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Asian American intellectuals' ethnic identification in their works : testing the colony and class models

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ASIAN AMERICAN INTELLECTUALS' ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION IN THEIR
WORKS: TESTING THE COLONY AND CLASS MODELS

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Sociology

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Jack C. Fong

May 1997

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ABSTRACT

ASIAN AMERICAN INTELLECTUALS' ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION IN THEIR WORKS: TESTING THE COLONY AND CLASS MODEL

by Jack C. Fong

This study examines perceptions of class and ethnic/racial discrimination upon ethnic identification in Asian American intellectuals' works. The research utilized the colony and class models. The colony model asserts that perceptions of ethnic/racial discrimination will result in ethnic identification. The class model asserts that perceptions of class discrimination will result in ethnic identification.

Findings supported the colony model: a relationship exists between perceptions of ethnic/racial discrimination and Asian American intellectuals' ethnic identification in their works. The colony model was supported because it captures perceptions of ethnic/racial discrimination within a contemporary and historical context.

Findings did not support the class model: no relationship exists between perceptions of class discrimination and Asian American intellectuals' ethnic identification in their works. The class model's assumption of lower class polarization is dispelled by recent findings documenting Asian American upward mobility. Finally, methodology refinements regarding future research on ethnic intellectuals are examined.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the patience and time of many intellectuals who were subjects in this research. Many thanks also go out to my peers at San Jose State University's Sociology Department: thank you Lorraine Converse and Christi Capelleti for your warm reassurances, laughter, and, most of all, friendship.

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Last but not least, I dedicate this thesis to my mother, Wendy; father, Leo; and sister, Gloria, for placing me in an educationally conducive environment, asking for nothing except that I continue my search for knowledge and truth.

May the stories of your people be your spiritual fortress.

- Belle Yang 1994

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Our community is at a crossroads. The ignorant lump us together. We can either use this as a rationale for cooperation and mutual empowerment, or reject this and fall into protective self-segregation (Sehgal and Yang 1992, 10).

Since Ethnic Studies curricula were introduced in the 1970s, Asian American intellectuals have redefined their historical and cultural roles within America's social fabric. Much of this resurgence in ethnic and cultural consciousness was contributed by Asian American intellectuals. Many Asian American intellectuals inspired ethnic and cultural consciousness through historical and social research. For example, Ronald Takaki's *Strangers from a Different Shore* (1989) fits him under