored in policy attitudes, because transnational homeland political concern is a big characteristic among immigrants (Jones-Correa, 1998; Lien, 2006; S. K. Ramakrishnan, 2005; J. S. Wong, 2006). In contrast, for those who have been in the United States for an extended period of time, and/or have sufficient exposure to American society and politics, then, their experiences will generate another dimension in partisan direction and intensity. The dynamics of these two mechanisms account for a downward quadratic shape in the partisanship pattern. That is, some immigrants who hold strong anti-communism attitudes tend to change their attitudes after living in the United States for a long period of time.

6.2.3 *Schematic processes*

The notion of cognitive structures leads us to the realm of social cognition theories, among them, the concept of schematic information processing plays a big role in accounting for the variations in political sophistication. Fiske and Taylor (1984) precisely defined a schema concept as: “a cognitive structure that represents organized knowledge about a given concept or type of stimulus” (p.140). Put plainly, a schema is a collection of mental pictures of the original encounters with examples of the typical cases. Also, a schema may contain both the attributes of the concept and the relationships among multiple attributes, which maintains that information is stored in an abstract form, not simply as a collection of all the original encounters with examples of the general cases (Fiske & Taylor, 1984). Schemas can be multidimensional; the hierarchical structures of a series of schema are schemata. Specifically, as Lau (1986) defines “schemata are hierarchically structured, containing a schema label, particular instances of the schema and generic information relevant to all or almost all of these specific instances” (p.95). The reason that schemata can be useful is that they allow people to take shortcuts in interpreting the vast amount of information that is available in a given environment. The schemata processes categorize information through which individuals turn information reception and learning into consideration, or guide interpretation of existing information.

Schemas capture the same sense as levels of conceptualization or belief systems, whereas they are not the same (Lau, 1986). Different levels of political conceptualization are explicitly ordered or hierarchical according to one’s cognitive capability or political sophistication. Whereas political schemata do not assume the ordering of political sophistication; rather, they are mental pictures—so to speak—of the political subjects or events that partially reflect some underlying cognitive structures. Party schema theory argues that individuals form impressions of the parties as part of

the processing of information. These party evaluations are stored as links in long-term memory, where they may be subsequently cued on exposure to new information.

A schematic information process can help us understand the formation of social identity. Social psychologists reveal that individuals are apt to consciously or unconsciously label themselves and others on the basis of self-perceived characteristics of the group (Turner & Reynolds, 2003). In the parlance of ethnocentrism, individuals have a tendency to divide the human world into in-groups and out-groups (D. Kinder & Kam, 2009). In particular, the political world is complicated for low information individuals and for those who have little interest in politics. Individuals tend to take intuitive shortcuts to evaluate political issues, such heuristics is based on information that is most accessible (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). Political and social identity developments vary with chronic accessibility. By “chronic accessibility,” I mean that it takes years to develop the schematic processes, which involve direct or indirect experiences. For immigrants, the exposure to politics, policies, the party communications, and intergroup racial relations tends to incorporate into the ways in which they evaluate the parties. Following these logics, a straightforward hypothesis is that the accumulation of knowledge in American politics is correlated with the length of residence in the United States, and acquisition of party identification is contingent upon the connection between political knowledge and incentives.

In sum, the cognitive process of political learning starts with general, vague and abstract issue conceptions and builds experience-based partisan conceptions. That said, lack of lived experiences in and political knowledge of America tends to predispose individuals to perceive various political issues based on pre-existing attitudes. In the context of immigrants, when and how they socialize party symbols as an information shortcut becomes an immediate empirical question when we attempt to understand immigrants’ political socialization. In this sense, party rhetoric that

respondents expressed reflect what political and party information individuals are haphazardly exposed to, and what kind of information they retain for political evaluations, and eventually form the basic cognitive structures of the parties (Hamill & Lodge, 1986; Lau, 1986; Lodge & Taber, 2013; Newcomb et al., 1965). I propose that unconscious and pre-conscious reasoning account for how pre-migration predispositions affect Asian immigrants' view on U.S. politics, and that post-migration experiences are apt to be conscious reasoning. The above theories explain conscious and unconscious information processes that differentiate new immigrants, older immigrants and US-born Americans. For immigrants, the levels of acculturation and assimilation shape the extent to which individuals are exposed to political information and develop an interest in American politics. As such, it entails variations in party schema.

6.3 Racial consciousness as a priming stimulus

I argue that racial consciousness is a typical post-migration experience through which immigrants learn their social identity as a racial group in the United States. To support this point, Table 6.1 shows various discrimination experiences among Asian Americans across different generations. The data were drawn from the 2008 National Asian American Survey. In a sense, the first-generation Asians reported more economic discrimination and less social discrimination. While the second and third-generation Asian Americans reported more on social discrimination than economic. Overall, the second generation tends to be more sensitive to discriminations than their first-generation counterparts as indicated in the sum of all percentages of discrimination experiences. This pattern holds in both California and nationwide samples. This lends us the empirical evidence that the longer Asians have been in the United States, the more conscious they are about racial discrimination. These data are on par with what Goto, Gee, and Takeuchi (2002) find in their research on the perception of discrimination among Chinese Americans. From a

culture-specific framework, they find that 43 percent of Chinese American respondents reported being unfairly treated recently, and 21 percent of Chinese Americans reported being discriminated against in their lifetime. In a similar vein, Masuoka and Junn (2013) and K. Ramakrishnan, Wong, Lee, and Junn (2009) find that racial categorization has a prevalent effect on political attitudes, in part, because racial considerations tend to be more chronically accessible to minorities. Therefore, racially conscious minorities more quickly sense racial undertones in political discourses without the moderating influence of elite framing or priming (Vincent, Valentino, Philpot, & White, 2006).

Most serious discrimination personally experienced	CA			US		
	1 Gen	2 Gen	3 Gen	1 Gen	2 Gen	3 Gen
Unfairly denied a job or fired	9%	9%	6%	10%	7%	6%
Unfairly denied a promotion at work	13%	10%	6%	14%	10%	5%
Unfairly treated by the police	12%	14%	8%	13%	12%	7%
Unfairly prevented from renting or buying house	6%	9%	6%	5%	7%	3%
Treated unfairly or badly at restaurants or stores	17%	31%	28%	18%	29%	29%
Total	57%	72%	55%	60%	65%	51%
N	1,729	173	78	4,568	384	162

Data: 2008 NAAS

Table 6. 1: Discrimination experiences among Asian Americans

The transition between consciousness and unconsciousness of racial and social identities can reflect in their responses to racial discrimination stimuli. Social psychologists have documented that, in pre-conscious automaticity the stimulus is experienced below the level of cognizance. As such, individuals are unaware of having been exposed to the priming stimulus. In contrast, in post-conscious automaticity individuals are aware of the stimulus, whereas they usually are not aware of its subtle effect on thoughts, feelings, or behaviors (J. Bargh, 2007). Racial discrimination as a form of post-migration experience can activate the conscious thinking when exposed to relevant information. As Masuoka and Junn (2013) argue, Americans' perception of group stereotypes is consistent with the order of racial hierarchy, in which Asians and Latinos are placed below Whites and above Blacks. Racial discrimination experiences and consciousness, therefore, reinforce such

a hierarchy in which individuals of subordinate groups are distinctly aware of their social identity and status (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). From a slightly different perspective, racial discrimination is also rooted in collective identity. DiMaggio (1997) points out that collective identity is the way in which social identities enter into the constitution of individual selves. Self-categorization theories portray collective identities as invoked by conditions that make particular identities salient (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Therefore, DiMaggio (1997) precisely points out that “individual identities reflect elaborated group-identities schemata as context-dependent in this way is consistent with observations of the volatility with which identities may gain and lose salience during periods of intergroup conflict” (p. 275).

Based on what I have discussed so far, one way to measure immigrant political socialization is to test the extent to which they are consciously aware of the treatment effect—racial discrimination experiences. Priming effect refers to change in benchmarks and/or ranking order of salience that individuals make political evaluation (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987). Priming effects vary with the social and political environment in which the accessibility of a predisposition leads the person to give it a greater weight in making decisions about politics and issues (Chong, 1996).

6.4 Experimental design

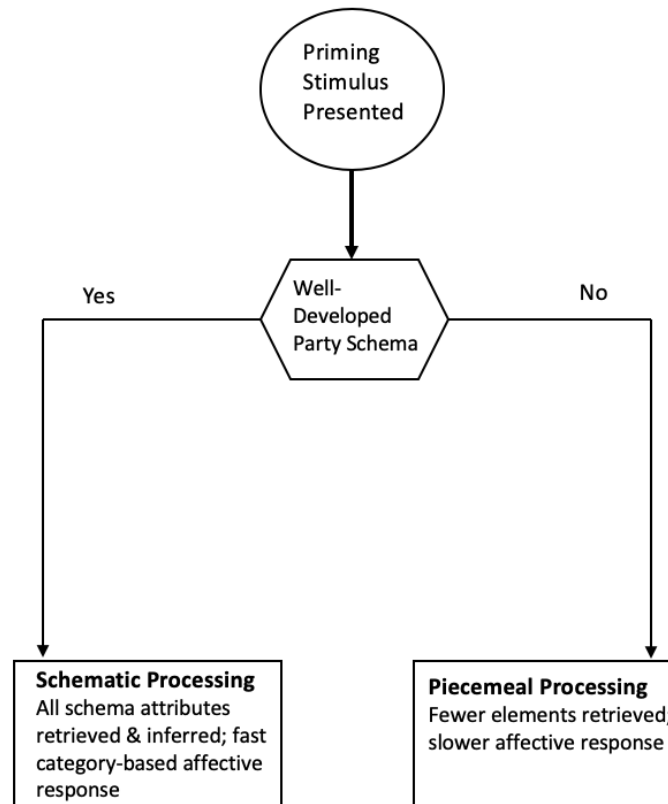


Figure 6. 1: A schematic model of political information processing²

The experimental design is based on a schematic model of political information processing introduced by Richard Lau (1986). The logic is straightforward: If individuals have a relatively well-developed party schema, they will express it without much thinking when political stimuli are presented. Then, their mental images of the parties can be categorized in a consistent way following a schematic process and demonstrate prompt category-based affective responses. In contrast, if individuals have low or little party conception, they will have piecemeal processing instead of schematic processing of the information. By “piecemeal processing,” it means according to Fiske (1986) that, “it relies only on the information given and combines the available features

² This figure is a simplified version of Lau’s (1986) Schematic Model (p.97).

without reference to an overall organization structure” (p.43). In other words, they are not able to retrieve any political information related to the parties or experience slow affective responses. Figure 6.1 illustrates the mechanism of how schematic information processing work. The information that individuals learn about any parties, candidates, policies or political events is an information processing mechanism to which people are exposed. Hence, their political schemata facilitate the processing, storage, and retrieval of that information (Lau, 1986). Nonetheless, the effects of schematic processing may vary in intensity according to the strength of prior learning (Sears, 1983). That is, individuals with prior experiences can express their attitudes without detailed consideration of underlying meanings.

Based on the schematic model shown in Figure 6.1, the experiment undertaken in this chapter is to treat the subjects with a series of discrimination priming stimuli. What we are to test in this experiment is the extent to which racial discrimination experiences sway the party images. As Figure 6.1 shows, if a person possesses a well-developed schema about a party and its position on racial issues, then priming him or her with racial discrimination experiences will probably lead to a quick category-based affective response.

6.5 Hypotheses

Based on the theory that I have discussed thus far, we expect that the stronger people’s party schemas, the less responsive they should be to new information, e.g., priming stimulus. In the particular case of discrimination experiences and party schemas, the stronger people’s party schemas, the more they have already built racial inclusiveness into it, and therefore the less they should change in response to the racial discrimination primes. In contrast, individuals with extremely weak or non-existent party schemas might not respond to the primes at all, because even

after being reminded about discrimination that Asian Americans suffer, they would not see this as a reason for liking the Democratic Party because they might not be aware of the party's policy of racial inclusion.

If people with extremely strong or extremely weak schemas are not expected to respond to the primes, what about people who fall in between—people who do have party schemas but do not have highly developed ones? How should they respond to being reminded about the existence of racial discrimination? We should expect the largest response to the primes from people in this group. They may know that the Democratic Party is associated with racial inclusiveness, but this idea might not be at the tops of their minds. But when they are asked what they like about the Democratic Party immediately after being reminded about the existence of discrimination, they put the two ideas together and cite inclusiveness as a reason for liking the Democrats.

Our expectation, then, is that people with moderately well-developed party schemas will be most responsive to the race primes. Put differently, there should be a non-monotonic relationship between strength of party schema and responsiveness to the race primes, with the biggest response among people in the middle range of party schema strength most responsiveness.

Unfortunately, the 2016 CMPS survey does not contain a direct measure of the strength of party schemas. However, we know from the previous chapter that length of time in the U.S. is a strong proxy for level of conceptualization: Asian Americans who have arrived recently in the U.S. have little sense of the political parties and are often bewildered by American politics, while immigrants who have been in the U.S. for many years often have highly sophisticated schemas for understanding political parties. Using length of time in the U.S. as a proxy for strength of party schemas and following the logic of the previous paragraph, we should expect a non-monotonic

relationship between time in the U.S. and responsiveness to the race primes, with those in the U.S. for a decade or so having the strongest response.

6.6 Party schema measures and reliability

To operationalize and measure the development of cognitive structures of the parties, this chapter employs open-ended questions about the Democratic and Republican Party that is available in the 2016 CMPS data. The precise wordings of these open-ended questions are: “In one sentence, what do you like most about Republican Party [or Democratic Party].” The assignment of the party image question is based on respondents’ self-report party identification. If subjects identified with Republican in the beginning of the survey, they will be asked to express open-ended impressions of the Republican Party in one concise sentence. Likewise, if they identify with the Democrat, they will be asked to express open-ended images of the Democratic Party. If respondents did not identify with either party, they will be asked randomly about party images of the Republican or the Democratic Party.

Before I delve into the typologies of open-ended responses, it is necessary to briefly discuss the merit of them. Open-ended survey questions have their advantages and disadvantages. Open-ended survey questions inquire attitudes that are on the top of respondents’ mind at the time of the interview (RePass, 1971). And these “nonreactivity” and cue-free survey questions do not predispose subjects to specific treatment conditions (Iyengar, 1996). These advantages give unique strength in measuring political schemas in the sense that it allows respondents to react to survey questions based on the retention of political knowledge, reflecting the underlying consistency in information processing about different attitude objects (Lau, 1986). Yet, the disadvantages of open-ended responses cannot be neglected. The measurement of the attitude

component is tricky. Past research pointed out that many survey items or variable constructs have been proved a statistically ill measure. Without giving subjects a frame of reference, their responses can be driven by other interpretations of the survey questions; in turn, respondents may not be able to form a coherent response (Kuklinski et al., 1991; Schuman, 1966). Therefore, Geer (1988) criticizes that open-ended questions require subjects to articulate a response, not their underlying attitudes. One way to alleviate this concern is to run a confirmatory factor analysis such as I did in chapter 4. Yet for our immediate purpose of understanding Asian Americans' post-migration political learning trajectory, a less rigorous approach may suffice. My task is not to adhere to labels by categorizing whether Asian Americans are less or more partisan, according to some theoretical criteria. Such an approach only smacks of political pedantry, and we may safely relegate it to the most strenuous methodological inquiry. Instead, the present analysis can go a long way simply by beginning with the identity-centric post-migration experience and socialization without prematurely going into any of the methodological intricacies.

6.6.1 Typology & measurement

The typology of qualitative responses to the party image questions is based on the following categories: policy, group, ideology, inclusiveness, partisan and class.

Category	Topology Rationale	Examples
Policy	The party's policies that individuals like or dislike about; whereas respondents don't have to specify what kind of policy.	"What I like most about the Republican Party is that there are no free passes. If you want something, you need to work for it. It's not going to get handed to you."
Class	Responses relate socioeconomic positions in a society, such as the working, middle classes, or the poor to the parties. Or, elements that are highly representative of it.	"They do tend to think of the poor more and try to pick up the lower class to balance things economically. However, I do not like any party. They tend to not do what they say nor do they stick to their statements." "They have the working people's interest in mind."
Liberal	Liberal ideology, progressive, open-minded Be able to use ideology to differentiate the parties.	"They are much more likely to support individual rights to equality" "Being very liberal and sharing the wealth of this country instead of harboring it all for the rich republican party, they are transparently crooked and greedy"
Conservative	Conservative ideologies or values	"Small federal government and less government regulation."
Inclusiveness	Friendly to minorities, immigrants, undocumented immigrants, LGBTQ, diverse ideas and concepts.	"The Democratic Party, although I don't always agree with its policies, is a party of inclusion and strives to represent all peoples, regardless of race, sexual orientation, or economic status."
Partisan	Respondents like or dislike a party because of a candidate or the other party.	"Like that Donald Trump is now my master." "Hillary Rodham Clinton is not involved."

Table 6. 2: Open-ended response typology

The score procedure is very straightforward. Total counts were computed by summing these key words and calculate the proportion of each category. Most open-ended responses consist of one or two short sentences in which subjects briefly explained why they favored the party they chose. It is based on these keywords I sort them into several corresponding categories as shown in Table 6.2. For example, if an open-ended response stated something about inclusion, then, it will be coded "1." Likewise, if multiple keywords are mentioned, then that particular response can belong to multiple categories. This coding scheme only makes sense if one open-ended response contains unidimensional. Schema dimensionality refers to the number of categories one open-ended response comprises. This is important because if one open-ended response contains multiple categories; it would suggest that party schemas have multidimensional ordering. Scholars in schema measurement argue that when someone has multiple dimensions of schemas, then the first

schema usually has dominant influence as compared to the second and third ones (Lau, 1986). As a result, it is important to apply the weighted proportions to reflect their differential influences.

The coding procedure was done by two Asian female undergraduate students at UCLA. To be sure, human coding is subject to variations, such as differing individual interpretations or errors. To ensure that each of the coders has similar performances, I randomly chose three hundred samples for both of them to code and used these samples to gauge the coding reliability. As a result, the reliability between these two coders was 0.88, meaning that their measurements were quite consistent and comparable with each other.

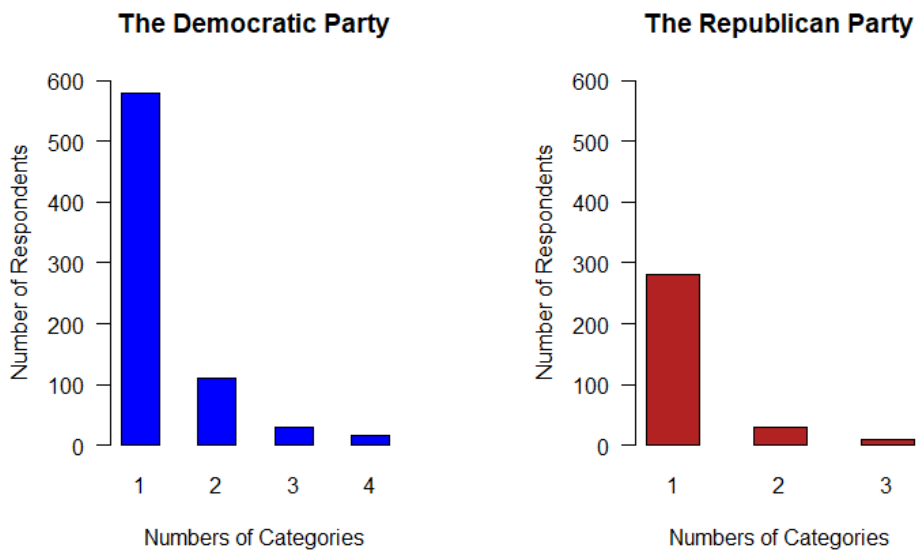


Figure 6. 2: Schema dimensions on the Democratic and Republican Party

Figure 6.2 shows that dimensionality of the responses. The Y-axis shows the numbers of respondents, and the numbers shown on x-axis indicate how many categories one open-ended response contains. As we can see for the Democrat's image, most respondents only mentioned one category, while some respondents mentioned two categories. Few people mentioned about 3 or more categories. It is the same pattern for Republican images. Most respondents mentioned only

one category, and few mentioned more than two. That is to say, most categories of the Democratic and Republican Party are unidimensional. Therefore, we do not have to apply a weighted proportion of all responses on each category or schema.

6.6.2 Discrimination-effect treatment

The treatment effect is to prime treatment subjects with racial discrimination experience questions. For example, subjects were asked “Have you ever been treated unfairly or personally experienced discrimination?” (see Table 6A.1. in the appendix 1 for detailed discrimination questions). Specifically, among those who were assigned to the treatment group, they were asked a total of nine racial discrimination experience questions encounter in the United States prior to the party image questions. In this sense, the racial discrimination experience questions aptly serve as priming stimuli by evoking the respondents’ explicit cognition of racial identity and its self-perceived political implications. This experiment relies on random assignment to operationalize the treatment effect. Random assignment ensures that those who hold varying racial consciousness had they not been primed by racial discrimination—unobserved quantity—are well-represented in the randomly selected control group. Thus, the average treatment effect (ATE) is expected to derive as

$$E[Y_i|D_i = 1] - E[Y_i|D_i = 0],$$

$$E[Y_{1i} - Y_{0i}|D_i = 1] - E[Y_{1i} - Y_{0i}|D_i = 0],$$

where Y_i is a potential outcome, and D_i denotes the treatment condition, as $D_i = 0$ and $D_i = 1$ indicate that subjects in the control and treatment groups respectively. Therefore, ATE is the mean difference between the potential outcomes between the given conditions of control and treatment.

6.6.3 Randomization and balance

In randomized experiments, the randomization enables unbiased estimation of treatment effect; for each covariate, randomization implies that the control and treatment groups will be balanced on average, by the law of large numbers. The treatment assignment bias arises because a difference in the average treatment effect between the control and treatment groups may be caused by a factor that predicts treatment rather than the treatment itself. To alleviate the treatment assignment bias, it is imperative to examine respondents' geographic and sociodemographic characteristics.

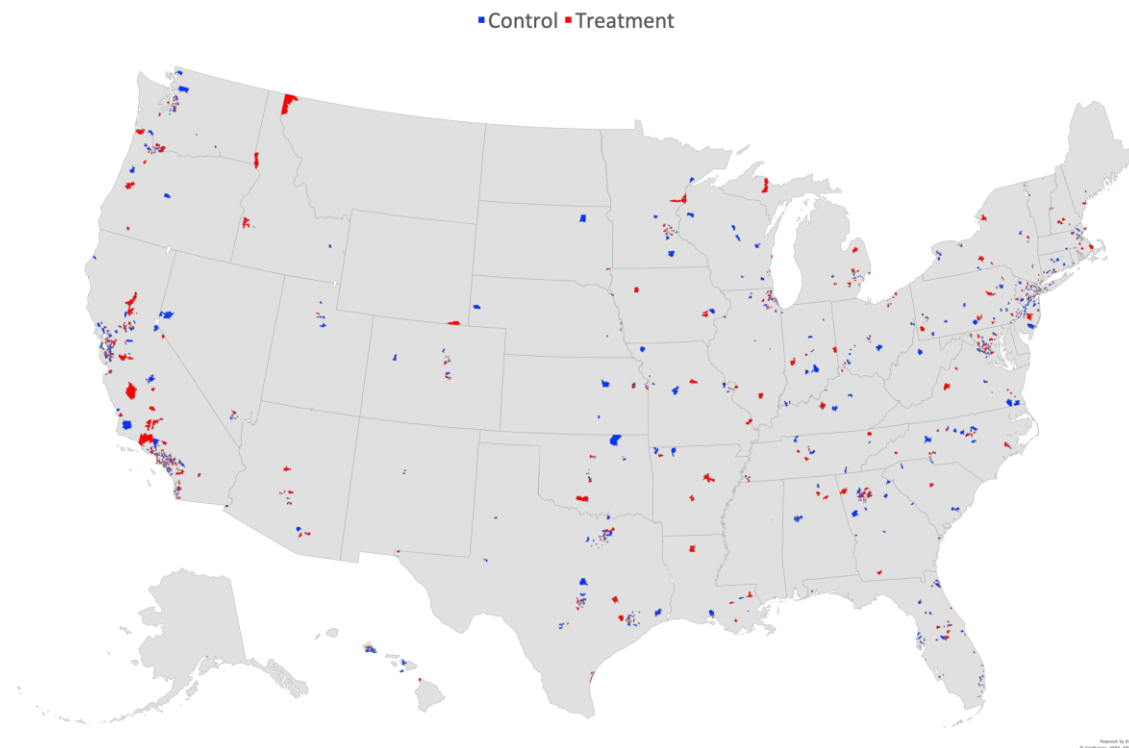


Figure 6. 3: Random assignment and respondents' zip code map

Potential outcomes in experiment can be affected by geographically based factors, which include unmeasured confounding variables. In the 2016 CMPS data there are 3,055 Asian American samples, among them about 839 respondents were randomly assigned to the control

group and 879 were randomly assigned to the treatment group to answer the open-ended questions about the Democratic and Republic Party. Figure 6.3 displays a map of location of the respondents who participated in this study. In Figure 6.3, the highlighted geographic units in blue and red denote all 1,276 zip code areas from 1,718 respondents in both the control and treatment groups. From the map we can see that the distribution of respondents was relatively scattered proportionally to the density of population in metropolitan areas, from which we can see that subjects in control and treatment groups were well randomized and balanced geographically.³

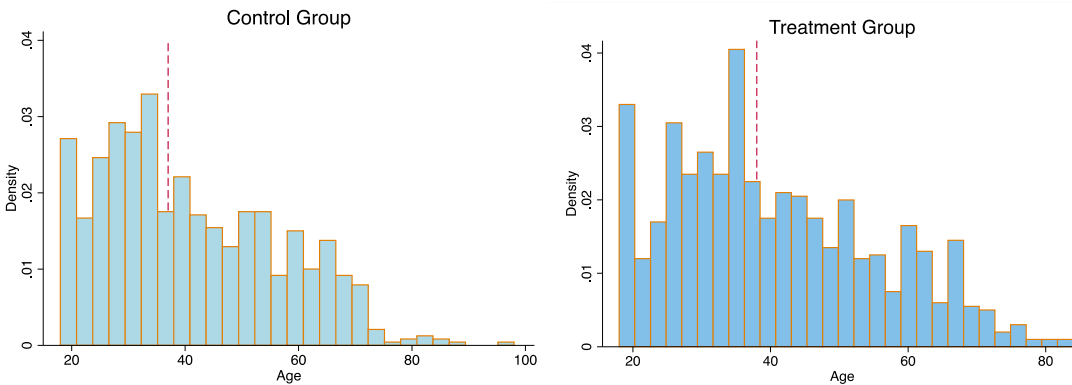


Figure 6. 4: Balance plot of age of control and treatment groups

Cohort effect in public opinion explains the variations in the characteristics of the opinion among individuals who are defined by some shared life experience, such as years of exposure to certain political phenomena.⁴ Such experiences have a long-term effect on the ways in which people of the cohort view the issues. Thus, it is critical to examine the distribution of age among the experiment subjects to alleviate this concern. Figure 6.4 shows the distribution of age between control and treatment groups. The median ages among the control and treatment groups are 37 and

³ In Figure 6.A.1 (See in Appendix 2), I test the correlation between control group and treatment group respondents' zip code. It is highly correlated.

⁴ Note that cohort effect is different from aging effect. See chapter 3 for details.

38,⁵ while the mean of each of them is 40. Thus, the distributions of age between the control group and treatment group were identical.

Variables	Control	Treatment	Difference	P-value
Party ID	3.389	3.402	-0.013	0.897
Political Ideology	2.968	2.922	0.046	0.405
Pre-adult Socialization	4.500	4.303	0.197	0.106
Sense of Belonging	1.561	1.564	-0.003	0.929
Sense of Exclusion	3.100	3.117	-0.017	0.606
Income	7.133	7.058	0.075	0.628
Citizenship	0.631	0.625	0.006	0.209
Married	0.549	0.550	-0.001	0.226
Age	40.816	40.546	0.270	0.713
Gender	0.584	0.584	0.000	0.999
Education	4.837	4.846	-0.009	0.860
Political Interest	2.250	2.190	0.060	0.120
Voted in 2016	1.060	1.059	0.001	0.931
Homeownership	0.554	0.543	0.011	0.647
Length of residence	22.334	20.974	1.360	0.229

Table 6. 3: Covariate balance between control and treatment groups

Table 6.3 displays the mean values and standard deviation values of covariates for respondents in both the control and treatment groups. The unit of analysis is individual respondents. 839 respondents were randomly assigned to the control group and 879 were assigned to treatment groups. Two-tailed test. Note that political ideology is a 7-point liberal-conservative continuum. Also, pre-socialization is the variable which asks respondents whether they learned political knowledge from their parents.

Table 6.3 summarizes the covariate balance tests across the control and treatment groups on a number of different sociodemographic factors. Sociodemographic variables include age, gender, education, length of residence in the U.S., citizenship and marital status. Economic variables include income and home ownership. Social variables include party identification, ideology, pre-adult socialization, whether voted or not in the 2016 presidential election, political interest, sense of belonging, and sense of exclusion. Despite the fact that the number of females is greater than males in both groups, the gender ratio is basically similar in control and treatment groups.⁶

⁵ Due to slight skewedness in distributions, it is more appropriate to use median rather than mean values.

⁶ Demographic characteristics graphics are available in Figure A6.2 in Appendix 2.

Moreover, in terms of educational attainment, the control group and treatment group also demonstrate highly comparable ratios from grade school to postgraduate education. As we can see from Table 6.3 randomization is successful, and the treatment is balanced across these dimensions.

6.6.4 Discrimination treatment characteristics

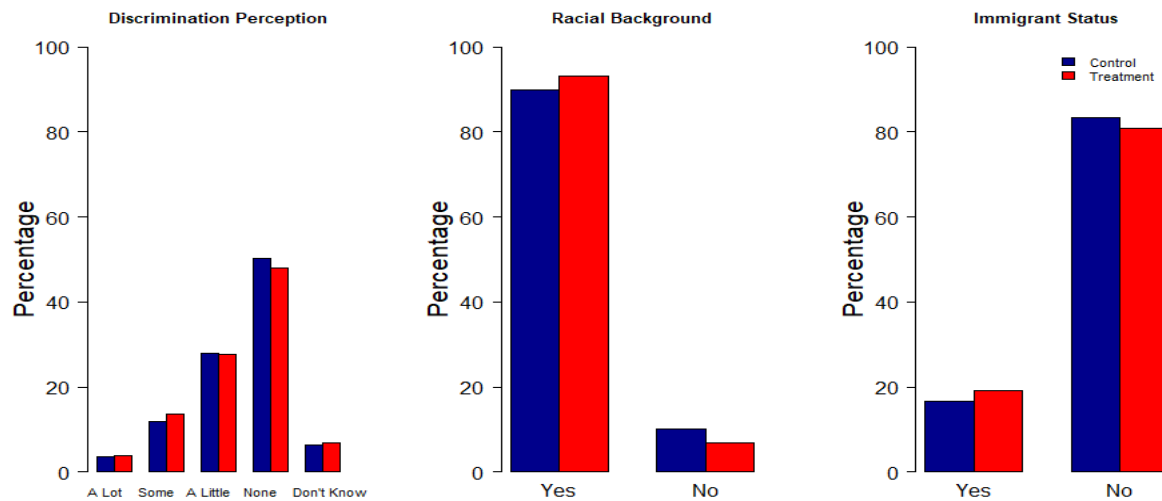


Figure 6. 5: Perception and experiences of discrimination.

In the survey experiment, it is assumed that subjects in control and treatment groups have balanced perceptions and experiences of discrimination. The variations in these perceptions or experiences would affect the treatment effect. Figure 6.5 aims to examine three different kind of discrimination effects. One is perception of discrimination, which asks respondents how much discrimination there in the United States today against Asian Americans. Experiences of discrimination can be measured from two aspects.⁷ One is discrimination against immigrant status and racial background. In the CMPS data the questions ask respondents whether they have ever

⁷ In the 2016 CMPS data, they also ask discrimination experiences about religion, accent, sexual orientation, etc. See Appendix 2 for details.

been treated unfairly or personally because of their race, ethnicity or being an immigrant. As Figure 6.5 indicates, there are no statistically significant differences ($p>0.1$) in perception of discrimination and experiences of discrimination between the control and treatment groups.

6.7 Experimental results

If political schemas exist and if they can be measured with open-ended survey responses, we should be able to observe some underlying consistency in the type of information processed about different attitude objects. The various responses to the open-ended questions were categorized into items relevant to class, group, partisan, inclusiveness, and ideology.

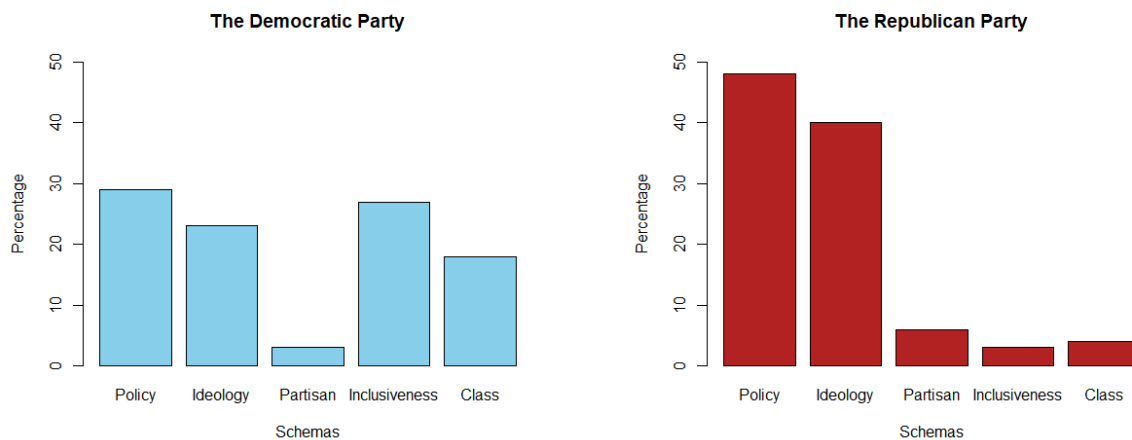


Figure 6. 6: Summary of party images

Figure 6.6 shows the summary of party images of both the Democratic and Republican Party, which combines the control and treatment groups. At a glance, Asian Americans have richer schemas with the Democratic Party, while only have two schemas, policy and conservatism, with the Republican Party. There are two implications: One is that Asian Americans tend to have more exposure to the Democratic Party than the Republican Party. The other is that the Democratic

Party’s political information is more likely to be accepted among Asians. As a result, when respondents were asked about the party image, their schematic information processing is relatively easier to retrieve the information and categorize them. Indeed, according to the 2016 CMPS data, about 85 percent of Asian respondents come from metropolitan locations, such as the San Francisco Bay area, Los Angeles, New York, etc., where Democrats tend to dominate the information environment. The second reason is that those who identify with the Republican Party tend to favor its anti-communist policy stance. The third reason is that those who support the Republican Party are those who have been in the U.S. for a long time. The reason that these people support the Republican Party is because they favor its tax-cut policy.

6.7.1 *The party image of Democrats*

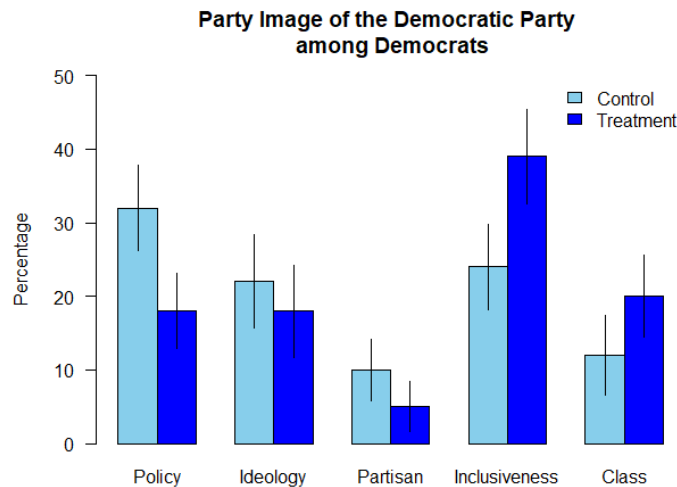


Figure 6. 7: Party image of the Democratic Party among Democrats

Racial discrimination experiment priming tends to demonstrate systematic effects on Democrats. As Figure 6.7 shows, policy, ideology, inclusiveness, and social class are the most frequent words that Democrats used to describe the images of the Democratic Party across the control and treatment groups. Nonetheless, the treatment effect was strong. After priming with

racial discrimination experiences, the responses in policy, ideology and social class decreased substantially. The differences in the treatment effects are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). In sharp contrast, however, the total responses in inclusiveness increased. This finding strongly supports my hypothesis that post-migration experiences tend to correlate with the development of social identity.

6.7.2 The party image of Republicans

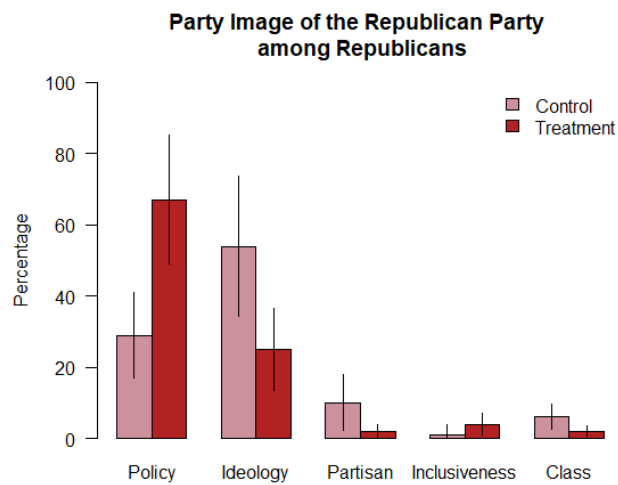


Figure 6. 8: Party image of the Democratic Party among Republicans

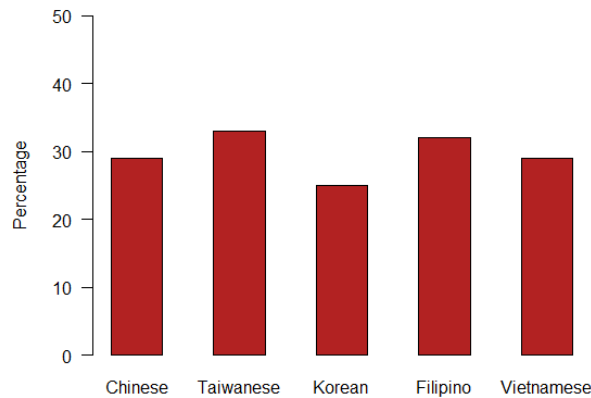
Compared to Democrats, the way in which Republicans responded to the treatment effect has distinct patterns. Figure 6.8 shows that the racial discrimination experience priming stimulus carries a strong and special message to Asian immigrants. In particular, respondents in the control group tend not to mention policy and tend to focus primarily on ideology issues. In part, because those who identify with Republicans have more political knowledge and interest in politics in general (Masuoka, Han, Leung, & Zheng, 2018b). The rapid change happened in the treatment group in which a series of racial discrimination experiences priming stimuli were presented. Social psychologists usually agree that emotion caused by negative-content stimuli can differentiate the

cognitive and affective factors. Depression-associated differences in construct accessibility are depressed effects (Gotlib & McCann, 1984). That is, the cognitive factor and the affective factor respond differently to depression-associated priming stimuli. This finding affirms that Asian Americans usually find Republican's ideology too extreme to be accepted (Raychaudhuri, 2018). Moreover, as Figure 6.8 shows, Asian immigrants who identify with Republicans rarely mentioned inclusiveness and social class. This finding affirms the conjecture in chapter 4 that the party conceptualization of the Democratic and Republican Party is different.

Most importantly, the racial discrimination treatment effect demonstrates an unusual change among Asians. As Figure 6.8 shows, the policy category increases substantially after treatment effect, while the ideology category decreases by 40 percent. For those who identify as Independents and non-partisans appear to have similar patterns, the policy category also increases by 30 percent. Race is a difficult question for Asians, particularly among those who identify as Republicans. Longing to assimilate into mainstream American society on the one hand, and experience social exclusion on other hand, many Asian feel ambivalent toward the Republican Party. Those who identify with the Republican Party can be motivated by some domain-specific issue concerns, such as foreign policy concerns or business owners who are overwhelmingly concerned about the tax issues (J. Wong et al., 2011). However, these people cannot deny the fact that they are not easy to share broader political commonality with other Republicans, particularly white Republicans.

To delve into Asian Americans' images of Republicans, we need to look into their response characteristics and major Asian American Republicans' demographics. As we can see in Figure 6.8 those who identified with Republicans tend to focus on economic policies or political values. Whereas most respondents could not elaborate what kind of policies or values. A typical response

in the control group is usually mentioned about political values. For example: *“The Republican Party was the party that freed the slaves and still believes in Capitalism, Free and FAIR Trade, small government and FREEDOM!”* In contrast, in the treatment group, many responses concentrated on the Republican Party’s economic policies. For example, one respondent said, *“They want to lower taxes, get work and economy back up, have better options for healthcare.”*



Data: 2016 CMPS

Figure 6. 9: Percentages of Republicans among major Asian co-ethnic groups

National origins can be one of the factors affecting party images. As Figure 6.9 shows, among Asian American populations, Chinese, Taiwanese, Filipino, Korean, and Vietnamese have the most Republicans; there are about 30 percent of respondents among each of these groups identified with Republicans. Echoed with the arguments in Chapter 3, national origins exhibit a fair degree of ideological consistency in their underlying party images. Anti-communism mentality and pro-business bias remain a reason why some Asian immigrants still favor the Republican Party. Hence, deep-seated predispositions and/or isolated issue concerns are the major reason why some Asian Americans support the Republican Party.

6.7.3 Party images among independents and nonpartisans

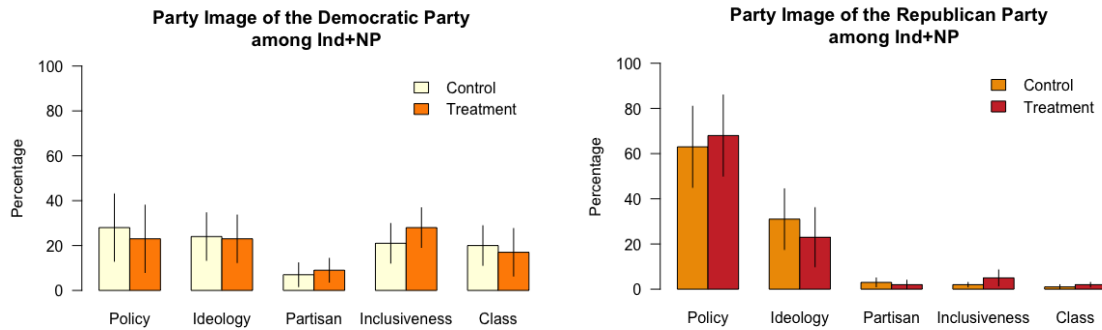


Figure 6. 10: Party image of Democrats among independents and nonpartisans

Figure 6.10 shows the Democratic Party and Republican Party by those who identified as independents and nonpartisans. J. Wong et al. (2011) and Hajnal and Lee (2011) reveal that those who are indifferent or unfamiliar with American politics tend to identify as independents or nonpartisans. Figure 6.10 is consistent with their argument in that Asian independents and nonpartisans not only are less likely to express their opinions on the parties, but also insensitive to negative-content priming effects. However, it is noteworthy that lumping US-born and foreign-born Asian Americans together might mask the variations among them. To reveal the finer grain of the underlying cognition, we need to further uncover the schemas on which the affective charge is involved.

6.7.4 Party schemas over time

The cognitive development of political knowledge and party schemas is a time-dependent process. This section will make two points about this time dependency: First, that recent arrivals are more likely cite concrete policy as reason for liking the Democratic Party, whereas immigrants who were born in the US or lived it in for a long period of time are more likely to cite abstract reasons, such as ideology and inclusiveness, as reasons for liking the party. Second, reminding people of

racial discrimination has the most effect on people who have some but not a great deal of experience living in the U.S.

Figure 6.11 shows the overall trends of party image of the Democratic Party among those foreign-born and who identify as Democrats, independents and nonpartisans. The patterns here are clear. New immigrants are more concerned about policy, but older immigrants care more about inclusiveness and class. I didn't include US-born generations here, because the response rate among them is a lot higher.

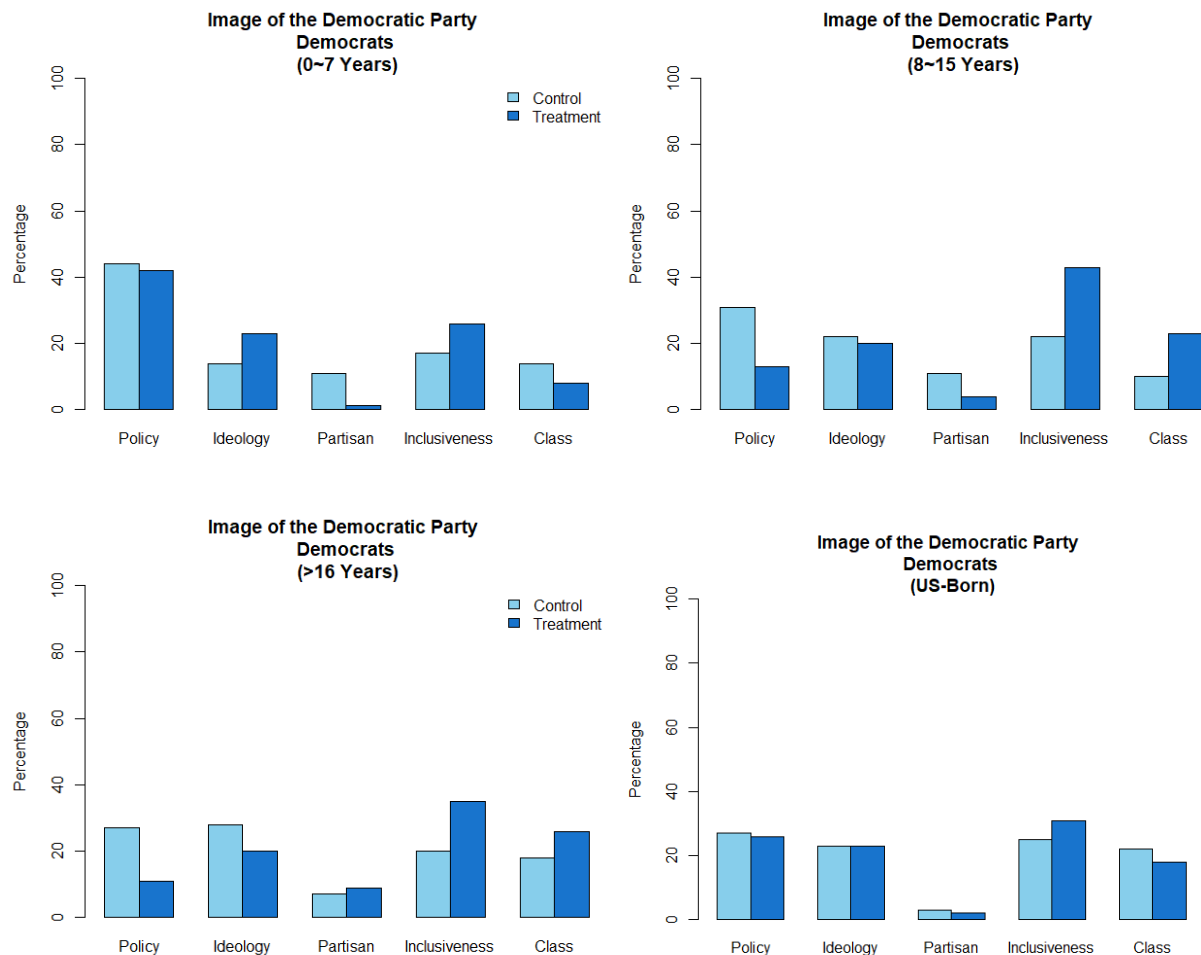


Figure 6. 11: Political image of the Democratic Party among Democrats over time

Close comparison of the lighter and darker bars in the four quadrants reveals that Asian Americans who had lived in the U.S. the least amount of time (less than 7 years, panel 1) or the most amount of time (born in U.S., panel 4) were less responsive to the racial primes than were immigrants who had lived in the U.S. at least 8 years (panels 3,4). Figure 6.12 gives a schematic view of the basic pattern relationship. (Note, the figure is a freehand summary of the data, not an estimate based on models and coefficients.)

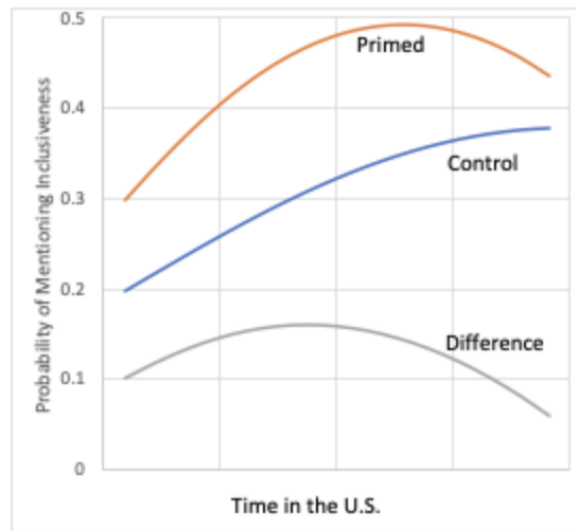


Figure 6. 12: Inclusiveness response to the primes by length of time

The combination of all the analyses I have conducted thus far shows two obvious patterns. 1) The alignment between the perception of inclusiveness and the Democratic Party tends to be monotonic. The longer Asian American immigrants live in the United States, the stronger they feel Democrats are more inclusive than Republicans. As we can see in Figure 6.12, the probability of responsiveness and the longevity of residence in the U.S. are positively correlated among the control group. 2) However, the responsiveness pattern to the racial discrimination experience primes tends to be non-monotonic. As the treatment group in Figure 6.12 shows, the people who have been in the United States the longest not only have stronger and hence more resistant to

change attitudes; they are also apparently less likely to be evoked by the racial discrimination experience primes. Hence, they do not seem to respond so much to the primes. Meanwhile, people have been in the United States the shortest time do not associate the Democratic Party with discrimination experiences because they do not know enough about US politics yet; hence they do not respond either. Whereas there is more change at the lowest level than at the highest. Moreover, after being exposed to the priming stimuli, people in the middle range of time in the United States are most sensitive to the inclusion issue.

By and large, these findings are consistent with what I have argued in Chapter 4. That is, lacking sufficient lived experiences in the United States, new immigrants still have little party conceptualization and politicized identity to guide them to respond to the discrimination priming stimulus. Older immigrants have developed varying degrees of coherent party conceptualization and politicized identity. Thus, the priming stimulus can easily activate their short-time racial discrimination memory. In contrast, those who were born in the United States do not seem to reflect much variation according to the priming effect, because they already formed steady party schemas.

6.7.5 Party schema among independents and nonpartisans

Figure 6.13 shows the trends of the party image of the Democratic Party among those who identify as Independent and Non-Partisan. The plots show that foreign-born independents and non-partisans are indifferent to political conception, as evidenced by the low number of open-ended responses regarding each of the categories. Low political conception leads to insensitive or lukewarm responses to the discrimination treatment effect. In sharp contrast, US-born independent and non-partisan seems to be a different story. Other than policy, the priming effect on other

categories is statistically significant. Of them, the response in the inclusiveness category increases by 50 percent. This finding indicates that independents and nonpartisans between foreign-born and US-born are in different dimensions.

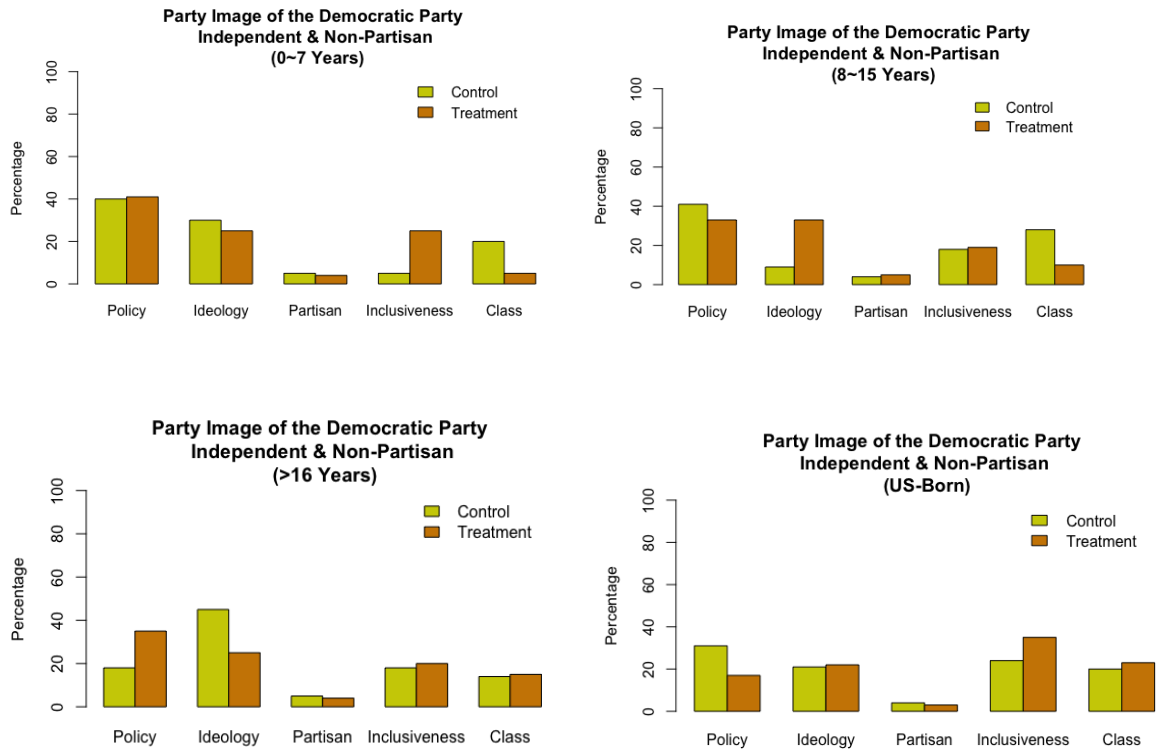


Figure 6. 13: Party image of the Democratic Party among independent and nonpartisan

6.8 Discussion

Schematic information processing in tandem with conscious & unconscious information processing allow us to better understand Asian Americans' cognitive structures of the parties and their dynamics over time. Previous research has shown that the underlying attitudes that constitute the conceptualizations of the Democratic and Republican Party are in multiple dimensions (Weisberg, 1980). Comparing Asian Americans' schemas of the Democratic Party versus the

Republican Party, the two parties carry very distinct images among Asians. Asian Americans tend to retain more schematic spectrums of the Democratic Party. As Table 6.7 and 6.8 illustrate, policy, ideology, inclusiveness and social class are the key schemas in the mind of Asian Americans, while Republican schemas only center on policy and ideology. The disparities in the cognitive structures mirror distinct socialization trajectories. My conjecture is that most Asian American populations concentrate in metropolitan areas (J. Wong et al., 2011), which allows them to be exposed more to the Democratic Party's political discourses. As Raychaudhuri (2018) points out, due to diffusion of political views in local contexts, Asian Americans are more likely to develop partisan preference for the Democratic Party. At a deeper level, Democrat's general liberal policy outlooks, e.g., particularly minority conscious policies, are relatively easier to resonate with Asian American communities.

On a substantive dimension, discrimination experience priming tends to generate depressing effects on subjects, thereby decreasing their responses to policy and ideology. Whereas, in sharp contrast, it also increased the perception of Democrat's on inclusiveness. This pattern is consistent among Democrats, Republicans and Independents. This finding somewhat echoes with Ocampo's (2018) research, in which she also found that the experiences of discrimination lower Latino's sense of belonging, while increasing their awareness of non-white status. This finding also reinforces the experimental results found by Kuo et al. (2016), in which they also found that the sense of social exclusion tends to nudge Asian Americans to support the Democratic Party and be against the Republican Party. Therefore, despite the fact that the racial hierarchy seems invisible and does not limit one's opportunities, in effect its structural influence is very prevalent, persistent and powerful in minorities' daily life. As such, anti-migrant discrimination can evoke racial group

consciousness and the sense of linked fate among immigrant communities (Kim, 2000; Masuoka & Junn, 2013; Zepeda-Millan & Wallace, 2013).

Moreover, party schemas reflect the dynamics of party images among Asian immigrants over time. One of the findings in this chapter indicates that party policy outlook has a great deal to offer new immigrants. This finding is supported by the qualitative interview discussed in chapter 4, in which the majority of immigrants' evaluations of the major policies are on the basis of political and social values, instead policy attributes per se. It offers the least barriers so that people can learn based on pre-existing attitudes, even though they have limited political knowledge of American politics. Moreover, the findings derived from party schemas also suggest that most Asians are not ideological or partisan. They are very pragmatic in the sense that policy, social class, and inclusiveness are the most important reasons for them to identify with the Democratic Party. Therefore, I argue that policy attitudes that Asian Americans possess are easier to find resonating with Democrats. Schematic thinking in the area of foreign policy, for example, can easily find consensus between Asian Americans and Democrats. This finding is consistent with what social cognitive scientists have documented: both conscious and unconscious learning set off the biased learning for later information processes. Moreover, conscious learning of the parties is based on the schematic processes. The post-migration experiences serve as a mechanism by which the schematic processes are established. From political ignorance or indifference to becoming a partisan is a process of political learning in which affective processes are activated. Selective perception and biased learning echo party schema. As Green et al. (2002) succinctly point out, "the psychological processes of self-categorization and group evaluation are therefore most apparent in established party systems, in which parties have cultivated symbols and group imagery" (p13).

Furthermore, this chapter also illuminated our understanding of Asian American non-partisans and those identified as independents. These groups of respondents simply have very weak party schemas. This in part because these groups of individuals have no interest in American politics or cannot discern the differences between the parties. Nonetheless, US-born non-partisans and independents are different from foreign-born counterparts. Foreign-born non-partisans and independents are more likely to have weak party schemas, while US-born counterparts tend to have moderate party schemas and respond to the treatment effect as expected, albeit weaker than other Asian partisans.

Thus far, the findings provide another layer of empirical evidence to affirm what scholars in race and ethnic studies have argued using different research methods. Lien (2001a, 2006) and Hajnal and Lee (2011) argue that the perception of shared political interest with blacks and Latinos will discourage Asians to identify with the Republican Party. However, Lien (2001a, 2006) and Hajnal and Lee (2011) do not offer further examination of how racial consciousness was stimulated (or failed to stimulate) among Asian communities.⁸ Using observational data, it is hard to tease out the effect, thus this chapter has illustrated how schematic information processing works using survey experiments, and how lived experiences turn into a factor subconsciously, nudging Asian American to the Democratic Party. Taken together, the experiences of racial discrimination and/or exclusion tend to prod Asian Americans to identify with the Democratic Party (Hajnal & Lee, 2011; Kuo et al., 2016; Lien et al., 2003; Masuoka, 2006). The differences between new immigrants, older immigrants and the US-born generation are the degree to which they connect

⁸ In Hajnal and Lee's account, their main interest is to examine why Asian and Latino Americans are hesitant to identify with the Democratic or Republican Parties; instead, these groups are likely to identify as Independent as a way to signal their uncertainty and ambivalence about American politics in general. As they argue, identifying as Independents has important implications for Asians and Latinos that many scholars overlooked.

these experiences with partisanship. The variable accounts for these differences are cognitive group commitment between the parties, racial backgrounds and self-perceived political interest. Even though new arrivals realize that they are minorities in the United States, they usually do not understand which party's policies are more favorable to minorities, and they also have a hard time to position their broader individual political interest along the spectrum of differential racial politics between the parties. Therefore, for ordinary Asian immigrants, learning the differences between the parties and the development of consciousness between race and the parties are time dependent. The longer they live in the United States, the more likely they are to develop the partisan strength with the Democratic Party. From a social network's perspective, immigrants are usually not overly interested in politics; they are indifferent voters, and they do not consider themselves as strongly attached to any parties. As they live in the United States over time, the salience that political matters have in their lives gradually increases. These processes involve many reasons. For one, spatial and temporal proximity effects of political information can be diffused within the local context via friends and family (Wallace, Zepeda-Millan, & Jones-Correa, 2014). As such, close association with social networks tends to motivate individuals to be aware of their political interests and absorb their interests as their own (Sinclair, 2012).

How can we tap these empirical findings into a broader theoretical framework? The survey experiment in party schemas and discrimination experiment illuminates the importance of the sense of inclusiveness among Asian Americans. From a social identity's perspective, the most important finding in this chapter is that party schemas are learned and consolidated through both socialization processes and individual experiences (Park & Hastie, 1987). The group membership grants us a sense of social identity: A sense of inclusiveness based on racial consciousness. Social identities can be used to account for how individuals understand and interact with social contexts

(Tajfel, Turner, Austin, & Worchel, 1979). To some extent, post-migration experiences are also a process of forming an identity centrality—that is, incrementally integrating racial identity with newly acquired social identity. As DiMaggio (1997) argues, “identity centrality can be situationally evoked, emotionally activated, and partial identities that provide integrated chunks of schematic organization” (p279). That is, identity can evoke contextual variation, and because it is consistent with evidence for domain-specificity of schematic organization. When using observational data, the conundrum is that it is usually hard to know whether conscious or unconscious information processes play the dominant role when evaluating given political issues. Even more puzzling is that for native-born Americans, the information process is complicated in that it takes into account both conscious and unconscious information processes at the same time. The survey experiment in this chapter shows promising results.

6.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that effective categorization is a product of conscious self-perception. Social identity can activate the affective component of the categorization processes. Self-identifying in a society is a key determinant of which group we belong to. Those who have been in the United States long enough to develop the sense of affective process are aware of their social identity. For example, it is hard for new immigrants to understand the racial hierarchy in the American society without knowing the history of segregation and the Civil Rights Movement, nor experiencing the racial discriminations. They cannot place their position in this hierarchy, in return, they identify as foreigners instead of minorities who share common political interests with other minority groups. As Newcomb et al. (1965) pointed out, “a person tends to have similar attitudes (alike in sign) toward objects that he considers to belong together.”

Moreover, I have argued that pre-migration predispositions tend to set unconscious responses to policy-based evaluations of the parties. Pre-migration experiences form the basic cornerstone for party image among those who are politically unsophisticated individuals, such as new immigrants. Policy attitudes are grounded in predispositions, which in large part are based on the social situation and cultural values in which one is brought up. As a form of crystallized predisposition, pre-migration predispositions significantly steer and color the way in which immigrants view the policies when they move to the United States. While political learning of a party's general positions derives from post-migration experiences that will lead to partisan-sorting affective response. Living in the United States for a certain period of time, lived experiences start to influence their attitudes toward the political issues and the parties. As they accumulate more experiences in the United States, their evaluation of the parties will gear toward party-centric political preferences and more concern about post-migration experience-based partisan sorting.

An analysis of political schemas suggests that party appeals will become increasingly effective in American politics as time goes on. As noted by other scholars, as immigrants live in the United States longer, they start to respond to party cues. The absence of a strong party schema among new immigrants and those who identify with independents and non-partisans can help explain why these groups of people are indifferent to politics. The analysis schema leads to the clear prediction that as immigrants live in the United States longer, they accumulate more political knowledge, they will be cognitively ready to process and respond to party cue and issue cue appeal. With this prediction, I will further demonstrate how this prediction works in the next chapter.

Appendix 1

Discrimination questions that serve as priming treatment effect.

1. “How much discrimination is there in the United States today against [Asian Americans]?”
2. Have you ever been treated unfairly or personally experienced discrimination because of your race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, being an immigrant, religious heritage or having an accent?
3. Did you experience that discrimination here in the United States, or in your home country?
4. In your opinion, were you unfairly treated because of your [racial background or ethnicity, skin color, gender, gender identity, sexuality, immigration status, religion, accent, regardless of whether or not you have an accent, other (Specify)]
5. In the most typical incident you experienced, what was the race or ethnicity of the person treating you unfairly?
6. In the most typical incident you experienced, was the skin color of the person/s treating you unfairly lighter than you, darker than you, or same skin color as you?

Appendix 2

How much discrimination is there in the United States today?

	All Asian	Foreign-born	US-Born
A lot	368	155	213
Some	1,358	574	784
A little	888	413	475
None at all	175	87	88
Don't know	266	154	112

Have you ever been treated unfairly or personally experienced discrimination?

	All Asian	Foreign-born	US-Born
Yes	1,478	593	885
No	1,577	790	787

Racial background or ethnicity (In your opinion, were you unfairly treated?)

	All Asian	Foreign-born	US-Born
Yes	1,478	593	885
No	1,577	790	787

Skin color (In your opinion) were you treated?

	All Asian	Foreign-born	US-Born
Yes	899	376	523
No	557	209	348

Gender, gender identity, sexuality (In your opinion) were you treated?

	All Asian	Foreign-born	US-Born
Yes	521	190	331
No	930	389	541

Was it about your immigrant status?

	All Asian	Foreign-born	US-Born
Yes	316	199	117
No	1,131	380	751

Was it about religion?

	All Asian	Foreign-born	US-Born
Yes	243	87	156
No	1,207	489	718

Was it about your accent?

	All Asian	Foreign-born	US-Born
Yes	558	330	228
No	890	249	641

In the most typical incident you experienced, what was the race or ethnicity ?

	All Asian	Foreign-born	US-Born
White	1,035	401	634
Black	195	89	106
Asian	119	48	71
Hispanic	70	26	44
Other	59	29	30

Table 6.A 1: Different types of discrimination experiences

Note: See variables C242-C260 in the 2016 CMPS codebook for details.

CHAPTER 7

The Patterns of Asian Americans' Partisan Choice: Policy Preferences and Racial Consciousness¹

For the most part we do not first see, and then define, we define first and then see. In the great blooming, buzzing confusion of the outer world we pick up what our culture has already defined for us, and we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture

--Lippmann (1922: 81)

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapters have explained the underlying psychological development of political conceptualization and party schema, this chapter examines the patterns of Asian Americans' partisanship acquisition by probing the key contributing factors that constitute Asian Americans' partisan orientation using national observational data. One of the basic features of American political consciousness is psychological attachment or the alignment with one of major political parties, which is commonly referred to as partisanship or party identity.² Party identification is a cumulative choice influenced by policy preferences, socioeconomic characteristics, and political anticipations (Verba & Nie, 1972). Despite facing enduring racial discrimination, Asian

¹ The earlier version of this chapter has been published in *Social Science Quarterly*, 100 (5), August 2019, pages 1593-1608.

² In this paper we use partisanship, party identification and party ID interchangeably; their meanings have no difference.

Americans have successfully overcome racial barriers to economic and educational advancements. In terms of education and economic status, Asian Americans have rates of achievement that have surpassed those of whites. Yet, Asian Americans, as one of the largest and fastest-growing immigrant-based ethnic communities, have experienced underwhelming political participation rates as documented by many public opinion surveys (Wong et al. 2011). As scholars have argued, the partisan choice of Latino and Asian Americans are different from those of their white and black counterparts. That is, they are less likely to identify with the Democratic Party or Republican Party; or more explicitly, they tend to express uncertainty and ambivalence about all of the available partisan choices (Hajnal & Lee, 2006, 2011). As a result, a large percentage of Asian Americans identify as independent or non-identifiers. By “non-identifiers,” I mean those who do not take partisan choice into account in forming their policy preference and/or think in partisan terms. As Lee & Ramakrishnan (2007) reveal, many Asian Americans cannot differentiate “Democrat,” “Republican,” “Liberal” or “Conservative.” To be sure, it is extremely hard to understand exactly why many Asian Americans do not think in partisan terms. Rather, it is more feasible to find the answer to why and in what ways Asian Americans develop partisan affiliation with the Democratic or Republican Party—this is the goal of this study.

Why party identification? Most scholars in the field of political behavior focus on the study of vote choice, the reason largely is that for mainstream American society, at least for whites and blacks, partisan affiliations have relatively stable and persistent trajectories, demonstrating a willingness to take sides in a political controversy or conflict (Campbell et al., 1966; Verba & Nie, 1972). In contrast, vote choice reflects relatively shorter-term attitudinal change in every electoral cycle for black and white Americans. Hence, vote choices at different administrative levels—presidential and congressional—signal the shift of political attitudes. Moreover, vote choice is not

always equal to partisanship—partisan loyalties on voting behavior swings over time (Bartels, 2000), or individuals may vote for an opposite party due to the effects from social networks (Sinclair, 2012). In contrast, affiliation with political parties is in and of itself a signal of political attachment. Partisan choice is a psychological orientation to political participation (Verba & Nie, 1972). Partisanship hence indicates the general political views along political parties, yet such “general” or “aggregate” political agreement by no means equals the specific policy agreement under certain administrations. As a result, individuals may identify as Democrats but vote for Republican candidates instead in the congressional or presidential elections. For this reason, this study focuses on partisan orientation rather than vote choice in an attempt to understand the motivation behind the identification with the Democratic or the Republican Party. I argue that socioeconomic attainment alone cannot efficiently explain the partisan choice for Asian Americans; rather, policy preferences and political commonality insert compelling influences in Asian American partisanship acquisition.

7.2 Policy attitude and partisanship

Scholars in the field of political behavior generally agree that policy preferences are a foundation for political involvement and partisan orientation (Verba & Nie, 1972). The conflated relationship between partisanship and policy positions has been controversial in that whether party identification affects policy views or the other way around is difficult to tease out (Jackson, 1975; Lewis-Beck et al., 2008). Lenz (2012) points out that citizens tend to change their attitudes to comport with their preferred party. Specifically, using three-wave panel data, Lenz convincingly shows that ordinary Americans take cues from party leaders. The process of exposure to political communications is the process through which voters learn and adopt their parties’ or candidate’s positions as their own. On the other side, Tesler (2015) proposes that the causal direction can be

reversed—that is, citizens may change their political attitudes to conform with crystallized predispositions. For example, Tesler (2015) points out that many white Americans’ opposition to Affordable Care Act (ACA) is based on racial resentment against Barack Obama. Indeed, both of these theories have trouble in tangling with the information levels that individuals possess. In other words, we usually do not know how much knowledge citizens have regarding a wide range of policy and the parties. For nonimmigrant citizens, their policy views can be shaped by the partisan cues that they learn from the mass media, or some policy attitudes can be grounded in racial resentment. Indeed, individuals’ evaluation of policies and candidates can be shaped by the ebb and flow of political information. For immigrant groups, the causal direction can be less complicated in that adult immigrants tend to hold consistent views on a wide range of policy issues after they immigrate to the United States. Gordon (1964) in his pioneering study of immigration assimilation argued that immigrants’ cultural patterns of behavior are rooted in the combination of cultural norms and values that brought over from the countries of origin and cumulative domestic experiences. On the other hand, as other scholars have documented, Asian immigrants tend to know little about American politics (Hajnal & Lee, 2011; J. Wong et al., 2011). Therefore, if immigrants approached the American political system with strong inclination toward some policies, these policy views are apt to shape political opinions and evaluation about the parties.

7.3 Political socialization

Recent research on Asian American political participation pays increasingly more attention to political socialization. Political socialization refers to the process through which individuals develop their political orientations involving parents, schools, media, and repeated civic rituals (Citrin & Sears, 2014; R. E. Dawson & Prewitt, 1969). The Michigan school of partisanship argued that party identification was considered the best predictor of an individual’s vote choice (Campbell

et al., 1960). The underlying logic of the Michigan model is based on the theory that partisanship is instilled in early childhood socialization as people grow up in a certain social environment. Sharing identical racial, socioeconomic status, and social surroundings, one's political views and political identification not only align with one another but are also inherited by their offspring as political predisposition. In return, partisan continuity embedded in socialization can be highly stable for a certain group of people in certain geographical locations (Sears & Funk, 1999).

Yet, the concept of socialization is parsimoniously confined in highly homogenous social environments in which the social interaction is mediated by at least the same race and culture. Once this concept is placed in the context of inter-group relations, group interest may hinder its explanatory power. Pearson and Citrin (2006) point out that the notion of political assimilation may not be consistent with the legitimacy of political preferences based on membership in cultural, linguistic, religious, or racial groups. It is in this sense the theoretical horizon of early-adult socialization cannot be overgeneralized without examining the deeper level of heterogeneity in racial and social contexts within which partisan choice is derived. Seen in this light, the Michigan school of partisan orientation can hardly apply to Asian American communities. For one thing, as an immigration-based community, many immigrants are still in the process of acculturation of the new homeland in America, such as learning English, and adopting values and norms (Ong & Nakanishi, 1996). Citrin and Sears (2014) and Wong (2000) argue that the process of assimilation embedded in the length of time living in America is the ultimate force that incorporates Asian Americans into political participation. However, specific life experiences embedded in the length of residence are obscured in these accounts; it is hard to pinpoint what kind of experiences tend to insert important influences pertaining to partisanship acquisition. For another, unlike blacks and whites, Asian Americans, even those who are born in the United States, do not have a strong tie

with partisanship to begin with in their pre-adult socialization. Thus, pre-adult socialization suffers the conceptual limitations when applied to Asian Americans.

7.4 Racial and political commonality

J. S. Wong, Lien, and Conway (2005) find that racial consciousness has positive correlations with political participation. Lien's (2006) study also finds that the perception of anti-Asian bias in U.S. institutions is positively correlated with Asian Americans' political participation. For example, the anti-immigration and minority sentiment in the late 1990s strongly structured the vote choice favorably toward the Democratic candidates (Lien, 2001a). Hajnal and Lee (2011) also argue that the perception of shared political interest with blacks and Latinos will discourage Asians from identifying with the Republican Party. However, Lien (2001a, 2006) and Hajnal and Lee (2011) do not offer further examination of how racial consciousness was stimulated (or failed to stimulate) among Asian communities.³

In the context of partisan choice, the selection between the Democratic and Republican Party is rooted also in racial consciousness in which the feeling of exclusion tends to reinforce the distinction between them. Kuo, Malhotra, and Mo's (2016) experimental research shows that the feeling of exclusion from whites tends to encourage Asian Americans to align with the Democratic Party. Likewise, Masuoka's (2006) research also find that the feeling of discrimination propels Asian Americans to lean toward the Democratic Party. This research together shows that the Democratic Party and Republican Party carry differing racial cues by which Asian Americans evaluate their political interests. However, it is noteworthy that the 2008 NAAS data show that

³ In Hajnal and Lee's account, their main interest is to examine why Asian and Latino Americans are hesitant to identify with the Democratic or Republican Parties; instead, these groups are likely to identify as independent as a way to signal their uncertainty and ambivalence about American politics in general. As they argue, identifying as independent has important implications for Asians and Latinos that many scholars overlooked.

among Asian American populations, the perception of political commonality with whites is more prevalent than that with blacks and Latinos. Focusing on these descriptive statistics alone, Wong et al. (2011) argue that feelings of commonality with other groups have limited effect on vote decisions. Yet, Wong et al. (2011) did not specifically test the correlations between racial commonality with blacks, Latinos, and whites, and partisan preference. In effect, in terms of political ideology, the major differences between the Democratic and Republican Party can be simply perceived as pro-minority and pro-white through the lens of racial consciousness among Asian Americans. In other words, Asians can use racial commonality with African or Latino Americans as a benchmark to evaluate their overall interests in considering partisan affiliation.

By and large, the existing theories as mentioned above collectively overlook the group specific alignment in partisanship acquisition. In this study, I conceptualize party identification as an outcome of the cognitive process of political awareness and a form of expression of connection with self-interest and political interest. Put simply, I treat partisan choice as a form of public opinion, that is, ordinary citizens express what they want, need, and desire through the support and affiliation with a political party. The patterns or characteristics of Asian partisan orientations are contingent upon policy positions and the sense of racial commonality. That is, the perception of political ideology in large part is mediated by policy positions; and the perception of racial identity is mediated through the inter-group interactions between Asians and other minority groups and between Asians and whites. With critical theory reviews discussed above, I lay out two hypotheses to test.

Hypothesis 1: *Individuals who hold liberal public policy views are less likely to identify as Republicans.*

Hypothesis 2: *Individuals who hold a belief that they share political interests with other minority groups are less likely to identify as Republicans.*

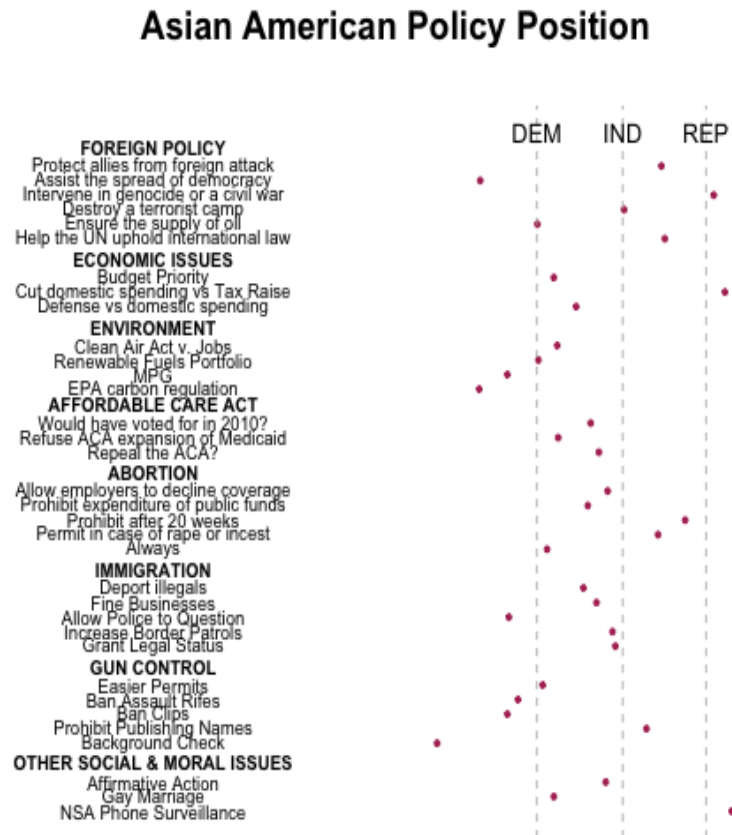
7.5 Policy attitude and policy position perception among Asian Americans

Prior to testing the above hypotheses, it is important to examine the aggregate policy attitudes among Asian Americans. There are 56,200 samples in 2014 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES) data, in which 73.7 percent are whites, 12.4 percent are blacks, and 6.93 percent are Latinos, and 2.43 percent are Asians. The 2014 CCES data asked respondents a comprehensive list of policy preference questions. Thus, from those 2.43 percent (1,365) Asian American samples we can take a glance at Asian Americans' policy positions. In order to compare Asian Americans' policy positions, I subset the data into Democrat, Republican, and independent samples, then calculate their mean values of each policy position. Among Asian American samples in CCES data, 40 percent are Democrats, 16 percent are Republicans, 28 percent are independents, the rest 16 percent are considered nonpartisans. 33 policy questions were chosen for this analysis (See Figure 7.1), answer options are "support", "oppose" or "skipped."⁴ Since Democrats are the majority among the samples, we know that their policy positions ought to be liberal. Still, it is quite informative to take an overview of Asian Americans' policy positions by comparing their policy positions to the average positions of Democrats, Republicans and Independents.

In Figure 7.1, I label "DEM," "IND" and "REP" to denote the mean values of policy positions among all respondents in the 2014 CCES data who self-identified as Democrats, independents and Republicans. As indicated in Figure 7.1, Asian Americans' policy positions are very close to those of average Democrats, while distance from those of average Republicans. Of course, these are just

⁴ Some options are "Yes", "No", and "Skipped"; or "For", "Against", "Skipped".

the snapshot policy attitudes, we do not see the dynamics of change when Asians live in the United States over time, and we do not know whether these policy attitudes translate into the understanding of the parties and their positions. Indeed, policy positions can be entirely independent from the understanding of the party position.



Source: 2014 CCES

Figure 7. 1: Asian American policy positions

7.5.1 Policy position congruence over Time

Policy congruence is amalgamated with the attributes of constituencies and the parties, its magnitude signals the overall political representation (B. Page & Shapiro, 1983). I argue that policy preference is a convenient steppingstone for Asian Americans to learn about the parties, and policy attitudes are driven by predispositions. Hence, foreign and social policies tend to be easier for Asian Americans to resonate with the Democratic Party. To test this hypothesis, I created a policy position congruence scheme. Drawing on the 2008 NAAS data, there are only five major policy issues, the answers range from strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree (no opinion), disagree and strongly disagree. For those who self-identify as Democrats and perceive that they strongly agree with Democrats position, I code it 1. And from agree to strongly disagree, I code them .0.75, 0.5, 0.25, 0 respectively. The same logic also applies to study the policy congruence with Republicans. The basic coding scheme is shown in the following table.

	Perceive Democrat's position	Perceive Republican's position
Strongly agree	1	0
Agree	.75	.25
Neither agree or disagree	.5	.5
Disagree	.25	.75
Strongly disagree	0	1

Table 7. 1: Policy congruence coding scheme

Following this coding scheme shown in Table 7.1, I enter the observations derived from the 2008 NAAS data. Those Asian American Democrats who perceive the Democratic Party's positions are closer to theirs, the score will be closer to 1. On the flip side, if those Asian American Republicans perceive the Republican Party's positions are closer to theirs, the score should be closer to 0. Moreover, the score that is closer to .5 indicates no policy congruence with either party. Therefore, this policy congruence scheme allows us to examine the temporal dynamics of policy

agreement among Asian American partisan and the magnitude of these policy congruence to the parties.

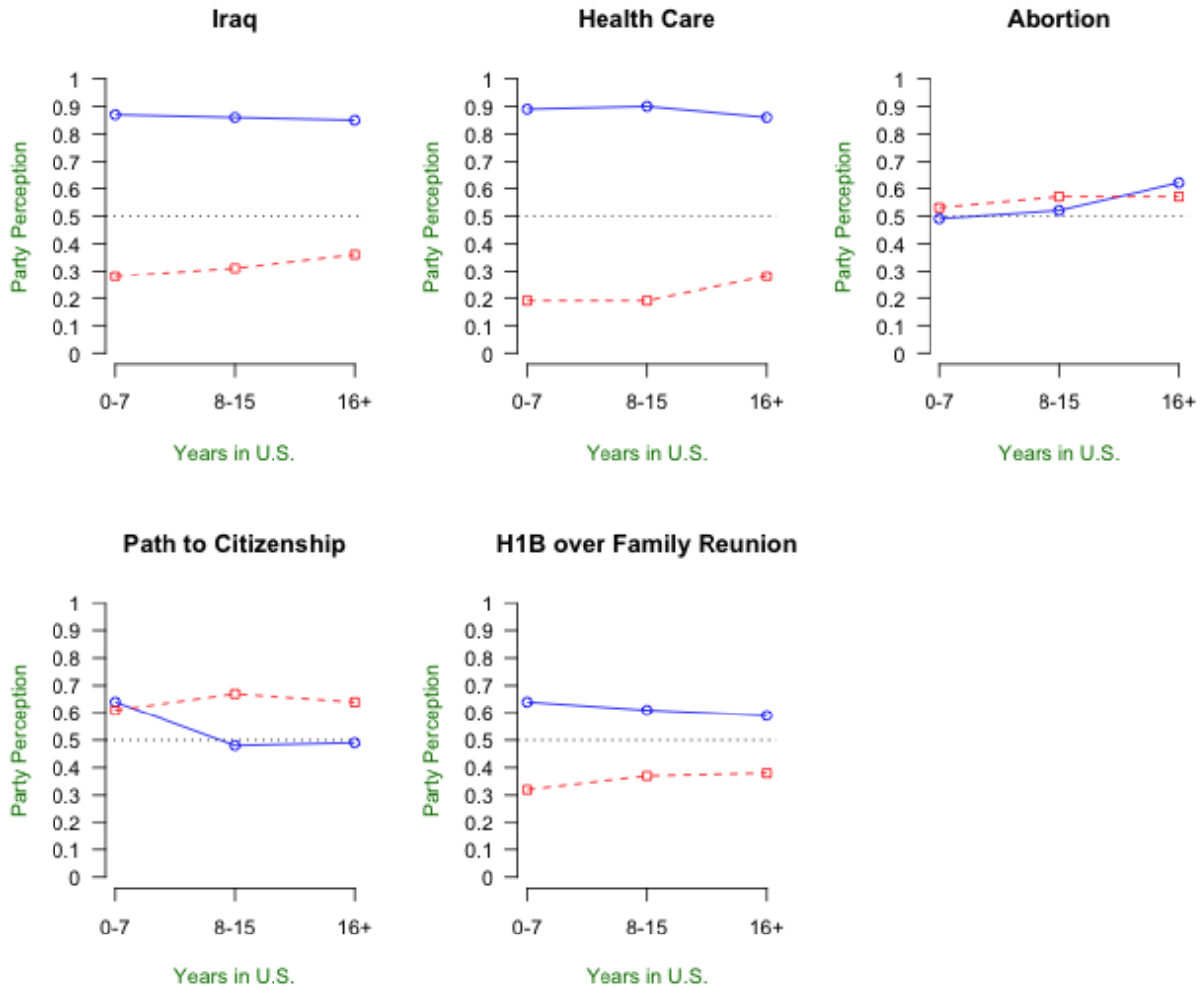


Figure 7. 2: Policy position congruence over time

As Figure 7.2 shows, Asian American Democrats tend to have stronger policy congruence with the Democratic Party. In the issue areas such as foreign policy and healthcare, Asian American Democrats' policy congruence is strongest, and very stable over time. In contrast, Asian American Republicans' policy congruence with the Republican Party becomes weaker over time and shifts toward the Democrat's policy positions. Moreover, on the abortion issue and the path to citizenship

for undocumented immigrants, Asian American Democrats tend to have weaker congruence with their party. Yet, in sharp contrast, Asian American Republicans do not even agree with the Republican Party but align with the Democratic Party.

7.6 Research design & measure

This study aims to test the variation on the dependent variable—party identification. To understand how I operationalize the dependent variable—party identification, it is important to make sense of the concept of party identification in this research. The conceptualization of party identification is a subject of heated theoretical debate among scholars in political behavior, as it can be understood as multidimensional or unidimensional (Franklin & Jackson, 1983). For instance, the Michigan school considers party identifications as endogenous variables, thus party loyalty is a driving force for partisan stability, while the Downsian model treats party identifications as exogenous to electoral behavior, which varies with policy and issue positions.

In this study, I conceive of partisan choice as a series of evaluations of policies endorsed by the Democratic and Republican Parties, and the preference is demonstrated with reference to one another. It is in this sense, I consider the identifications with Democrats and Republicans are opposite policy preferences—that is, a choice of one party is conditioned upon the policies advocated by the other party. In addition, I perceive the longevity of residence in the United States as a proxy for political socialization, in which the partisanship acquisition is a process of learning and balancing the individual and group political interests. To this end, I see party identification as a discrete variable. The scope of my model is specifically limited to socioeconomic status, policy preferences, racial commonality and political socialization, and based on these key variables to determine partisan choices.

Furthermore, this research also includes the country of origin of Asian immigrants as a control variable to examine if early predisposition affects their partisan choice (Gordon, 1964). More specifically, I will compare Asian Americans with ancestries from China, South Korea, Japan, Vietnam, and India, as well as the Philippines, to explore the extent to which these people differ from one another in terms of partisan choice. My sense is that early socialization in the country of origin might have varying degrees of effect on one's political socialization after immigration to the United States.

7.6.1 Data

The independent variables that I have mentioned above are included in the 2008 National Asian American Survey (NAAS). Different from the American National Election Studies (ANES), the 2008 NAAS not only provides complete information about the socioeconomic status of Asian Americans, but also partisan choices. Moreover, the 2008 NAAS also provides the country of origin of the respondents. As such, the detailed ethnic background of Asian Americans allows further exploration of the possible variations within the Asian co-ethnic communities.

Empirically, the 2008 National Asian American Survey data (NAAS) are the first most comprehensive survey data that exclusively focus on Asian Americans. The variable Party ID in the 2008 NAAS data consists of "Democrat," "Republican," "independent/Decline to State," "Other Party," "Skip/NA," "Don't Know," and "Refuse." If we treat the last three categories as nonpartisanship, then, independent together with nonpartisanship⁵ accounts for roughly 55 percent of the survey responses. With this large portion of independent and nonpartisanship, it is a big challenge to clearly distinguish the selection between nonpartisanship and independent. Indeed,

⁵ Those who refused to answer, don't know and skip the question are considered non-partisan.

the boundary between independent and nonpartisanship is always blurring. The same issue also plagues the choices between “Democrat,” “Republican” and “independent” in that it is hard to differentiate lower levels of political interest, hidden partisanship from genuine independent. In Hajnal and Lee’s (2011) two-stage sequential choice model, they first employ logistic regression to separate partisan and non-partisan respondents, then among those self-identified partisans, they employ multinomial logit regression to examine the pairwise selections between Democrat, Republican and independent. Although that method seems efficient, it inevitably encounters two critical issues. First, Hajnal and Lee (2011) assume that those who think in partisan terms will automatically treat independents as a midpoint between Democrats and Republicans. Second, independents contain multiple meanings and implications for foreign-born immigrants; careful and thorough examinations of them are needed prior to lumping them into a single category. Uncertainty and ambivalence could be the reason why many immigrants choose to identify as independents. In Barreto and Bozonelos’s (2009) study on Muslim Americans’ partisan preferences, they also found that those Muslims who were not familiar with American politics tend to identify as independent or nonpartisan, when they could not identify a party that represents their political interests. Unfamiliar with American politics and political parties, many Asians would shy away from identifying with the Democratic or Republican Party. Therefore, the distinction between non-partisan and independent is extremely hard, if not impossible, to discern. Therefore, in this study I employ self-report two-point party identification—Democrat and Republican—as a dependent variable and employ logistic regression to model their partisan choices—that is, I code Democrat=0 and Republican=1.⁶

⁶ The way in which I create this dichotomous variable, I also recode independent, non-partisan and others as missing values.

7.7 Statistical test I: Public policies and partisan choices

The way in which Asian Americans, particularly foreign-born Asian Americans, learn the parties and develop the partisan identification differs from native born Americans. On one hand, most foreign-born immigrants do not understand the policy advocacies and ideological stances between the parties. As Hajnal and Lee (2011) also point out, a large percentage of foreign-born Asians and Latinos do not differentiate the parties. To this end, it is reasonable to argue that partisanship does not come before the attitudes toward a series of policy issues. On the other hand, Asian Americans have their distinct social, cultural, and economic milieus, as well as political ideologies that predispose or dispose of their political interests and worldviews. Thus, we propose that policy opinion is an important mechanism in structuring Asian American partisan orientations.

Therefore, this section is intended to use several major policies to probe the extent to which they can predict partisan preferences. In doing so, the statistical tests proceed with four major clusters of variables: Public policies, socioeconomic attainment, the length of residence in the United States, and the country of origins of five major sub-Asian groups. The purpose of adding country of origin is to examine the variation among the major sub-Asian groups.

	β		(SE)
Policy Variables			
Iraq War	-0.57	***	(0.04)
Health Care	-0.50	***	(0.05)
Abortion	-0.26	***	(0.04)
Immigration (H1B) ⁶	-0.08	*	(0.05)
Citizenship Opportunity ⁷	0.14		(0.12)
Socio-Demographic Variables			
Income ⁸ --Working Class	0.01		(0.25)
Income--Middle Class	0.18		(0.25)
Income--Upper Middle Class	0.21		(0.28)
Education ⁹	-0.03		(0.04)
English Proficiency	-0.01		(0.16)
Year in U.S. ¹⁰	0.00		(0.01)
US Born	4.52		(11.50)
Age	0.01		(0.02)
Age2	0.00		(0.00)
Female	-0.02		(0.12)
Co-Ethnic Groups			
Indian	-0.31		(0.21)
Filipino	0.37	*	(0.22)
Vietnamese	1.46	***	(0.21)
Korean	0.35	*	(0.20)
Japanese	-0.25		(0.26)
Intercept	-1.17		(11.57)
N	2067		
Pseudo R ²	0.28		
Log Likelihood	-942.07		

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

The dependent variable is 2-Point party ID-Democrat=0 and Republican=1.

All variables are recoded as conservative positions have higher values.

Income level below 20K is used as a reference.

Chinese as a sub-ethnic group is used as a reference in this model.

Data: 2008 National Asian American Survey.

Table 7. 2: Policy preferences and partisan choices (logit)

Indeed, as Table 7.2 shows, Asian Americans who support withdrawal of the U.S. troops out of Iraq are more likely to identify as Democrats. Those who support that the federal government should guarantee healthcare for everyone are more likely to identify as Democrats. In terms of moral issues, those who agree that abortion should be legalized in all cases are less likely to align with the Republican Party. Nonetheless, immigration related policies are not strongly correlated

with partisan orientation. That is, the attitude toward family reunification visa is barely statistically significant, and the attitude towards granting opportunities to undocumented citizens is not statistically significant. Therefore, in terms of foreign policy and economic policy and moral issues, Asian Americans tend to clearly lean toward the liberal end, which is the reason why they can strongly predict partisan preference. In contrast, the influence of immigration related issues on partisanship tend to be weaker. This finding can be slightly surprising in that the majority of Asian American populations is immigrants (Masuoka et al., 2018b). The reason, in large part, is due to the fact that most Asian immigrants are documented immigrants. According to the estimated statistics provided by Migration Policy Institute, as of 2010-2014, 71 percent of unauthorized immigrants come from Mexico and Central America, while only 13 percent come from Asia.⁷ Using the 1998 presidential campaign as a case, D. R. Kinder and Sanders (1996) find that white voters exposed to the Republican campaigns mostly took into account only racial resentment against blacks, setting others aside. Particularly, when an issue is framed in a way that underscores the personal benefits and costs at stake. Self-interest can determine political significance. Seen in this light, it is not surprising that Asian Americans do not consider granting citizenship opportunities to undocumented immigrants an important issue.

Moreover, the logistic regression test in Table 7.2 also shows a surprising result. Socioeconomic attainments, say, education, income, and English proficiency in general have no statistically significant influence on structuring Asian American political attitude favorably toward either the Democratic Party or the Republican Party. To the extent, this finding is not consistent with Verba and Nie's (1972) account that socioeconomic status inserts varying degrees of

⁷ <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states#Unauthorized>

influence on political attitudes in the sense that high socioeconomic status is correlated with political attentiveness. Obviously, policy positions have profound implications for partisan orientations. We argue that these policy attitudinal elements carry important weight for partisan attitudinal direction, since policy preferences are a cornerstone for partisan orientation (Verba & Nie, 1972). To this end, the statistical result confirms our first hypothesis that liberal policy outlooks lay a concrete groundwork for the alignment with the Democratic Party.

In order to clarify the influence of national origin, the logistic regression model in Table 7.2 also includes five major sub-ethnic groups to gauge the effect of national origin on partisan orientation. These co-ethnic groups are Chinese, Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, Filipino and Japanese. These are the major Asian co-ethnic groups in the U.S., which account for the vast majority of the Asian American populations (Wong et al. 2011). We use Chinese as a reference group because they are relatively evenly split between Democrats and Republicans as compared to other groups. According to the 2008 NAAS data, 43 percent of Chinese Americans identify as Democrats, 34 percent identify as Republicans and 23 percent independent. As the test result shows in Table 7.2, among these major co-ethnic Asian groups, only Vietnamese tend to strongly and consistently align with Republicans. Unsurprisingly, as many scholars have mentioned, many Vietnamese came to the United States after the end of the Vietnam War as refugees. Their intense aversion to the Vietnamese communist regime prompts them to support the “Hawkish” foreign policy that Republicans endorse (Hajnal & Lee, 2011; Lien, 2006). Filipinos and Koreans also demonstrate moderate tendencies to identify with the Republican Party, in part, because they are more Republican leaning as compared to the Chinese. As Lien (2001a) argues, dynamics and diversity among the Asian American communities prevent them from developing political consensus across communities. Asians socialized through different channels carry their own

political predispositions, and act as disjointed groups. As a result, Asians derive political preference from individual evaluation of group status and importance of community with their own political perspectives and identities (Lien et al., 2003; Phan & Garcia, 2009; Tam Cho, 1999). Having said that, from a macro-perspective, Asian American partisan choice in general is trending toward Democrats. This tendency was even stronger in the 2016 presidential election as documented recently by Masuoka et al. (2018).

In sum, the logistic regression analysis highlights a few important determinants that, from different angles and spectrums, advance our understanding of Asian Americans' partisan affiliation. Policy preferences lend us the confidence that policy positions constitute the cornerstone for Asian American partisan orientation. Even though Asian Americans lack the solidly grounded lived experience and preadult socialization, such as experienced by black and white counterparts, to some extent, ideological attitudes embedded in policy opinion are consistent with Democrat's policy advocacies and ideological orientation. Therefore, it would not be difficult to conclude that liberal policy advocacy is an important determinant for Asian Americans' alignment with Democrats. Admittedly, however, it is hard to use a single-equation multivariate regression test to produce a sweeping conclusion about Asian American partisan preferences. It should be recognized that each of these key variables can influence partisan attitudes not only directly by policy preferences, but also through its indirect effects on other social forces, such as racial consideration. To test Asian-American partisan preference, the following statistical test seeks to test the influence of racial consciousness on partisan choices.

7.8 Statistical test II: Racial consciousness and political commonality

Another place for assessment of Asian American partisan affiliation is racial commonality. By “racial commonality,” I mean how Asian Americans perceive shared political interest with other minority groups. I argue that the sense of racial commonality with other minority groups is an important directional component in partisan affiliation, in which racial attitude serves as a reference for Asian Americans to evaluate their social identity and political interest in the context of racial consciousness. The way in which I measure racial commonality is through Asian Americans’ perception of political commonality with African, Latino and white Americans. Specifically, I include the variables in the 2008 NAAS data that ask respondents: “Thinking about government services, political power and representation, would you say Asian Americans have a lot in common, some, little in common, or nothing in common with” [blacks, Latinos and whites].⁸ These variables enable us to gauge how the sense of political commonality with other racial groups correlate with partisan choice. The following statistical test also includes four clusters of variables: perception of out-group political commonality; perception of in-group political, socioeconomic status, and economic commonality with other Asian sub-groups.

⁸ In the model, I code these scales reversely, so that negative direction represents the leaning toward the Democratic Party.

	β		(SE)
Racial Commonality Variables			
Pol. Int. with Black ¹³	-0.12	*	(0.07)
Pol. Int. with Hispanic	-0.20	***	(0.07)
Pol. Int. with White	0.23	***	(0.07)
In-group Political Interest	-0.12		(0.12)
In-group Economic Interest	0.07		(0.12)
Socio-Demographic Variables			
Income--Working Class	-0.09		(0.25)
Income--Middle Class	0.08		(0.25)
Income-Upper Middle Class	0.25		(0.27)
Education	0.01		(0.03)
English Proficiency	0.17		(0.15)
Year in U.S. ¹⁴	0.00		(0.01)
US Born	7.69		(10.17)
Age ¹⁵	-0.02		(0.02)
Age ²	0.00		(0.00)
Female	-0.21	*	(0.11)
Co-Ethnic Groups			
Indian	-0.33	*	(0.19)
Filipino	0.92	***	(0.19)
Vietnamese	1.97	***	(0.19)
Korean	0.76	***	(0.18)
Japanese	0.00		(0.23)
Intercept	-8.13		(10.21)
N	1944		
Pseudo R ²	0.11		
Log Likelihood	-1104.48		

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

The dependent variable is 2-Point party ID-Democrat=0 and Republican=1.

All variables are recoded as conservative positions have higher values.

Income level below 20K is used as a reference.

Chinese as a sub-ethnic group is used as a reference in this model.

Data: 2008 National Asian American Survey.

Table 7. 3: Racial commonality and partisan choices (logit)

The statistical test in Table 7.3 confirms my second hypothesis, that is, the perception of political commonality with blacks, Latinos and whites does serve as an important delineator of Asians' partisan choice. Specifically, those who view that Asians share political commonality with

blacks and Latinos are more likely to identify as Democrats. On the contrary, when Asian Americans believe that they share political interest with whites, they are more likely to align with Republicans. Out-group political commonality may also depend on social class interest. The conjecture is that Asian immigrants, like other people in immigrant-based communities, consist of a good proportion of low-income working class. They tend to collectively favor the public policies that benefit the working class (Cain et al., 1991), such as universal health care and other social welfare programs. Furthermore, Table 7.3 also indicates that the perceptions of in-group political and economic interests with other Asians do not have statistically significant influence on partisan preferences. Therefore, different from Dawson's (1994) linked-fate model, which stresses the endogenous belief of shared political interest among African Americans; Asians do not seem to strongly embrace the similar belief with other Asian co-ethnic groups. Rather, Asian Americans' racial consciousness is derived exogenously from immigrant experiences, in which the social identity and lived experience as a racial minority strongly structure their partisan alignment with Democrats. As Kuo et al.'s (2016) research also compellingly reveals, the sense of social exclusion strongly encourages Asian Americans to gear toward the Democratic Party.

Surprisingly, moreover, socioeconomic attainments such as income and education do not demonstrate statistically significant influence on partisan choice. Moreover, similar to Table 7.3, no evidence is found that either length of residence in the United States or age have obvious influences on partisan choice. This indicates that the sheer passage of time cannot serve as an effective proxy for political socialization. Rather, life experiences, such as racial discrimination, social exclusion, etc., are better agents for immigrants' political socialization. In addition, Table 7.3 also includes major Asian co-ethnic groups based on country of origin and uses Chinese as a

reference group. Still, Filipino, Vietnamese, and Korean lean toward Republicans, while Indians tend to support Democrats.

In short, the result of the statistical test in Table 7.3 is consistent with previous research done by other scholars. Racial consciousness functions as a cognitive shortcut, thereby reinforcing the awareness of political interests of being a racial minority. Asian Americans' partisan attitudes have been attributed, among other things, to the perception of political commonality with other groups. The perceptions of being racial minority and sharing common political interest with blacks and Latino encourage Asian Americans to support the Democratic Party; while those who believe that they share common political interest with whites tend to lean toward Republicans.

	β		(SE)
Policy Variables			
Iraq War	-0.58	***	(0.05)
Health Care	-0.49	***	(0.05)
Abortion	-0.24	***	(0.04)
Immigration (H1B)	-0.07		(0.05)
Citizenship Opportunity	0.21	*	(0.13)
Racial Commonality Variables			
Pol. Int. with Black	-0.02		(0.09)
Pol. Int. with Hispanic	-0.18	**	(0.09)
Pol. Int. with White	0.23	***	(0.08)
In-group Political Interest	-0.08		(0.14)
In-group Economic Interest	0.00		(0.15)
Socio-Demographic Variables			
Income--Working Class	-0.11		(0.30)
Income--Middle Class	0.12		(0.30)
Income--Upper Middle Class	0.08		(0.33)
Education	-0.02		(0.04)
English Proficiency	0.10		(0.18)
Year in U.S.	0.00		(0.01)
US Born	-0.79		(12.52)
Age	-0.01		(0.03)
Age2	0.00		(0.00)
Female	-0.01		(0.13)
Co-Ethnic Groups			
Indian	-0.34		(0.22)
Filipino	0.45	*	(0.24)
Vietnamese	1.43	***	(0.23)
Korean	0.56	**	(0.22)
Japanese	-0.32		(0.29)
Intercept	4.30		(12.58)
N	1749		
Pseudo R ₂	0.28		
Log Likelihood	-790.04		

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

The dependent variable is 2-Point party ID-Democrat=0 and Republican=1.

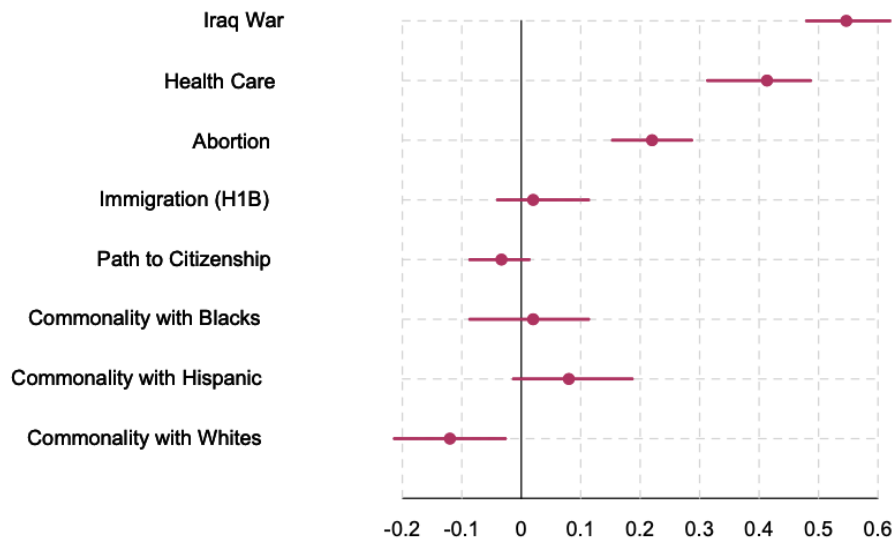
All variables are recoded as conservative positions have higher values.

Income level below 20K is used as a reference.

Chinese as a sub-ethnic group is used as a reference in this model.

Data: the 2008 National Asian American Survey.

Table 7. 4: Policy preferences, racial commonality, and partisan choices (logit)



Data: 2008 NAAS

Figure 7. 3: Predicted probabilities with 95% CI

To further test the influence of policy attitudes and the perception of racial commonality with blacks, Latinos and whites, all these variables are included, and a comprehensive logistic regression analysis is run. As Table 7.4 shows, the major variables of interest in this model remain little changed in terms of direction and magnitude, except that the policy attitude toward to H1B visa becomes not statistically significant, while the attitude towards the path to citizenship opportunity for undocumented immigrants becomes marginally statistically significant. Likewise, the perception of common political interest with blacks becomes statistically insignificant. This is because combining the variables of policy and common political interest with blacks, Latinos and whites, the variation of the dependent variable can be taken out by other stronger variables. In addition, Asian co-ethnic groups remain basically consistent with those of Table 7.3 and 7.4 in that Filipinos, Koreans and Vietnamese tend to identify with the Republican Party. More important,

Table 7.4 lends us confidence that policy attitudes and racial commonality independently explain the variation of party identification.

In addition, Figure 7.3 summarizes the marginal probabilities of the influences of policy attitudes and perceptions of racial commonality with blacks, Latinos and whites. As Figure 7.3 shows, foreign policy such as the attitudes toward withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq, health care, and abortion remain the most important predictors for Asian-American partisanship. When changing their values from minimum to maximum, holding other variables constant, we can see that these policy attitudes can boost the likelihood of alignment with the Democratic Party by 55, 40 and 22 percent, respectively, though the attitudes toward H1B visa⁹ over family-based immigration visa and provide path to U.S. citizenship for undocumented immigrants have little influence on partisanship. From the racial commonality perspective, those who perceive racial commonality with Latinos are 9 percent more likely to identify as Democrats, while those who perceive racial commonality with whites are 11 percent less likely to identify as Democrats.

7.9 Discussion

This study's theoretical argument is that policy preferences and racial commonality with other minority groups lay a concrete groundwork for partisan identification with the Democratic Party. Liberal policy attitudes toward a wide range of policy issues, naturally incline to influence Asian Americans to agree with the Democratic Party's policy positions. In particular, on the issues such as withdrawal of the U.S. troops from Iraq, health care, and abortion, Asian Americans demonstrate an overwhelming tendency toward the Democratic Party, which is different from nonimmigrant citizens, who might change their policy attitudes to comport with those of their

⁹ H-1B visa allows U.S. employers to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations.

preferred party (Lenz, 2012). As such, the causal direction between policy attitudes and partisanship is hard to tease out. However, about 70 percent of the Asian American population is foreign-born, and most identify as either non-partisan or independent (J. Wong et al., 2011). In this sense, it is reasonable to conjecture that policy attitudes drive partisanship, instead of the other way around. To be sure, using only observational data only demonstrates the correlations between policy attitudes and partisanship among Asian Americans; future research will need to conduct survey experiments to clarify this causality.

Moreover, it is also realized that these are crude measures of commitment to policy preferences, and they do not take into account the more specific social and economic circumstances faced by Asian Americans. Likewise, the overall policy preferences should not be expected to be static. Due to the data availability, only a few general policies can be tested, yet more salient and highly controversial policies have not been examined.

Second, *vis-à-vis* policy preferences, racial commonality plays another key role in constituting and defining political socialization in the context of racial minorities in the United States, as well as the object of political understanding. Narratives of American political incorporation are central to articulating the socioeconomic attainment for white Americans (Verba & Nie, 1972), or collective racial interest of African Americans (M. Dawson, 1994). As a result, what is said and often left unsaid about the influence of racial environment inevitably discloses much about the implicit ideological framework in which political and social life in Asian American communities may be evaluated and understood. Indeed, the statistical test in Table 7.2 also provides the evidence that racial consciousness offers a new lens through which to observe racially based political calculus.

Racial commonality is a social product derived from racial environment in which policy preferences and racial consciousness are mediated by the social and racial contexts. Citrin and Pearson (2006) point out that assimilation refers to ethnic differences eroding as immigrants are exposed to and absorb the dominant norms of their new country, that is, the gradual homogenization of ethnic groups through socioeconomic integration and acculturation. In a similar vein, Oliver (2010) also says that living in the United States promotes the transformation of the diverse group from Latin America into Latinos or other Asian co-ethnic groups into Asians. With this respect, even though they have a weak sense of in-group commonality as revealed by Hajnal and Lee (2006) and also indicated in Table 7.2, Asian American co-ethnic groups channel through similar modes of partisan choice in the sense of pursuing a common stake in important policy issues with other minority groups. In this sense, political socialization is not merely the adoption of economic, social, and political institutions of the host society; for immigrants, the process of political socialization needs extra efforts—that is, they not only need to achieve socioeconomic advancement, overcome the language and cultural hurdles, but also need to develop a sense of racial consciousness associated with political interest of their own group as immigrants and minorities. As argued by other scholars, partisanship acquisition for Asian Americans is a developmental process, which connects with immigration experiences and social networks (Lien et al., 2003; Phan & Garcia, 2009; Janelle S. Wong, 2000).

By all accounts, nonetheless, regarding the selection between the Democratic and Republican Party, the influence of socioeconomic attainment is minimal. Income, education and English proficiency do not have statistically significant correlations with partisanship as indicated in Table 7.2-7.4. This pattern of partisan choice is indeed inconsistent with the upward-class mobility thesis argued by Tate (1994), which suggests that those who garner higher wages are more likely to seek

alternatives to Democratic Party identification. This finding, therefore, strongly suggests that the way in which Asian Americans develop their political interest is somewhat different from that of white and black Americans. Stated otherwise, Asian Americans who hold liberal views on major public policies are more likely to identify as Democrats. More tellingly, the perception of political commonality with Latinos and blacks will incline Asian Americans to favorably identify as Democrats. On the contrary, the perception of political commonality with whites tends to align Asian Americans with Republicans. Drawing from personal experiences and racial consciousness as being a minority group can hardly disregard the common political interest of racial minorities in the United States. Put simply, political attitude depends on a particular cognitive representation of what one has seen and experienced, that is, a combination of cognitive and affective elements. In return, the rationally and racially conditioned evaluations of the Democratic and Republican Party depend on each party's policy outlook and advocacies for minority political interests.

CHAPTER 8

Policy Congruence, Partisanship and Political Knowledge among Asian Americans

8.1 Introduction

Previous chapters have examined the psychological mechanism and the determinants of Asian Americans' partisanship, this chapter aims to delve deeper into the intertwined relationships between policy attitudes, partisanship, and political knowledge, and the extent to which they affect vote choice. One of the most important but also obscured aspects of Asian American immigrants' political behavior is partisanship (Hajnal & Lee, 2011; Uhlaner & Garcia, 2005). Scholars in American politics in general are in consensus that temporal stability of partisanship is one of the reasons why party identification is the most efficient predictor for political behaviors (Campbell et al., 1960; Converse, 1964; Lewis-Beck et al., 2008), and remains a powerful way to shape people's attitudes toward policy (Green et al., 2002; Lenz, 2009; Zaller, 1992). Nonetheless, we still have a limited sense of how and why immigrant citizen populations choose one candidate over the other, and the routes by which they learn about American politics and become full-fledged partisan loyalties (Hajnal & Lee, 2011). It is expected that learning and retention of political knowledge are positively correlated to the exposure to American politics as immigrants live in this country over time (M. A. Barreto & Segura, 2014; Cain et al., 1991; Jones-Correa, 1999; S. K. Ramakrishnan, 2005; Janelle S. Wong, 2000). Yet, few topics in the literature on political behavior have looked into immigrants' political socialization and the ways in which they construct the

knowledge structures of the parties. Thus, it is not clear whether Asian Americans follow their own policy preferences or side with political parties. This chapter aims to test these relationships by isolating the impact of party cues through a survey experiment where party cues are manipulated. This experimental design allows us to identify whether Asian Americans' opinion derives from the policy preferences or party. I argue that Asian Americans have strong policy preferences that fundamentally makes them favor the Democratic Party, while the political knowledge they learned in the United States over time serves as a moderator.

One line of the research in opinion formation is party-cue effects. American public opinion scholars stress the importance of party cue-based information processing about policy that “predominates” the evaluations of their content (Iyengar & Valentino, 2000). People usually neglect policy information on reaching evaluations even when they are exposed to it. They use party labels or political elites' policy-position rather than policy attributes as a heuristic process to determine their vote choices or candidate preferences. Even among well-informed citizens, they react readily to political ideas on the basis of external cues about their partisan implications (Lenz, 2009; Lewis-Beck et al., 2008; Zaller, 1992). Another line of the research focuses on the importance of predispositions in shaping opinion formation. Citizens are often exposed to various political discourses regarding different issues and policies that can resonate with their underlying political, social and economic values. Public opinion research has found that these deep-seated values are usually the major determinants for policy preferences (D. R. Kinder & Sanders, 1996; McClosky & Zaller, 1984; Parker & Barreto, 2013; Zaller & Feldman, 1992). Policy agreement and preferences therefore serve as the key rationale by which citizens favor a particular party or candidate over others (Downs, 1957).

Together these lines of research often identify mixed effects between party cues and policy cues, in large part, because citizens usually rely on both party cues and political values in evaluating candidates and formulating political opinions. The comparisons between party cue and policy-cue effects usually assume that people have equal political knowledge to evaluate party cues and policy attributes. Whereas the direct empirical evidence of political cognition has been scant, particularly with regard to foreign-born citizens. This chapter contributes to the literature by extending the dual-process mechanism to study immigrants' partisan opinion formation and to illuminate the mechanism for structuring vote choice. Also, it qualifies the theory of partisanship as a psychological attachment by setting the conditions in the context of political learning. This chapter looks into the psychological construction of partisanship among Asian Americans and compares the utility of political knowledge measures in estimating party cue-based versus policy-based effects. The survey experimental results show that policy congruence provides a deep-seated disposition for Asian Americans to develop a partisan direction closer to the Democratic Party. As moderating effects on policy, political knowledge crisply distinguishes between cue-based and policy-based opinion formation among Asian Americans.

This chapter starts by reviewing the major theories and evidence that shed light on party-cue effects and policy attribute effects. The second section introduces the experimental design that allows the comparison of these two effects. The third section discusses the political knowledge item and scale validation. The fourth section is the report of statistical analysis. The last section is discussion and conclusion.

8.2 Theory: Policy congruence and political knowledge

8.2.1 Party-cue effects and information processing

A cue is a piece of signal information that may facilitate information processing. By implications, party cues may contain two functioning purposes: partisan attachments and policy preferences embedded in the partisanship. Cue-based information processing about policy dominates the way in which individuals evaluate the content of the message (M. Barreto, 2010; Iyengar & Valentino, 2000). The first line of research emphasizes the party-centric view, which argues that voters determine policy attitudes primarily on the basis of party identification. This line of theory put forth by Campbell et al. (1960) argued that voters cast their votes on the basis of their party identification. Party-centric thinking thus serves as the most enduring psychological attachments for citizens' vote choices. As citizens learn that Democrats and Republicans will pursue different policies, attachment to one side or the other becomes an important rationale for policy preferences (Carmines & Stimson, 1989; Hetherington, 2001; Uhlener & Garcia, 2005). These accounts, in toto, help set the context within which ordinary voters' policy attitudes are the direct product of the parties and political elites.

Party cues serve as "information shortcuts," hence party cues might reduce attention to policy. Party cues can reduce attention to descriptions of policy even among people who have been exposed to such descriptions (Bullock, 2011). Scholars point out that past studies used observational data and find that party cues seem to have an important effect, whereas it is not easy to isolate policy effects along with different cue-conditions. Bullock's (2011) experimental results confirmed this. The issue that arises here is: Does this logic also work for immigrants? Party-cue effects are based on an untested assumption that individuals have the same level of political

knowledge to categorize the information into the partisan sides. That is, for party cues to work, individuals must be able to be responsive to partisan discourses. In addition, these party cues must carry influences in their vote choice considerations. Indeed, the extent to which party cues work is dependent on the extent to which immigrants develop the connection between policy attitudes and the parties. To achieve this, individuals need to know what they want in terms of policy and also accumulate certain knowledge of the parties.

8.2.2 Policy congruence

Another line of theory argues that policy consideration can be a critical rationale that shapes people's partisan choice (Downs, 1957). As such, voters are responsive to policy (Ansolabehere, Rodden, & Snyder, 2008; Erikson, MacKuen, & Stimson, 2002; Key, 1966). Social values, policy attitudes and party identification are deeply intertwined with one another. Hence, policy-cue effects and party-cue effects are not easy to isolate, and few studies directly compare their relationships. The conflated relationship between partisanship and policy positions has been controversial; whether party identification affects policy views or the other way around is difficult to tease out (Jackson, 1975; Lewis-Beck et al., 2008).

For many people it is a tradeoff between crystallized predispositions and partisan preferences. If policy views are crystallized predispositions, then people would not change their policy attitudes to comport with their preferred parties'. Tesler (2015) further pushes this line of argument and says that crystallized predispositions have profound impact on partisan preferences. As he shows, those who hold strong racial resentment against blacks would change their partisanship to agree with their racial predispositions. The logic can also be applied to minority immigrants. Yet, to what extent can policy position outweigh partisan preferences remain an unexamined question.

In the context of Latino and Asian American vote choice, both party-cue and policy-cue effects cannot fully explain their preferences without understanding their socialization. Indeed, pre-migration political socialization might not directly or explicitly affect policy attitudes or favorability of a particular party, more subtly they insert latent preferences toward some policies or the parties. In political psychology literature, scholars distinguish latent partisan preferences from explicit attitudes. For example, recent research of Sears et al. (2016) finds that most Latinos, including nonpartisans, demonstrate a consistent and overwhelming latent partisan preference toward the Democratic Party even with minimal information about the parties. Similar patterns also demonstrate among Asian immigrants. Even though Asian Americans are hesitant to declare partisan affiliation (Hajnal & Lee, 2011; J. Wong et al., 2011), they do favor Democratic candidates over Republicans. According to the 2016 CMPS data, in the 2016 presidential election 55 percent of Asian American voters who identified as independents or nonpartisans voted for Hilary Clinton. In contrast, support for Trump was low among even those identifying as Republicans: 36 percent of Asian American Republicans voted for another non-Republican candidate (Masuoka, Han, Leung, & Zheng, 2018a).

8.2.3 Political knowledge

The need for cognition refers to people's desire for a firm answer to a question as compared to the aversion of ambiguity (Kruglanski & Webster, 1996). This motivates individuals to obtain more information for relevant evaluations. Despite many studies in the psychological literature on the need for cognition constructs, only few such cognition constructs are found in political science. As Kam (2005) points out, it is due to a lack of instrumentation. The ways in which people process political information injects another layer of the argument between party-cue and policy-cue effects. In tandem with party-cue and policy-cue effects, Kam (2005) and Bullock (2011)

differentiate information processing into two forms: systematic and heuristic processing. The former is more proactive in the sense that individuals tend to effortfully scrutinize the information content before committing to a judgement, while the latter is a form of passive piecemeal processing. That is, people hinge their judgements predominately on pre-existing cues rather than the content of information (Kruglanski & Webster, 1996; Lau, 1986).

Nonetheless, the need for cognition is more likely to measure personal trait or personality rather than political knowledge. Cacioppo and Petty (1982) find that need for cognition is correlated with general intelligence, but weakly correlated with being close-minded and uncorrelated with social desirability. Kam (2005) in her research finds that the need for cognition has no effects on opinion formation; instead, heuristic and systematic information processing play a critical role. In contrast, Bullock (2011) shows that the need for cognition has moderating effects on policy information. The dual-process models suggest that cue effects may outweigh policy effects. Cue effects are a heuristic mode, in which individuals rely on stereotypes as an information shortcut. Party label is a simple and direct cue. Policy effect is a “data-driven” mode in which individuals disregard or downplay stereotypes, and evaluate the candidates based on given information (Rahn, 1993). As Bullock (2011) points out, individuals in low need for cognition sometimes scrutinize information more cautiously, and individuals in high need for cognition often give them little thought. By implication, if US-born Americans and foreign-born Americans possess different levels of political knowledge, they might evaluate the given policies differently.

This mixed result in large part is attributed to the ways in which they construct and measure the need for cognition. Kam (2005) points out that effortful political cognition can be better predicted by a domain-specific measure of propensity to think about politics, as compared to a general nonpolitical measure. Political awareness is more precise than political cognition in that it

takes into account consideration (Lusk and Judd, 1988; McGraw et al. 1991), and attention and reception of political discourse (Converse, 1962; Zaller, 1992), and ability to reject the information (Krosnick, 1990; Zaller, 1992). However, the distinction between effortful political cognition and political awareness can be highly overlapped. One issue is that domain-specific political information can be considered difficult for some people, but easy for others, which might have nothing to do with awareness. For example, Alvarez and Brehm (2002b) reveals that union workers are more knowledgeable about workers' rights, and veterans and military personnel are more aware of defense and foreign policy-related issues. Existing studies in measuring political knowledge have been limited. For instance, in Kam's (2005) study, "need for cognition" is measured with subjects' level of agreement or disagreement with the two statements: (1) I like to have the responsibility of handling a situation that requires a lot of thinking. (2) I would prefer complex to simple problems. Next, the additive scale composed of responses to four questions about the offices held by political figures is administered. In Bullock's (2011) research, "need for cognition" is measured by subjects' ability to recall the facts of the reliability, but validity of these items has never been tested. Therefore, this research has trouble in tangling with the political knowledge levels that individuals possess.

8.3 Why Asian American immigrants?

Dual-process theories which focus on the policy effect and party cue effect have served as a framework for understanding political information processing in several existing studies and aiming to disentangle their interactive relationship. This framework is also important in understanding Asian American immigrants' political socialization, in which pre-migration predispositions and post-migration political information processing have the same dual-process nature. Therefore, the present chapter asks not only whether dual-process theories are appropriate

for modeling political socialization among Asian American immigrants, but also the extent to which political knowledge facilitates this process. Existing research in public opinion has yet to examine this question. Using only US-born American samples, Zaller's (1992) model, for example, predicts that the politically aware citizens will respond to political messages that resonate with their predispositions—but both party identification and values are considered predispositions. In other words, when individuals are well aware of the politics and know the differences between the parties and their policy positions, the need for cognition will reduce. As a result, this is a challenge to study the relationship between values and party-cue effects, because for ordinary US-born Americans, it is difficult to extricate the interaction effects between policy attitudes and parties (Jackson, 1975).

Need for cognition is a key individual difference measure examined in social psychology. Need for cognition assumes that individuals have the same cognitive abilities to evaluate the given issues, it only differentiates the motivation and personal characteristics (Kruglanski & Webster, 1996). As for those Asian Americans who were born outside the United States, need for cognition can be a challenge in that when the political knowledge of the parties is weak, it is hard to talk about motivation. For Asian Americans immigrants, they need to learn both the parties and policy at the same time, but the underlying drivers for them differ. As documented by scholars in the field of public opinion, political knowledge and interest play a critical role in the political message processing. This concern is even more critical among immigrants, who come to the United States with varying levels of educational background, political knowledge of American politics and English proficiency (M. Barreto, 2010; M. A. Barreto & Segura, 2014; Lien, 2006; S. K. Ramakrishnan, 2005; J. Wong et al., 2011). Simply put, it is not a personal characteristic or intelligence issue, but a political knowledge issue.

In addition, for Asian Americans, policy congruence tends to be an endogenous variable that is determined by one's political predispositions, which can be ascribed to pre-migration experiences and socialization (Lien, 2008; S. K. Ramakrishnan, 2005), while party identification of the Democratic and Republican Party is based on post-migration experiences (Hajnal & Lee, 2011). This different order sets off the socialization gap between US-born Americans and immigrant citizens. Scholars in social and cognitive psychology suggest that prior knowledge of a certain domain facilitates learning new information (Fischer & Johnson, 1984; Lau, 1986; Lodge & Taber, 2013; A. H. Miller, 1986). The mechanism that connects these two elements is the degree to which individuals link the policy views with the parties. This mediating agent is the political knowledge structure of the parties. In other words, political knowledge structures are based on learning and retention of the knowledge, and are positively correlated to the temporal exposure to American politics. Specifically, it is the memory of the policy positions between the Democratic and Republican Party (Lodge and Hamill, 1986). Social cognition research on cognition functioning demonstrates moderator effects on information processing, in which schema-consistent information will be easier for individuals to adopt.

8.4 Survey experiment and measurement

For the survey experiment, a nonprobability sample of 2,706 subjects were surveyed via *Qualtrics*, a professional survey platform, from 2018 to 2019¹. The survey targeted mostly college students

¹ This experiment was approved by the UCLA office of human resource protection program. IRB#[19-000672](#).

in 56 U.S. universities, which include international students from Asia. The map below shows, respondents of the survey come from all over the country.

The survey samples appear to resemble the Asian American populations in most respects, including age, gender, and regions of residence. Among respondents, 46 percent self-report as Democrats, 9 percent Republicans, 19 percent Independents and 25 percent non-partisans. Moreover, male respondents account for 44 percent and female accounts for 56 percent. 62 percent of respondents are foreign born, while 38 percent are US-born. Average age among US-born respondents is 22, and 25 for foreign-born counterparts. In fact, a sample's non-representativeness on education is not likely to sharply affect the analyses. And to the extent that it does affect them, it probably causes them to understate the power of policy description.

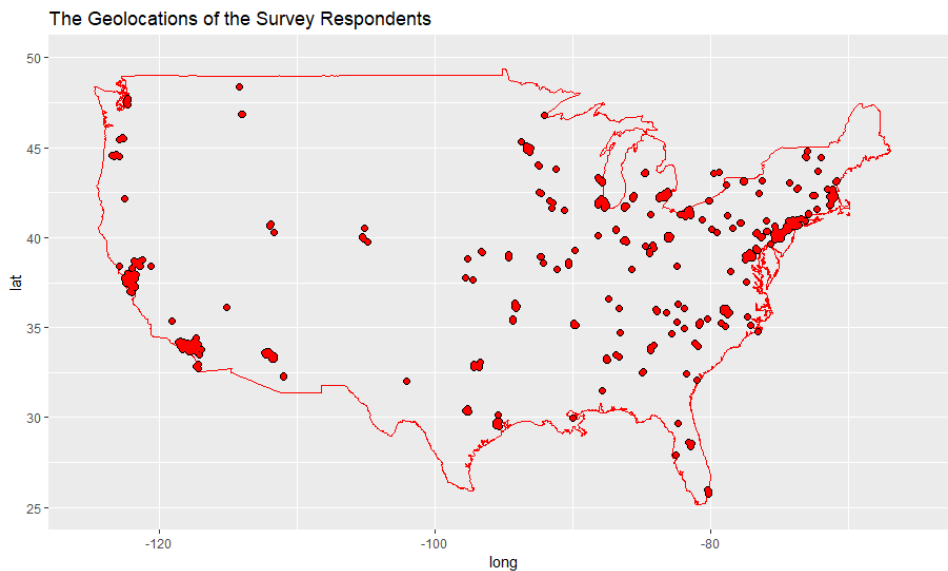


Figure 8. 1: The geolocations of respondents
Non-probabilistic sampling was fielded in 56 university campuses

8.5 Experimental design

Party Cue Treatment

	Candidate	Party Endowment
No Cues	John Brown; James McDuffy	None
Consistent Party Cues	Democratic candidate John Brown; Republican candidate James McDuffy	The Democrat also favors a ban on the possession of assault rifles and complete freedom for women to choose whether or not to have abortions.
Inconsistent Party Cues	Democratic candidate John Brown; Republican candidate James McDuffy	The Republican supports the current level of federal spending on health care, but opposes any expansion

Table 8. 1: Party cue treatment illustration

The treatment of the survey experiment will be randomized with three versions of the news article (See appendix for the survey news article). The article closely resembled regular press articles, which contains between 157 and 196 words, depending on the condition to which the subject was randomly assigned. This length is shorter than average articles, making it easier for subjects who have limited English proficiency to read and understand the content. To administer this research design, survey subjects were randomly assigned to one control group or two of the treatment groups. The treatment conditions are illustrated in Table 8.1. Those who are assigned to the control group will read the paragraph positions *without* any partisan cues. In contrast, those who were assigned to treatment (1) will read the same articles *with* explicit partisan cues associated with each candidate, such as their party identifications and party endorsements. Those subjects who were assigned to treatment (2) will read the same article with *inconsistent* partisan cues. That is, we purposely reverse partisan cues in treatment (2). Specifically, the partisanship of the candidates is inconsistent with the candidates' policy advocate. For example, a Republican candidate proposes to support as liberal positions such as universal healthcare, and a Democratic candidate supports the increase in spending on nuclear weapons. Manipulations of party cue-conditions allow us to

assess the affective responses, that is, whether subjects read the news article, and their responses are based on the content of the information or their pre-existing knowledge of the parties.

8.6 Post treatment measures

After reading the short newspaper article, respondents were asked to guess which candidate would favor the policy positions on healthcare, defense spending, and immigration issue, as well as show their candidate preferences. These are basic issues in the sense that if someone pays moderate attention to American politics or has some knowledge about the parties, he or she should be able to guess correctly. In other words, for those who possess strong political knowledge, these policy positions will automatically activate the link between individual policy preferences and party positions. This is the case if individuals identify with the parties, but their policy preferences deviate from those of the parties', that indicates their policy congruence is low. For many immigrants, if they are not familiar with the parties and American politics, their policy congruence will have low influence on candidate preference. In contrast, those who have been in the United States for some years—have been exposed to American politics and accumulated some political knowledge—are supposed to derive the connections between the parties and their own policy preferences promptly.

My assumption is that Asian Americans possess the endogenous policy preferences, which are guided by their predispositions. For those who have been in the U.S. for some years or understand the connection between policy preferences and the parties, they are supposed to have developed certain partisan schemas that associated their policy preferences with the parties. Therefore, when evaluating the candidates for an election, respondents will search for relevant information for the assessment. They will either read the hypothetical news article to obtain the information or based

it on their pre-existing knowledge. The party labels hence serve as a priming paradigm that connect the candidates’ overall policy positions and those of their parties’. If respondents have adequate prior exposure to American politics, the party label will become the “hot cognition,” using Lodge and Taber’s (2005) words, that quickly evokes the long-term memory as a working memory. Of course, since we do not record the response time, we are uncertain whether subjects are intentionally or consciously processing the priming paradigm—the party labels.

Moreover, an attention check was conducted to see whether respondents paid sufficient attention to the survey. Three forms of party identification questions were used as an attention check throughout the survey. One was the party thermostat, one was whether subjects want Democrat or Republican control of the U.S. Congress in the next midterm election, and a 3-point scale party identification. If respondents’ party identifications were not consistent within the party lines, that is, for example, variations between Democrat and weak Democrat was scored acceptable; whereas cross party lines were considered “bad” responses and omitted from analysis.

8.6.1 Randomization and balance

Variables	Covariate Balance Between Control and Treatment Groups					
	Conditions			P-values		
	Control	T 1	T 2	Ctrl ~T1	Ctrl ~ T2	T1 ~ T2
Feeling toward the Democratic Party	61.86	61.65	60.47	0.86	0.26	0.34
Feeling toward the Republican Party	37.09	35.80	36.10	0.37	0.49	0.83
Ideology (lib~con continuum)	2.29	2.30	2.37	0.87	0.21	0.26
Political knowledge	0.64	0.67	0.62	0.30	0.68	0.14
Attention to political news	1.82	1.89	1.97	0.35	0.05	0.30
US Born	0.43	0.43	0.47	0.97	0.168	0.155
Age	24.38	24.49	24.60	0.80	0.61	0.79
Length of residence (Foreign-Born)	7.99	8.61	9.05	0.34	0.11	0.52
Gender (female)	1.53	1.55	1.55	0.48	0.48	0.48
Asian Political Commonality	3.11	3.16	3.12	0.38	0.86	0.49
Pre-Migration Education	3.24	3.11	3.23	0.16	0.91	0.21
Post-Migration Education	2.62	2.74	2.61	0.37	0.94	0.34

Table 8. 2: Covariate randomization and balance check
T1 and T2 refer to the samples of control group and treatment group 1, and treatment group 2.
Significance level is $\alpha = 0.05$.

Table 8.2 summarizes the covariate balance across the control and treatment groups on a number of different demographic and social factors. Demographic variables include age, gender, education, length of residence, US-born and foreign-born. Social variables include the feeling about the Democratic or Republican Party, which ranges from 0 to 100. Ideology is a self-report left-right continuum. Attention to political news is about how often respondents pay attention to politics over the mass media. Pre and post-migration education are about respondents' highest education received before and after they migrated to the U.S., which ranges from less than high school to post-graduate. The sense of political commonality among Asians is about how much respondents think they share common political interest with African and Latino Americans. Table 8.2 examines the two-sample t tests between all treatment conditions. As we can see, all p -values are greater than .10 except for the attention to political news. Therefore, the randomization is successful, and the treatment is balanced across all of these dimensions.

8.7 Experimental results

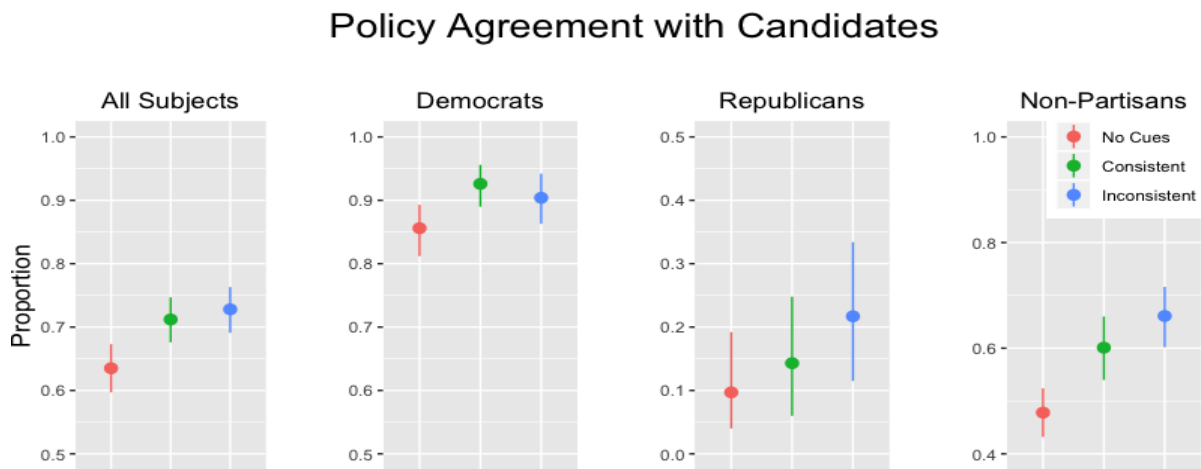


Figure 8. 2: Effects of party cues and policy direction

The above panels indicate the proportion of policy agreement with the democratic candidate's policy positions. Respondents were asked whether the candidates' policy positions are closer to their own after the experiments. The results show that both party cues and policy affected attitudes. The policy effect was greater on average and greater for Democratic subjects.

Figure 8.2 presents the main results. In the survey experiment subjects were asked which candidates' policy positions were closer to theirs across all different cue conditions. Figure 8.2 also divides subjects into different groups by partisanship: All subjects, Democrats, Republicans and Non-partisans. This is because aggregate results may mask the underlying partisan variations. As expected, all non-Republican subjects were more supportive of the liberal policy positions proposed by the liberal candidates. By "the liberal candidates" I mean the candidates' positions are liberal, whereas party cues may be swapped. All subjects were more supportive of the liberal candidates when party cues were given. The difference between no party cues and consistent party cues is statistically significant ($p\text{-value}=0.029$). Also, the difference between no party cues and inconsistent party cues is statistically significant ($p\text{-value}=0.006$). The similar patterns are also shown among Democratic, Republican and nonpartisan subjects. For Democratic and nonpartisan subjects, the difference between no party cues and consistent party cues is statistically significant ($p\text{-value}<0.05$).

However, similar patterns became weaker when consistent party cues were changed to inconsistent party cues, and the differences are not statistically significant across all different subsets of subjects. I posit that subjects were sensitive to party labels; once the party consciousness was activated, the policy attitudes were indirectly elevated as well. Moreover, Republican subjects have the least proportion of agreement with the liberal policies. What remains puzzling is that among Republican and non-partisan subjects, being exposed to Republican cues tends to move toward the policy agreement with the candidates who endorse liberal policies. These phenomena

lead to two conjectures: The first is that these subjects mechanically followed the party labels. The other is that subjects considered policy views are more important than partisanship.

Moreover, partisanship matters. Figure 8.2 shows that partisanship has obvious effects on candidate preference. Democrats were more likely to support the liberal candidates and Republicans were less willing to support the liberal candidates across all cue-conditions. Those non-partisans were leaning toward supporting the liberal candidates. Moreover, if party labels serve as a heuristic shortcut, party cues should be able to reduce attention to policy descriptions in the news articles. Hence, subjects who received the cues should answer these questions less well than those who did not. Furthermore, subjects who received inconsistent cues should answer these questions less well than subjects who received consistent party cues. The most surprising finding is that party-cue effects do not reduce respondents' attention to policy details. The experimental results tend to support these hypotheses.

Furthermore, Figure 8.2 shows an interesting phenomenon. First, comparing no-cue condition to cue-conditions (including consistent and inconsistent cues), the latter conditions seemed to boost candidate preference, and such an effect was marginally statistically significant across different partisan groups except the Republicans. Second, when inconsistent party cues were exposed, subjects' responses were hypothesized to be affected by them; whereas they were the opposite; instead, the proportion of those who supported the liberal candidates increased slightly. These two patterns suggest that cue-conditions do not reduce subjects' attention to policy attributes. When both partisan and policy consciousness were activated, policy consciousness tended to dominate their evaluation of the candidates.

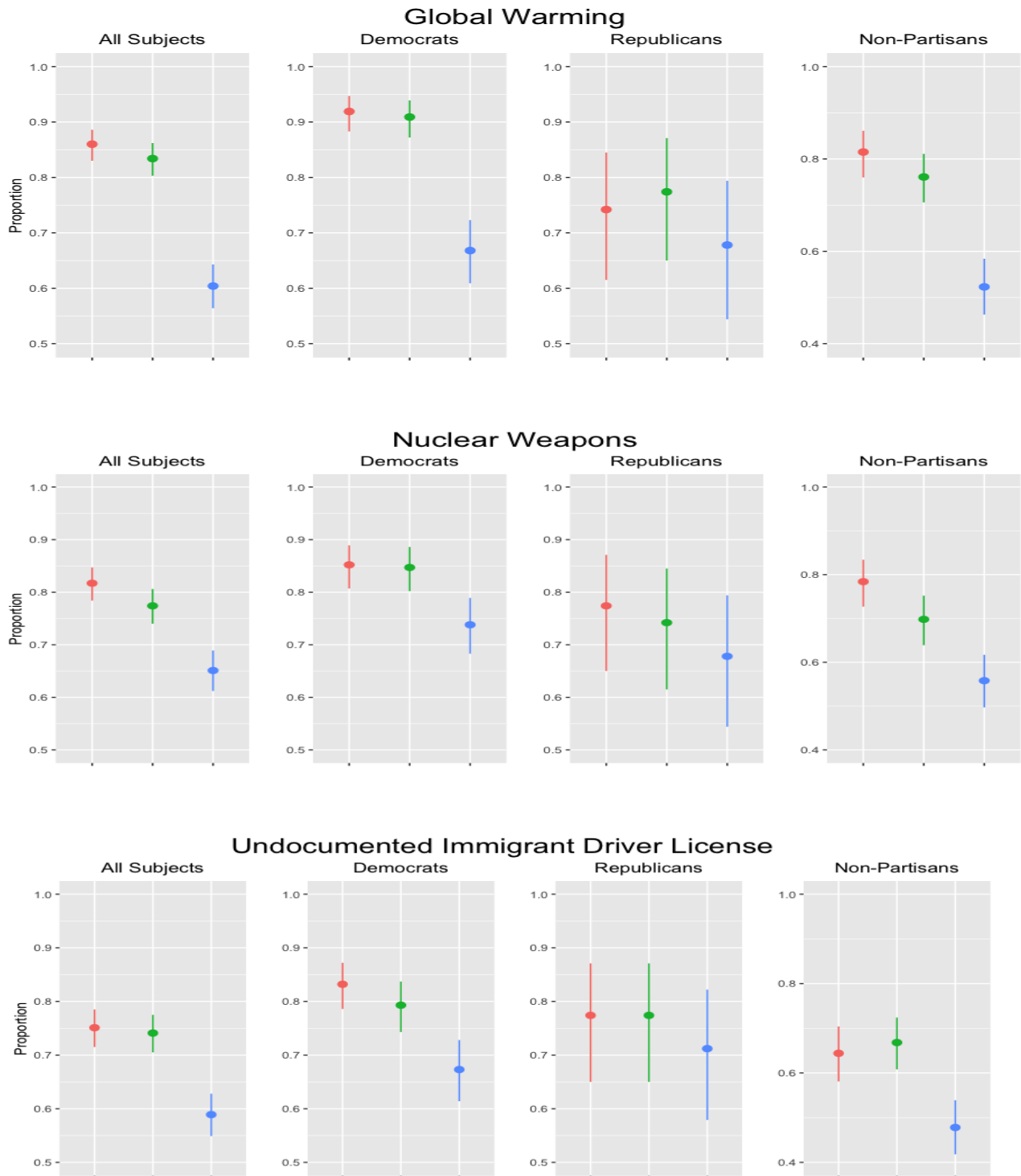


Figure 8. 3: The proportions of the answers that are consistent with the parties.
 Note: Each row plots the proportions of correct answers by all subjects, Democratic subjects, Republican subjects and Non-partisan subjects.

Figure 8.3 summarizes the experimental results from three different survey questions and across different partisan groups: All subjects, Democrats, Republicans and nonpartisans. The survey questions ask subjects to guess the candidates' policy positions based on the content of the news articles they read. As expected, a consistent pattern emerged: Without party cues, subjects gave more attention to the policy descriptions, and they were more likely to guess the party positions match the parties', while when consistent party cues were given, the proportion of correct answers started to drop slightly. When party cues of the Democratic Party and Republican Party were swapped, the correct answers dropped as expected.

Regarding the question of policy positions on fighting global warming, when no party cues were exposed, the proportion of subjects who got the answers right was 80 percent. When subjects were exposed to consistent party cues, the average percentage of correct answers reduced slightly to 77 percent. However, when party cues were reversed, the average percentage reduced to 61 percent. Figure 8.3 shows a coherent pattern that when party cues were consistent with party policy positions subjects' evaluations basically did not change, but when party cues and party policy positions were inconsistent, subjects became confused or got the answer wrong. As Kruglanski and Webster (1996) point out, individuals are inclined to obtain relevant information for evaluations as soon as possible. Figure 8.3 clearly shows that party cues did reduce subjects' attention to the details of the messages.

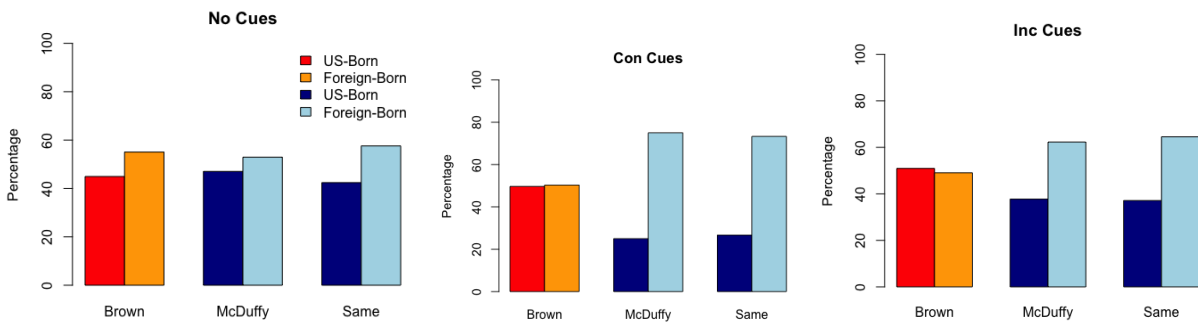
Most importantly, when getting into specific policy details, there are no strong partisan differences across different partisans. Specifically, there is no statistically significant difference between no-cue and consistent-cue conditions in the three policy areas. When subjects were exposed to inconsistent party cues, many of them were not able to match the party positions with the policy details. I posit that some subjects mechanically followed party cues without paying

enough attention to the details. Alternatively, some subjects may know the party's position very well and tend to be confused by party and policy conflict.

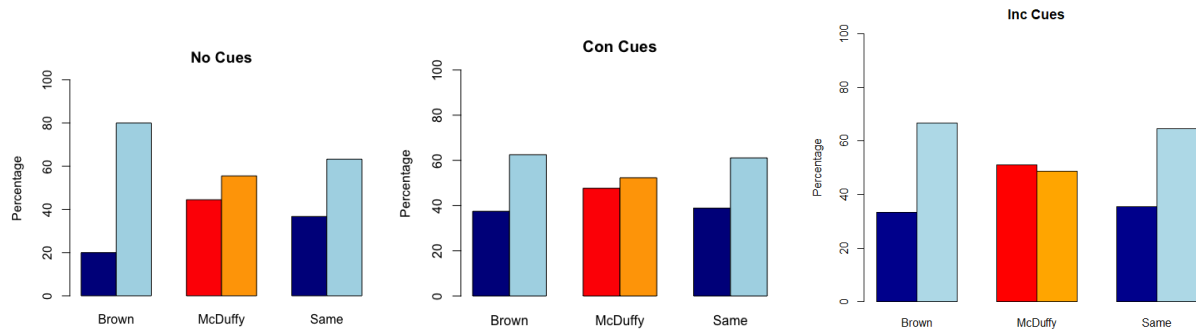
In sum, experimental results as shown in Figure 8.2 and 8.3 indicate a strong pattern that even though party cues reduced subjects' attention to details for the article content, they did not affect their candidate preference. These findings are consistent with those of Bullock (2011) that party cues reduce subjects' attention to details, but does not reduce attention to policy information. One possible explanation as suggested by Bullock (2011) is that party cues have countervailing effects among partisans. They reduce interest in parties but also stimulate interest in policy because the cues clearly indicate party conflict over policy. This explanation is well supported by this experiment.

8.7.1 *The political knowledge gaps between foreign and US-born Asians*

Government action on fight global warming



More federal spending on nuclear weapons



Drivers licenses for undocumented immigrants

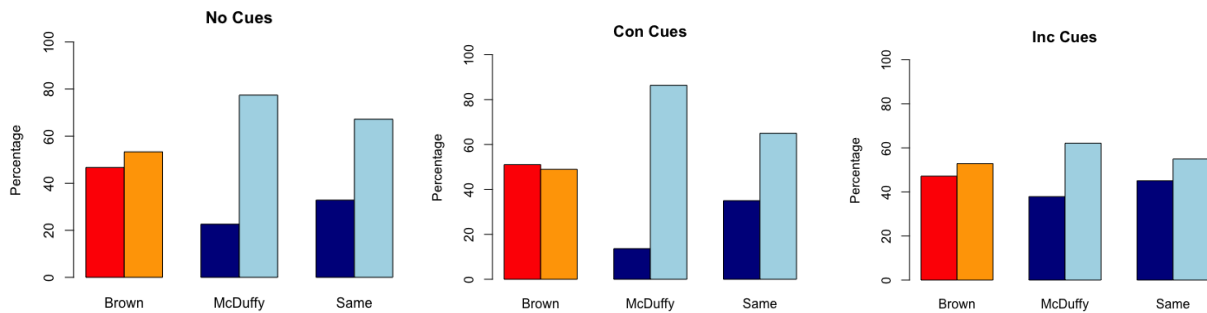


Figure 8. 4: The variation of answers between US-born and foreign-born generations. Note: red and orange colors indicate that answers are correct.

Were subjects confused by the treatment conditions or unthinkingly follow party cues? I hypothesize that those who were born in the United States have well-developed party schemas and conceptions, thus they are able to respond to party cues and use the given political information at the same time, while the foreign-born are less likely to do so. To examine this question, I separate the answer by foreign-born and US-born generations. In the surveys, the questions ask, “which candidates share your policy position?” Subjects have three options: Brown, McDuffy, or the same. Among these options only one is normatively correct,² which is highlighted in red and orange for US-born and foreign-born. Figure 8.4 shows that among those who answered the

² “Correct” in the context of this study is a normative sense. For example, when we say the Democrats are considered more friendly to racial minorities, in general more Americans believe it is the case, but we cannot say it is absolutely true, because some people might disagree.

questions correctly, the proportions between foreign-born and US-born generations are equivalent. Whereas among those answered the questions incorrectly, there was an obvious gap between foreign-born and US-born. Nonetheless, it is hard to pinpoint whether subjects blindly followed party cues, or they were confused. To be sure, there is a clear gap between US-born and foreign-born generations.

8.8 Political knowledge and scale analysis

I argue that policy preferences of Asian Americans and partisan preferences are often misaligned because of the need for the political knowledge to connect their policy attitudes and the parties. Immigrants' political learning is to find a connection between these two ends as a mediator. Prior studies show that high levels of political knowledge moderates the effects between political values and vote preferences (Zaller, 1992). J. Wong et al. (2011) also find that the more education Asian Americans receive, the more likely they perceive the political commonality with other Asians and non-Asians. Also, in terms of the measures of identity, the stronger the spoken English-language skills, the greater the sense of both linked fate and commonality with Asians, and other minority groups (J. Wong et al., 2011). As scholars have pointed out, lower levels of participation among foreign-born immigrants could be caused by the lack of socialization into American political institutions (Junn, 1999; Tam Cho, 1999).

8.8.1 Political knowledge items

I argue that the underlying variation in political knowledge among Asian Americans can shape partisan orientation and candidate preference. In social and cognitive psychology, a cognition is the process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through our thoughts, and direct or indirect experiences. It is a pattern of thought that organizes the categories of information and the

relationship among them. Political cognition refers to the process of acquiring coherent knowledge of the parties and their associations with the issues that is easily accessible when subjects are exposed to party cues. One of the best ways to measure political cognition is the capability to connect the parties and candidates with their issue positions. Political knowledge and interest are the most important stimuli for partisan conceptualization (Campbell et al., 1960; Hamill & Lodge, 1986; Lau, 1986; Lewis-Beck et al., 2008; Lodge & Taber, 2013; Zaller, 1992).

I measure subjects' political knowledge using 37 items, which encompass the association between the parties, candidates, and policies. Each item has four answer options: "Democrat," "Republican," "Both," and "Don't know." For example, one of the political knowledge items asks, "which party has the most seats in the house of representative?" Subjects can choose one of the four given answers. The answers to these questions were coded as a binary variable, which contains only normatively correct and incorrect answers. The correct answer is coded as "1," otherwise it is coded "0."

In order to effectively measure individuals' political knowledge, this study uses Item Response Theory (IRT) to construct a political knowledge scale by treating political knowledge as a latent trait. This political knowledge scale precisely measures the process by which individuals retain the political information that they were exposed to and their capacity to discern the parties, candidates and policy positions. Table 8.3 summarizes the wording of political knowledge items, and descriptive statistics, which specifically targets both policy and party domain-specific knowledge. As Campbell et al. (1960) documented, party, policy and candidate are the most important elements for the development of political knowledge structure and conception of the parties. I hypothesize that immigrants who have lived in the United States for a given amount of time or

those who have strong interest in politics can identify the connections between the parties and their widely polarized policy positions.

Item	Wording	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Item 1	Friendly to working class people	0.39	0.49	0	1
Item 2	Friendly to business owners	0.43	0.50	0	1
Item 3	Friendly to immigrants	0.52	0.50	0	1
Item 4	Friendly to rich people	0.46	0.50	0	1
Item 5	Friendly to Non-Christians	0.42	0.49	0	1
Item 6	Friendly to racial minorities	0.56	0.50	0	1
Item 7	Favors White Americans	0.47	0.50	0	1
Item 8	Friendly to gays and lesbians	0.54	0.50	0	1
Item 9	More likely to support death penalty	0.39	0.49	0	1
Item 10	Favors more government spending	0.34	0.47	0	1
Item 11	Favors cuts to legal immigration	0.47	0.50	0	1
Item 12	More open to new ideas and experience	0.42	0.49	0	1
Item 13	Favors tougher border controls	0.53	0.50	0	1
Item 14	More anti-communism	0.31	0.46	0	1
Item 15	Favors Affirmative Action	0.42	0.49	0	1
Item 17	Favors affordable healthcare	0.49	0.50	0	1
Item 18	Friendly to the National Rifle Association	0.53	0.50	0	1
Item 19	Which party has the most members in the U.S. senate	0.40	0.49	0	1
Item 20	Favors tax cut	0.42	0.49	0	1
Item 21	Favors cuts to social welfare programs	0.46	0.50	0	1
Item 22	Favors development of green energy	0.48	0.50	0	1
Item 23	Favors less government regulation and spending	0.39	0.49	0	1
Item 24	Favors international cooperation to advance peace and security	0.34	0.47	0	1
Item 25	Bill Clinton	0.51	0.50	0	1
Item 26	Donald Trump	0.56	0.50	0	1
Item 27	Barack Obama	0.58	0.49	0	1
Item 28	Hillary Clinton	0.57	0.50	0	1
Item 29	George W. Bush	0.51	0.50	0	1
Item 30	Ronald Reagan	0.46	0.50	0	1
Item 31	John McCain	0.44	0.50	0	1
Item 32	Colin Powell	0.22	0.41	0	1
Item 33	Al Gore	0.37	0.48	0	1
Item 34	President of the Current U.S. Senate	0.41	0.49	0	1
Item 35	The party that more people in Texas support	0.53	0.50	0	1
Item 36	The party that more people in California support	0.56	0.50	0	1
Item 37	The party that more people in Alaska support	0.31	0.46	0	1
Item 38	The party that more people in New York support	0.49	0.50	0	1

Table 8. 3: Summary statistics of items comprising the political knowledge scale

8.8.2 Political knowledge distribution

A functioning democracy requires citizens to be able to know and express their individual interests and do so in the context of the broader public interest (Carpini & Keeter, 1996). Sophistication of political socialization is manifested in ideological discrimination between major political issues and cognitive elaboration. I argue that due to different political socialization, there are disparities in the levels of political knowledge between US-born and foreign-born Asian Americans. Figure

8.5 shows the distribution of the number of correct answers to the political knowledge items. As we can see, foreign-born individuals on average have less political knowledge than their US-born counterparts.

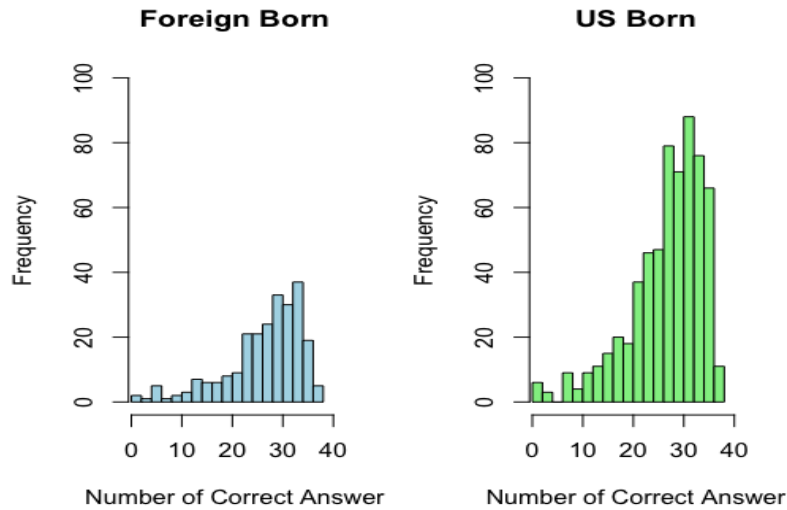


Figure 8. 5: The distribution of correct answers to political knowledge items. These histograms omitted those who score 0, because it aims to show the differences among those who retain political knowledge.

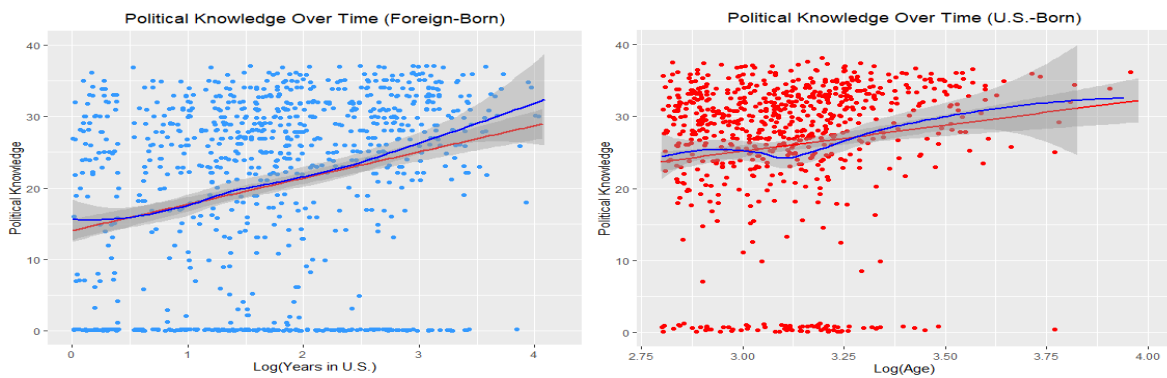


Figure 8. 6: Scatterplot between years in the United States and political knowledge

The X axis for foreign born shows the log transformed years in the U.S., and for US born it is age. To see the actual years, it needs to convert a logged values x by calculating e^x . The Y axis is the number of items subjects correctly answered. Because the distribution of years in the United States and age are left skewed, to make a scatter plot, we need to make logarithm transformation with them. The red line is a regression line and blue line is a loess smooth line.

In particular, as Chapter 4 has already illustrated, due to the lack of an organization dimension, new arrivals usually have little or vague party conceptions, which explains why their preferences of the parties, the candidates or policies are capricious. As immigrants live in the United States longer and are exposed more to American politics, the growth of political knowledge leads to greater consistency in partisan preference. To illustrate the gap and growing pattern of political knowledge accumulation between foreign-born and US-born Asian Americans, Figure 8.6 shows the scatterplots between the number of correct answers to political knowledge items and the length of residence in the United States. The red line is a least square line, and the blue line is a loess smooth line. Since both the least square lines and loess smooth lines among foreign-born and US-born respondents are almost overlapped, indicating the least square lines capture the linearity of the data points. If we compare the slopes between these two generations, we can see that foreign-born respondents have a steeper upward tilt to the line and a lower intercept, meaning that they have a steeper learning curve for American politics. Whereas for the US-born respondents, the slope shows a flatter upward tilt to the line and a higher intercept, indicating that foreign-born and US-born respondents have different trajectories in political learning. When US-born respondents become 18 years old, they already know a lot about American politics and party systems. Nonetheless, despite the differences in initial knowledge, the knowledge gap becomes narrower as foreign-born Asian immigrants reside in the U.S. longer. In other words, as foreign-born Asians live in the United States longer and have more exposure to politics, their general knowledge about American politics are somewhat equivalent to those of their US-born counterparts.

8.8.3 Factor analysis

Political knowledge is a latent trait, which is measured by 37 political knowledge items. The purpose of factor analysis is to assess the unidimensionality of the item scale. A factor-analytic technique is used to ensure that no departure from unidimensionality is present among a set of items. That is, to assess whether this set of items measure one and only one latent trait; otherwise, we will have measurement errors that affect item scale construct and item reliability. In doing so, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is conducted to analyze the dimensionality underlying the political knowledge items.

	Factor 1	Factor 2		Factor 1	Factor 2		Factor 1	Factor 2
Item 1	0.717	0.201	Item 14	0.437	0.421	Item 28	0.702	0.592
Item 2	0.605	0.380	Item 15	0.518	0.559	Item 29	0.566	0.675
Item 3	0.789	0.415	Item 17	0.764	0.389	Item 30	0.446	0.733
Item 4	0.737	0.327	Item 18	0.676	0.584	Item 31	0.447	0.704
Item 5	0.672	0.417	Item 19	0.383	0.261	Item 32	0.129	0.618
Item 6	0.775	0.494	Item 20	0.455	0.619	Item 33	0.290	0.753
Item 7	0.760	0.344	Item 21	0.621	0.525	Item 34	0.406	0.675
Item 8	0.759	0.500	Item 22	0.700	0.488	Item 35	0.633	0.621
Item 9	0.527	0.467	Item 23	0.383	0.653	Item 36	0.683	0.617
Item 10	0.366	0.561	Item 24	0.653	0.254	Item 37	0.238	0.683
Item 11	0.734	0.374	Item 25	0.557	0.658	Item 38	0.536	0.667
Item 12	0.739	0.261	Item 26	0.728	0.550			
Item 13	0.731	0.494	Item 27	0.729	0.588			

Table 8. 4: Factor loadings for the items comprising the political knowledge scale

Factor analysis was conducted using statistical software EQS 6.4.

Factor rotation method is Kaiser Varimax. Item 16 has a very low factor loading, so it was omitted for analysis.

Table 8.4 lists the items that comprise the political knowledge scale examined in this study, which shows the factor loadings for the items in the scale, based on one factor solution utilizing the entire dataset. As Table 8.4 shows, a single factor solution is the most appropriate for the political knowledge scale, because most factor loadings are greater than .6, while a 2 factor solution seems to have more low factor loadings.

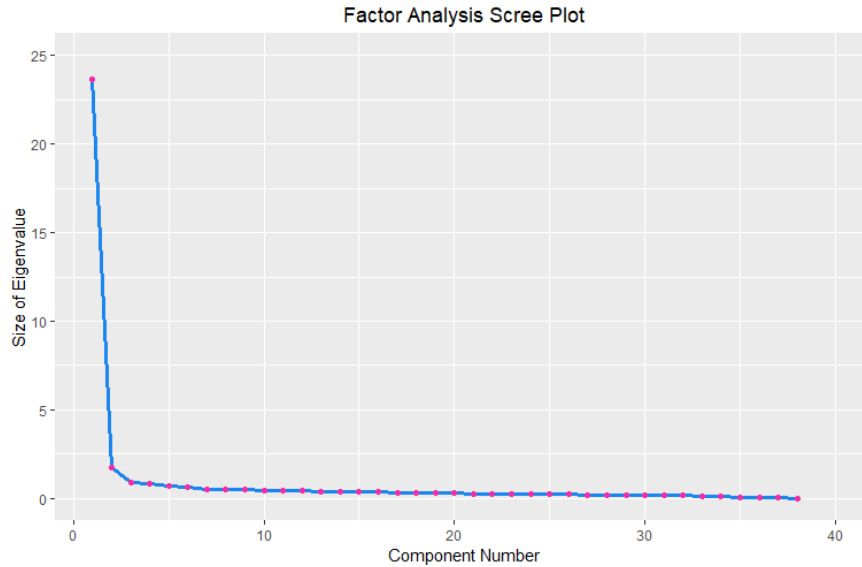


Figure 8. 7: Factor analysis scree plot

Moreover, as Figure 8.7 shows, there is a single dominant eigenvalue among those 37 knowledge scale items, which strongly suggests that the answers to these survey items are confined within one single latent factor.³ Specifically, there are only 2 factors that yielded eigenvalue greater than 1.0; whereas the first factor has a dominant effect as shown in the scree plot in Figure 8.7. The ratio of the first and second eigenvalue is 13.11: the eigenvalue of the first factor is 23, which accounts for 63.9 percent of the common variance, whereas the second largest eigenvalue 1.75 accounts for only 4.74 percent of the common variance. Therefore, the factor analysis provides sufficient evidence that only one latent factor produced the correlations between political knowledge variables. It is clear that this set of items are unidimensional and achieve factorial validity.

³ The covariance matrix of these 37 items should have the sum of eigenvalues to be 37. The first eigenvalue is 23.65 indicating that 63.9 percent of the variances and covariances can be explained by one single factor.

8.8.4 Item selection

The political knowledge scale was developed, where a pool of political knowledge items was used to gauge the political cognition must have the property to differentiate the low and high knowledge of the parties. How can we be sure that the political knowledge items can effectively discriminate between high knowledge and low knowledge respondents? Previous research simply ignores the variation of item interpretations. Kam (2005) used only two items to differentiate the personal differences as the way to measure political cognition and awareness. Bullock (2011) introduced more items to gauge the need for cognition, but he assumed that the item's difficulty parameters are the same, and citizens possess the same level of political cognition. This may be true among US-born citizens, but skepticism arises when we apply this assumption to immigrant populations. As Hajnal and Lee (2011) find that many Latino and Asian immigrants are afraid to identify with the parties, because of their uncertainty about political information.

To validate item selection, I apply Item Response Theory (IRT) to analyze that performance of the items and how these items serve as a discriminator for political cognition among Asian Americans.

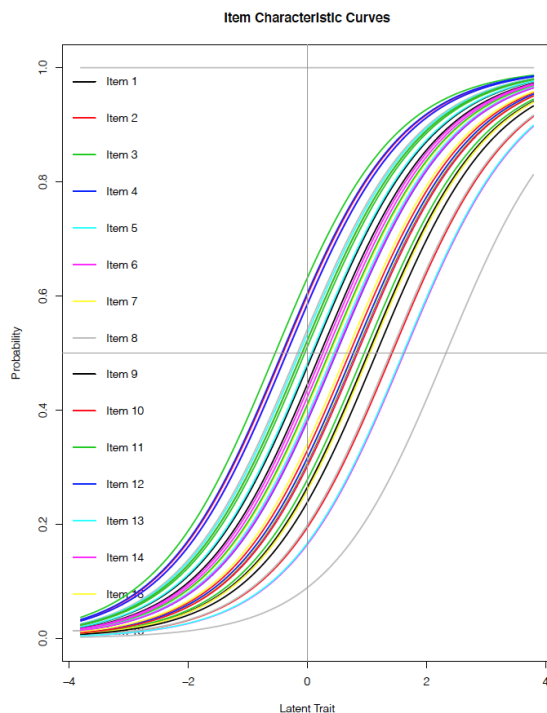


Figure 8. 8: 1PL item characteristic curves

The item characteristic curves in Figure 8.8 show that the political knowledge scale items were exceptional discriminators between low knowledge and high knowledge respondents. This One-Parameter Logistic (1PL) (also known as a Rasch Model) model assumes that all scale items related to the latent trait equally and items vary only in difficulty (equal to having all factor loadings across items).⁴ The main idea behind the principle of specific objectivity is that the measurement of individual latent traits does not rely on the specific items in a survey. The item difficulties should be assessed independent of the specific individuals in the sample. The idea of specific objectivity is worked out technically by requiring that the item response model has known sufficient statistics for both the person and the item parameters (Heinen, 1996).

⁴ $\lambda_i = \frac{\alpha_i}{\sqrt{1+\alpha_i^2}}$ where λ_i is a factor loading of a given item, and α_i is a discrimination coefficient. As we can see, there is a monotonic relationship between λ_i and α_i . When α_i is large, λ_i a particular item will be large as well.

In this study, I adopted a 1PL model in which only the item difficulty parameters vary, assuming that all items have the same discrimination parameter between individuals with different abilities. This hypothesis was tested using 2 Parameter Logistic (2PL) model, in which each item's discrimination parameter is free to vary. The 2PL results are highly identical to those of 1PL. This is because the items administered in this study were similar; the items do not differ with respect to the discrimination parameter. Furthermore, the 3PL model was also tested, its guessing parameters was 0.082, meaning that we can simply neglect the concern that subjects randomly guessed the answers. Therefore, the trace lines for the 37 items run parallel, which assumes that the latent variable and the indicators are equally strong for all indicators.

8.8.5 Internal consistency

Internal consistency reliability is a way to gauge how well the political knowledge items are measuring the latent trait we expect it to measure. In doing so, I randomly split the data into two subjects i and j , and applied *Spearman-Brown Prophecy* formula to measure the reliability. That is,

$$\rho_{XX} = \frac{k \rho_{ij}}{1 + (k - 1)\rho_{ij}}$$

where k is the number of subjects, and ρ_{ij} is the reliability between subject i and j . Then I calculate the total score of each row of i and j , and calculate ρ_{ij} , the correlation between subject i and j . To accurately calculate the reliability, the Monte Carlo simulation was conducted, in which I wrote a R script to randomly split the data into two halves and calculate the reliability. I simulated this process 1,000 times, in each simulation process the program produces a reliability value. Then I calculate the mean of the 1,000 reliability values, which yields $\rho_{XX} = .99$ among these items. The

tests indicate that the items selected for use in succeeding experiments exhibit a high degree of interrelatedness.

Moreover, since the 37 items have one dominant latent factor, I further validated this measure using *Coefficient Omega* to analyze the correlation. The reliability score is also 0.99, which is consistent with the result derived from *Spearman-Brown Prophecy* formula. Therefore, both reliability tests indicate a good internal consistency. In sum, the political knowledge scale has shown one primary factor in a reliable manner, and the IRT result has shown that the political knowledge scale can effectively discriminate Asian Americans who have good knowledge of the parties and those who do not.

8.9 Measurement & statistical model

I argue that Asian Americans' policy preferences are shaped by their underlying core values, which are due to their pre-migration socialization, while political knowledge of the parties are learned based on their post-migration experiences. Political knowledge serves as a moderator between partisan preferences and policy preferences.

8.9.1 Dependent variables

The dependent variable is candidate preference. Respondents have three options: "Brown," "McDuffy," or "the same." I rescored the variable into a dichotomous one. That is, whether respondents support the liberal candidates or not, based on the three party-cue conditions. Therefore, in all party-cue conditions, preference for Brown was coded 1, and otherwise 0.

8.9.2 Key independent variables

To test this hypothesis, I measure subjects' political knowledge using the 37 items. Each political knowledge item has its varying difficulty. In a 1 parameter logistic (1PL) model, the probability of correctly answering an item as a function of θ is

$$P_i(\theta) = \frac{e^{(\theta_i - b_i)}}{1 + e^{(\theta_i - b_i)}}$$

where b_i is a difficulty coefficient of each item, and θ_i is a latent trait. I weigh each item according to their difficulty parameter w_i , which $w_i = b_i$. That is, supposed that x_i is a knowledge item, a vector of U_i is a total score of all correct answers for each person i , thus $U_i = w_1x_1 + w_2x_2 + \dots + w_{37}x_{37}$. The vector U_i will be incorporated into the regression models as the political knowledge variable.

To measure the policy congruence, I construct a variable to gauge the congruence between one's self-report partisanship and the ability to discern the policies on the basis of party position. This variable is a 3-point scale coded as 0, 0.5 and 1 respectively. After subjects read one of the randomized news articles, they were asked to guess which candidate was more likely to support the policies such as "government action to fight global warming," "more federal spending on nuclear weapons," and "driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants." Based on the survey responses, if someone who self-identified with Democrats and his or her policy views are consistent with liberal view in a policy area, then their policy congruence will be 1. Alternatively, if someone who is self-identified as Independent, but he or she guesses the candidate's positions correctly, then his or her policy congruence is coded 0.5. In other words, "1" indicates highly consistent with the Democratic party's positions, and "0" indicates no consistency. Because the

party labels are randomized, if respondents mechanically follow the party labels, they will have low scores in policy congruence.

8.9.3 *The model*

Although the analyses above distinguish between Democratic, Republican and Non-partisan subjects, they still conceal much variation in political knowledge. To differentiate the effect of political knowledge on candidate choice, I estimate the following model.

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Candidate Preference} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Knowledge} \times \text{No Party Cues} \\
 & + \beta_2 \text{Knowledge} \times \text{Consistent Party Cues} \\
 & + \beta_3 \text{Knowledge} \times \text{Inconsistent Party Cues} \\
 & + \beta_4 \text{Policy Congruence} \times \text{Knowledge} \\
 & + \beta_5 \text{No Party Cues} + \beta_6 \text{Consistent Party Cues} \\
 & + \beta_7 \text{Inconsistent Party Cues} + \beta_8 \text{Knowledge} \\
 & + \beta_9 \text{Policy Congruence} + \sum_i \Theta + \epsilon
 \end{aligned}$$

In this model the dependent variable is the candidate preference, which asks “which candidate’s policy is closer to yours.” The dependent variable is scored 1 and 0 for dichotomous outcomes. Each candidate has distinctive policy positions upon whom respondents are offered the options of one of the two competing candidates or neither of them. “No Cues,” “Consistent Cues” and “Inconsistent Cues” are scored 1 for subjects who were assigned to these conditions, and 0 for other subjects. “Knowledge” and “Policy Congruence” are recorded to range from 0 and 1. $\sum_i \Theta$ denotes the sum of other control variables. The residual ϵ is assumed to follow a normal distribution, $\epsilon \sim N(0, \sigma^2)$, with zero mean and unknown variance and have no correlations with other variables.

There are three racial consciousness variables included in the model. Asian commonality variable asks, “When it comes to social and political issues, how much do you think Asian Americans have in common with African Americans and Latinos in the U.S.?” “Obama effect” asks respondents, “Do you think that Barack Obama, as the first African American president in the U.S., provided hope and opportunity for just Black Americans, or for all racial minority groups in the U.S. including Asian Americans?” “Trump effect” asks, “When you read or hear about Donald Trump criticizing undocumented immigrants, do you think he is mostly talking about Latinos, or do you think he is also being critical of Asians here in the United States?” These variables offer another layer of test to support the racial consciousness.

Following the model indicated above, the coefficient of party cues should be zero when knowledge measure equals zero. If low knowledge subjects are influenced by party cues, the coefficient of the interaction term *Party Cues*×*Knowledge* should be positive and significant. If the high knowledge subjects *lean* less on party cues than the low knowledge ones, then the coefficient on this interaction term should be negative, meaning that the effect of party cues is weakened as the score on the knowledge scale measure increases. Taking both of these coefficients into account, the effect of party cues should be close to zero. The marginal effect of party cues is thus expected to vary across the range of the political knowledge measure, with the expectation that party cues will be statistically significant and distinguishable from zero among low knowledge subjects and will be indistinguishable from zero for politically sophisticated subjects.

If low knowledge subjects neglect the policy congruence, then we would expect the coefficient on “Policy Congruence” to be indistinguishable from zero. If high knowledge subjects lean more on policy congruence as knowledge increases, then the coefficient of *Policy*

Congruence×*Knowledge* should be positive and significant, such that those who are high in policy congruence are more supportive of a given candidate.

8.10 Statistical results

Table 8.5 shows the statistical output, which includes three models with three different party-cue conditions.

	Political Position Closer to Democratic Candidate Cue Conditions		
	No Cues (1)	Con Cues (2)	Incon Cues (3)
No Party Cues × Knowledge	0.122 (0.606)		
Consistent Cues × Knowledge		0.279 (0.643)	
Inconsistent Cues × Knowledge			-0.413 (0.633)
Policy Congruence × Knowledge	2.204*** (0.799)	2.172*** (0.796)	2.027** (0.812)
Policy Congruence	1.186** (0.524)	1.130** (0.523)	1.311** (0.533)
Knowledge	-0.128 (0.552)	-0.146 (0.539)	0.183 (0.602)
No Party Cues	-0.686* (0.374)	-0.090 (0.395)	0.770** (0.389)
Age	-0.035 (0.053)	-0.032 (0.052)	-0.031 (0.052)
Age2	0.000 (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)	0.000 (0.001)
US Born	0.137 (0.177)	0.147 (0.177)	0.101 (0.178)
Female	0.630*** (0.149)	0.653*** (0.148)	0.653*** (0.149)
Chinese	-0.021 (0.166)	0.000 (0.164)	-0.032 (0.166)
Asian Political Commonality	0.266*** (0.085)	0.265*** (0.085)	0.261*** (0.085)
Obama Effect	0.684*** (0.158)	0.669*** (0.157)	0.674*** (0.158)
Trump Effect	0.554*** (0.168)	0.511*** (0.166)	0.522*** (0.167)
Constant	-3.282*** (0.997)	-3.471*** (0.981)	-3.835*** (1.009)
N	1,432	1,432	1,432

Standard errors in parentheses, two-tailed test
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 8. 5: Determinants of candidate preference

Each column in the table reports the logit regression results. The dependent variables are the support for Democratic candidates, which are coded “1,” and “0” otherwise. All variables in the table were rescored within the range from 0 and 1.

Model (1) shows that in the context of no party cues, the coefficient of *No Cues × Knowledge* is correctly signed, but not statistically significant. In consistent party-cue condition, Model (2) shows that despite the coefficient *Consistent Cues × Knowledge* it is not statistically significant, the magnitude increased to 0.279 as compared to that in Model (1), this means that when party cues are consistent, high knowledge individuals tend to follow party cues. In sharp contrast, when the Democratic and Republican party cues were swapped, the direction of the coefficient *Inconsistent Cues × Knowledge* became -0.413. This indicates that the high knowledge subjects lean less on party cues than the low knowledge ones. Simply put, the effect of party cues is weaker as the score on the knowledge scale measure increases. This finding is consistent with what is found in Figure 8.3. Therefore, this result suggests that Asian American immigrants do follow party cues, particularly those who have less political knowledge. They might take party labels as a heuristic shortcut.

Moreover, policy congruence tends to have a positive and statistically significant effect on candidate preference. Such an effect is a lot stronger when it interacts with political knowledge. The interaction term *Policy Congruence × Knowledge* aims to capture the interactive effect between policy congruence and political knowledge levels. As the coefficient of *Policy Congruence × Knowledge* shows, it is statistically significant and in a positive direction. This is to say, political knowledge has strong moderating effects on policy congruence across all models, but it is less important as a moderator of party cues. The variable age and its squared term age^2 are not statistically significant, meaning that age does not have effects on the linear or quadratic trend.

In addition, adding Asian political commonality, Obama effect and Trump effect to the model, the magnitude of *Policy Congruence* \times *Knowledge* did not change much. Thus, these racial consciousness variables seem to insert different dimensional effects to the model. Overall, the results of regression models are consistent with the models in Chapter 7.

These results show that the impact of party cues increase as political knowledge rises. Its impact is positive and statistically significant from those who have low political knowledge. Concurrently, the impact of policy congruence changes as political knowledge increases, and its impact is highly statistically significant. These results appear in the models using party cues and political knowledge, thus suggesting that political knowledge has moderating effects on policy views.

8.11 Discussion & conclusion

A concern about democracy is that many people tend to follow too readily the policy attitudes of their preferred parties' without critical and independent evaluations of the policy details (Bullock, 2011; Lenz, 2012). Ordinary citizens often use party cues as a heuristic shortcut to help form their policy positions (Bullock, 2011; Campbell et al., 1960; Hetherington, 2001; Lewis-Beck et al., 2008). This party-centric view may not be applicable to anyone or racial groups. It depends on a matrix of interconnected predispositions, partisan attachment, and political knowledge.

Predispositions play a weighty role in a partisan direction. Citizens may change their political attitudes to comport with crystallized predispositions (Tesler, 2015). For adult immigrants, policy preferences are rooted in core values, which are nurtured in pre-migration political socialization and experiences. Coming from different cultural and social environments, Asian immigrants must reorient themselves to and learn a new political system that is dissimilar from that of their home

countries, which include institutional arrangements, associations of political values with the parties, and social norms to which they are unfamiliar (Segura, 2013). Thus, the policy outlook of the parties becomes a convenient basis for Asian American immigrants to react to the policies of the political parties. Therefore, I find that policy congruence has a strong impact on candidate preferences, while party cues alone do not have the same magnitude of direct effect. These findings are consistent with those of Chapter 7 that policy views can be a strong predictor for Asian American partisan direction.

In general, Asian Americans immigrants have weaker pre-adult political socialization than their native-born counterparts (Alvarez & Garcia Bedolla, 2003; Hajnal & Lee, 2011; S. K. Ramakrishnan, 2005; Uhlaner & Garcia, 2005; J. Wong et al., 2011). Disparities in the degrees of partisan attachment and political knowledge among Asian Americans are due to the dynamic and complex background of immigrants. Asian American immigrants come to the United States in different time points, age, and political interest. Also, as discussed in Chapter 4, different life experiences among new, old, well-assimilated immigrants, as well as US-born generations renders different levels of political conceptualization and issue concerns. Taken together, they contribute to a large individual-level variation in political knowledge and partisan attachment among Asian American immigrants.

What remains unclear is whether policy cues or partisan cues play the most important role in candidate choice, as well as who tends to be affected most. Thus, the experiment illustrated in this chapter aims to disentangle the intertwined relationship between party cue, policy-cue effects and political knowledge. In doing so, I applied Item Response Theory to construct a novel political knowledge scale and treated political knowledge as a latent trait to differentiate Asian American respondents by political information levels. Thus far, the results of the experiment have

demonstrated that for Asian Americans, the overall policy preferences tend to play a dominant role and offer the explicit impetus for partisan direction and candidate choice. As a result, policy view congruence with the Democratic Party constitutes a convenient cognitive shortcut. The survey experimental results have illustrated that when there were no partisan cues, respondents simply evaluated the candidates based on their policy preferences and read the news article more carefully. When consistent party cues were given, respondents took party cues as a cognitive shortcut and skipped the details in the contents. This is consistent with prior research, which argues that exposure to party cues may “short-circuit” the processing of policy description, thereby limiting the attention to the policy details (Kruglanski & Webster, 1996). Moreover, some well-known prior work also suggests that even when partisans know about the attributes of policies, their views will be influenced less by the knowledge than by party cues. To test these two arguments, in the inconsistent treatment condition, I swapped party cues. When partisan cues and candidate policy positions were reversed, it ended up that only those respondents who have high political knowledge could correctly guess the candidate’s position. Therefore, political knowledge tends to have moderating effects on candidate choice. Asian American immigrants who have high political knowledge are more likely to follow the policy attitudes endorsed by the Democratic Party, while those who have low political knowledge tend to follow the parties. These findings are consistent with prior studies, which show that high levels of political knowledge moderates the effect between political values and vote preference (Zaller, 1992). In this sense, knowing these elements and proper connections between them forms the knowledge structure of the parties. These differences help to explain why the effects of elite position-taking and policy considerations differ from person to person.

In sum, the results of the experiment show much individual-level variation in the relative influence of policy cue and party-cue effects. The role of policy congruence is most striking: In my experiment, Asian Americans were far more affected by policy than by party cues. That is, Asian Americans' candidate preferences are strongly grounded in policy preferences across different partisan groups, and party cues have limited effects on policy evaluations and candidate preference. Among Asian American immigrants, policy preferences of Asian Americans and partisan preferences are often misaligned because of the need for the political knowledge to serve as a mediator connecting their policy attitudes and the parties. Whereas political information plays a clear role in moderating policy effects, but it is less important as a moderator of party cues.

Appendix

Following is a newspaper story describing a contest between two candidates for election to the U.S. Senate in one of the American states. Please read the story carefully and then answer the questions that follow.

BROWN, MCDUFFY IN NARROW RACE FOR SENATE

*The election for the U.S. Senate next week offers voters an unusually clear choice of the future of the country. **Democrat** John Brown has promised that, if elected, he will work for free medical care for all residents of the United States to be paid for by higher taxes on wealthy Americans. **The Democrat** also favors a ban on the possession of assault rifles and complete freedom for women to choose whether or not to have abortions.*

***Republican** James McDuffy takes quite different positions. He favors tax cuts for big corporations to stimulate growth of the economy, limits on the availability of abortion, and complete freedom to buy and possess guns. **The Republican** supports the current level of federal spending on health care, but opposes any expansion.*

Polls show that Brown currently has a narrow lead in the race, but experts said the race is a toss-up and will be settled by next week's debate between the candidates at the Downtown Club.

CHAPTER 9

Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

What is at stake in understanding Asian Americans' political learning in both public opinion and immigrant political incorporation? How does it extend our understanding of the complex and intertwined mechanisms in mass partisan opinion formation? How does this dissertation contribute to our understanding of immigrants' partisan opinion formation in other immigrant groups, which involves both pre-migration predispositions and post-migration experiences? What important lessons can we draw from the experiences of Asian American immigrants' partisanship acquisition to generalize and deepen our understanding of political socialization? These are the overarching psychological and statistical issues that inspire this dissertation. Taken together, all these chapters are a critical inquiry into the origins of partisan opinion formation and transformation.

9.2 Hajnal and Lee's account re-examined

In their book, *Why Americans Don't Join the Party*, Hajnal and Lee construct a versatile framework within which Latino and Asian immigrants' partisanship acquisition can be better analyzed. They argue that information uncertainty, ideology ambivalence and identity formation are the three major reasons that account for Latino and Asian Americans' refusals to adhere to the pairwise partisan choice between the Democrats and the Republicans or even the tripartite choice between Democrats, Republicans, and Independents. This dissertation is inspired by their work

and follows their direction to further explore the empirical puzzles that they have not convincingly resolved empirically.

How can we extend the insights in Hajnal and Lee's arguments by incorporating political learning to understand Asian Americans' partisanship acquisition? First, information uncertainty is a prevailing phenomenon among new immigrants, but increased exposure to American politics leads to greater constancy in their partisan preferences. Political motivations that integrate different stages of lived experience are what incentivize political learning and activate immigrants' political awareness. This awareness helps construct party conceptions and form politicized identities, and, as such, a certain fraction of information is selected for processing depending on self-perceived issue salience. Nonetheless, the interpretation of new political information is not easy to dissociate cognitive stimulus factor from an emotional one. The dynamic interplay between them involves a recurring relationship. Immigrants who are characterized by greater political awareness about policies, group interest and racial consciousness are more likely to be exposed to information about them, and they are also more likely to think about the issue and express their attitudes. Likewise, party perception involves the organization of political information about the parties and the attribution of properties to them on the basis of information-yielding cues.

Second, pre-migration experiences and ethnic-based political values are the most important political predispositions. These so-called "ideological roots" affect the partisan direction and policy preference. Most importantly, predispositions shape the way immigrants interpret new political information. As I have argued, "alternate ideological orientations," do not prevent them from forming party attachments. Rather, they carry profound influences in individuals' ideological preferences. For example, Asian Americans' partisan shift from leaning toward the Republican Party before the 1990s, to leaning toward the Democratic Party after the 1990s signals change in

their pre-migration experiences, such as anti-communism mentality. Thus, country of origin and when they immigrate to the United States equally matter in partisan attitudinal assimilation.

Third, the processes of social identity formation and transformation illuminate partisan choice and strengthen partisan intensity. The notions of pan-ethnic linked fate, the sense of ingroup/outgroup political commonality are challenging for immigrants, not only because of its multi-dimensional complexity and self-identification subjectivity; but also, it is due to uneven assimilation and incorporation among new immigrants (Junn, 2006b). Hence, lumping all these new, old, and well assimilated immigrants in one category can easily mask psychological and behavioral nuanced variations. Nonetheless, dynamics in post-migration experiences unveils various common channels and stimuli by which to shape immigrants' attitudinal elements. Politicized identity formation is a subtle but profound psychological mechanism for partisan attitudinal assimilation. Grounded in lived experience, politicized identity is correlated positively and roughly with the length of residence in the United States. For Asian American immigrants, understanding how the American political system works is closely related to understanding how their social identity fits into the political system and American ethno-racial categories.

In addition, the intertwined relations between information, ideology and identity may also affect each other. It is hard to study all these concepts and their dynamic interplays in one set of survey data. Stratifying immigrant populations based on different levels of party conceptualization and politicized identity allows us to study the dynamic nature of partisan attitudinal formation among Asian American immigrants—that is, where and how they are exposed to politics affects their cognitive understanding of the parties and emotional attachment. These amendments, taken together, illuminate the complex picture of the formation of Asian Americans' partisan attitudes. Now let us recap the key findings and arguments in the following sections.

9.3 Antecedents to the partisan orientation

The formation of political attitudes is based on the matrix of predispositions, perceptions and preferences (Masuoka & Junn, 2013). The Immigrant and Nationality Act of 1965 serves as the pivotal historical category that grounds the political meaning of contemporary Asian immigration to the United States. With respect to contemporary Asian immigration after 1965, the disparities in success in socioeconomic advancement but sluggishness in political participation (Aoki & Nakanishi, 2008) raises an urgent question for our understanding of the complex journey of political assimilation. The influx of Latino and Asian immigrants embarked on a path that has since led to the profound transformation of American electoral landscape, and the essential learning processes occur among new immigrants. Yet, in disputing the simplemindedness of such narratives, we must not underestimate the remarkably tenacious ideological power. Of particular note, political attitudes among new immigrants are responsive to a dynamic interplay of both pre-migration predispositions and post-migration experiences. I have argued that partisan direction and partisan strength are two different levels of analysis. A practical distinction can be understood between structural positions and developmental potentials—as the latter may be conditional on but not entirely determined by the former. That is, pre-migration predispositions should not be understood as a rigid apparatus; variation of which generates varying paces and patterns of partisan alignments among Asian American co-ethnic groups. In Chapter 3 I have demonstrated that where and when immigrants come from matters in the sense that pre-migration experiences imbue individuals with values and partisan bias that may set a profound imprint in their post-migration political socialization. As a result, immigrants' pre-migration political and social values tend to shape their preferences in a wide range of policies, which constitute a convenient basis for immigrants to learn about the parties. Of course, what is perplexing is not that the political history

of national origins involves political presuppositions as well as implications for understanding Asian Americans' socialization. Rather, how some ideologically motivated apparatus of reproducing partisan bias has endured so steadfastly among some individuals. Equally important, post-migration experiences are central to the construction of politicized identity. This simplifying logic supplies the crucial justification for what often has been complacently referred to as immigrants' "re-socialization," that is, their politicized and racialized identity formation. By forming the racial and social identity as Asian Americans, racialization appears inevitable.

9.4 Two modes of political thinking: Party conceptualization and politicized identity

Attitudinal incorporation is the way in which immigrants assimilate into American political arena. Assimilation starts with attitudes, then behavior. It has been documented for decades that party identifiers—Democrats or Republicans—are more active participants in politics, demonstrate more concern about political issues, and follow political debates more closely than nonpartisans and independents (Brady, Verba, & Schlozman, 1995; Campbell et al., 1960). Political assimilation might be grounded in partisan loyalty. Partisan identities and sorting intensify over time, along with increasing political consciousness driving the prevailing emotion attachment that motivate political participation.

Cognitive structures of politics, candidates and the parties are the basic elements that constitute and define political attitudinal incorporation. From a social and cognitive psychological perspective, post-migration experiences are the ways in which party conception is formed and partisan attitude is expressed. In Chapter 4 and 5, I have proposed and tested a dual-concept measure to account for political conceptualization among Asian American immigrants. I have argued that for Asian American immigrants, understanding how American political system works

is closely related to understanding how their social identity fits into the political system and American ethno-racial categories. A central question for immigrants coming to understand politics is figuring out whether they are more comfortable with a left-wing politicized identity or a right-wing politicized identity. Going left would involve perceptions of discrimination and the need to link their fate with other ethnic groups to get representation through the Democratic Party.

Political learning encompasses the development of the dual-concept. I have shown that despite party conceptualization and politicized identity being correlated, they are two distinct concepts. The former is the way to familiarize with the parties, candidates and policies. The development from absence of issue content to ideological differentiation illustrates the development of party conceptualization. While the transformation from the perception of foreigners in a strange land to politicized identity demonstrates a process of racialization into the party system and partisanship. Hence, the additive nature of political learning is a process of integrating new information into the existing political cognitive structures for understanding new subjects. Such a developmental nature is central to articulate post-migration experiences, that is, on a continuum from political confusion, feel like a citizen, politically aware to a high functioning citizen. Insofar as individuals accumulate sufficient social experiences in the United States, their attitudes toward the parties may start to be malleable. As a result, successive lived experiences in the United States disclose much about the implicit partisan and ideological framework within which political learning may be evaluated and understood. Nonetheless, lacking an organization mechanism connecting all these elements, it is hard to guide capricious attitudes and issue concerns with coherent and consistent political preferences.

Central to political conceptualization, the ways Asian Americans are exposed to politics and turn experiences into the cognitive structures are the basic building block for political schemas. At

a social identity's dimension, Chapter 6 has demonstrated that the process of immigrants' partisanship acquisition is a culmination of self-perceived social identity that is socialized by the nexus of pre-migration predispositions, post-migration information and racial identity. The combination of these elements constitutes the basic cognitive structure by which individuals make sense of everyday politics, and account for temporal partisan dynamics—a key feature for Asian and perhaps other immigrants' acquisition of party identification. One of the categorization processes that people use to simplify the party images is to organize the parties according to their basic outlooks. Therefore, the distinction in party schemas between the Democratic and Republican Party highlights the frames of references for ordering issues of concern.

I have argued that political learning among immigrants has a profound theoretical meaning in that it illuminates the learning processes which account for the underlying developments of racial and political consciousness. Racial consciousness has positive correlations with political participation, thus the perception of shared political interest with blacks and Latinos will discourage Asians to identify with the Republican Party (M. A. Barreto & Segura, 2014; Hajnal & Lee, 2011; Lien, 2001a, 2006; J. S. Wong et al., 2005). However, previous studies do not offer further examination of how racial consciousness was stimulated (or failed to stimulate) among Asian communities. Using observational data, it is hard to tease out the effects, thus Chapter 6 has illustrated how schematic information processing works using survey experiment, and how the sense of inclusiveness subconsciously nudges Asian Americans to the Democratic Party.

Chapter 7 has demonstrated that Asian Americans tend to have a liberal policy preference, and such policy positions are one of the most important building blocks for them to support the Democratic Party. I find that Asian Americans' partisanship acquisition derives mainly from policy preferences and a sense of minority political commonality and racial identity. I argue that

predispositions are the underlying factors that nudge Asian American immigrants to favor liberal policies, which gives an initial push for Asian American immigrants to accept the Democratic Party's overall policy positions, as compared with the Republican Party. Having discussed all these, it has been unclear whether policy attitude or partisan attachment together with political knowledge determine vote choice. Observational data alone cannot answer this question. Chapter 8 used a survey experiment to further tease out these intertwined relationships. I have shown that Asian Americans' candidate preference is affected mostly by policy preference, and political knowledge has moderating effect on policy preference but not much on party cues alone.

9.5 The limitations

In this dissertation, I have attempted to open up an interpretive space in which an alternative theory of political socialization that attends more to divergence, multiplicities, and critical possibilities can be written. I have explored the political and ideological dynamics of political learning among immigrants by examining several key instances of socioeconomic grievances and political criticism in their local circumstances. Through these currents, dominant forms of socialization were challenged, and new forms of political critique arose that transgressed the traditional boundaries of the pre-adult socialization.

The learning of American politics does not mean that Asian Americans must align with the Democratic Party. As I have shown, pre-migration and post-migration both inject varying degrees of influences on Asian American partisanship acquisition. Therefore, it is hard to understand immigrants' political learning ignoring global and domestic political dynamics. Yet despite its anchoring effect in pre-migration predispositions, a concept of post-migration socialization that focuses on structural racial consciousness such as group relations to the social means of racial

identity permits considerable flexibility. Above all, in the case of Asian Americans, there is a need to recognize that the phenomenon of political learning may involve social relationships more complex than socioeconomic advancement. Theoretically, it is apparent that a group such as Asian Americans is not an exceptional case as there is rapidly changing intra-group compositions. It has its different instruments at its disposal, and various nexuses to the political milieu. This does not in itself disqualify pre-migration predispositions from application to post-migration socialization but does indubitably request that more sophisticated theories of predispositions be molded. In effect, one of the purposes of this dissertation is to investigate how predispositions may contribute to our understanding of the roots of political socialization and its contemporary transformation, provided that the concept itself is somewhat relaxed, and the unevenness of development acknowledged. Most importantly, certain complexities—temporality, local context, political awareness, for example—ought to be included as integral parts of the analysis, yet without obliterating its conceptual core and theoretical integrity. Suffice to say, it may be achievable, and imperative as well, to push the conceptual boundaries of political learning as much as they can possibly withstand yet without having to overcomplicate them.

9.6 Immigrant political incorporation and American politics

What does the understanding of Asian Americans' political learning contribute to our understanding of the American democratic process function? Scholars in American politics suggest that the “democratic process” lies in the connection between voters and politicians, in which parties and politicians aim to influence the voters to maximizing their probability of winning the office (Achen & Bartels, 2016; Bawn et al., 2012; Schattschneider, 1975; Schumpeter, 1962). This party-centric paradigm profoundly shapes the ways we understand the formation of mass opinion. Zaller's (1992) Reception-Acceptance-Sample (RAS) model offers a powerful

mechanism within which elite-mass opinion formation and dynamics can be better analyzed. Central to the notion of elite-driven paradigm, Zaller stresses the crucial role played by political elites, yet the RAS model takes predisposition as a shallow and narrow perspective and assumes that people have equivalent cognitive structures to interpret political discourses. Both Zaller's RAS model and this dissertation agree with the theoretical logic of *The American Voter*. Whereas the departure between my theoretical argument and Zaller's lies in the disparities in predispositions. The RAS model tends to treat mass opinion as a unitary, uniform, and universal process that generalizes across all social groups. Lee's (2002) research on social mobilization during the Civil Rights movement has shown that the elite-driven paradigm cannot account for African Americans' mass opinion activation. Also, as I have argued in this dissertation, immigrants do not have the same level of partisan knowledge and loyalties to the point at which they respond to political elite discourse. Due to disparities in predispositions and post-migration experiences, the way in which Asian American immigrants learn about American politics and form mass opinion is more of a bottom-up pattern than the opposite.

Thus, contesting with psychological attachment as proposed by *The American Voter*, from a theoretical vantage point, I have argued that the party-centric models place too much weight on intergenerational transmission of partisan loyalty, which cannot capture the patterns of immigrants' partisanship acquisition who do not have generations of family or community partisanship to build on. Immigrants' political socialization processes are more of experience-driven rather than elite-driven. Partisan maturity is essentially approached when individuals accumulate enough experiences, which also account for the disparities in the degree of partisan maturity between Asian Americans and native-born white populations and African Americans. This maturity generally arrives more slowly than for US-born Americans. Therefore, eventually

immigrants do become partisans, but their starting point is undeniably different from non-immigrant Americans.

9.7 Implications for future study

This dissertation is the first comprehensive endeavor to understand Asian Americans' political learning. A caveat has to do with the understanding of determinants of political predispositions. At one level, using national origins as a proxy for predisposition, we are doing group-level analysis rather than individual-level analysis. In view of the specific attitude being investigated, I have in effect operationalized an imprecise entity. At another level, I use policy attitude as a proxy for predispositions, assuming the absence of the boomerang effect between partisanship and policy preference. The justifications of such choices are based on qualitative interviews and existing theories. Therefore, more comprehensive comparative examinations of political, social and economic values can further illuminate what we have tried to understand but still have a nebulous concept of predisposition. For future studies, a fine-grain measure of predispositions should be based on a broad range of psychological measurement of political, social and economic values. Moreover, this study has not examined the local contextual effects, as I have mentioned in Chapter 7, policy attitudes can interact with local political concerns. Thus far, the vast majority of Asian Americans live in major metropolitan areas, such as New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. These places have been traditionally liberal. The extent to which these liberal social and political environments facilitate political learning among Asian Americans remain unknown. For example, would Asian Americans who live in predominantly Republican neighborhoods be more likely to align with the Republican Party? Also, would Asian Americans be more likely to experience racial discrimination, which in turn would nudge them to support the Democratic Party? These are inevitable questions that are in need of an empirical inquiry.

In addition, in terms of survey methodology, immigrants due to their distinct cultural characteristics, tend to have their own survey response characteristics. Inspired by Hajnal and Lee's sequential model, independents and nonpartisans should be further examined to flesh out the underlying psychological impetus for survey choice. Thus far, we have not had a good understanding of whether Asian immigrants' survey responses, e.g., don't know, don't care, what they understand about the survey items, and what drives the variances of survey responses. For future study, we should continue to gauge how Asian Americans' survey responses differ from whites, blacks and Latinos. For example, due to disparities in socialization, Asian and Latino's survey measurement error mainly come from interpretation of the survey item *per se*, and/or cultural characteristics, while whites and blacks tend to have less measurement error variances but more true opinion variances.

9.8 Concluding thought

My intention in this dissertation is not to demonstrate that every Asian co-ethnic group will follow the same political learning pattern, nor saying that they are going to support the Democratic Party. In spite of partisan choices are outcomes of psychological and experiential processes as I have argued in this dissertation, local political contextual factors and social networks are also important forces shaping people's partisan attitudes. However, I have argued that the *very* political learning in which immigrant groups are found can lead to political assimilation. I expect there are three different kinds of readers with distinct responses: readers that are inclined to believe immigrants are naturally prone to assimilate into the host society may find this dissertation unsurprising. While readers, e.g., Samuel P. Huntington, who believe that non-Anglo immigrants are unassimilable to the mainstream U.S. polity may find this dissertation bewildering, whose skepticism tends to see the increase in perceptual difference will result in increasing partisan polarization in politics. Cut

orthogonally to these two dimensions are readers who believe in multiculturalism; who would agree that there are many routes through which immigrants arrive in partisan attitudinal assimilation into the U.S. electoral system. As Citrin and Sears (2014) say, immigrants no matter where they come from, ultimately accept the principles of liberty, democratic creed, and economic self-reliance, while maintaining components of their original cultural and ethnic legacies. This would help create a diverse and enriched American common culture.

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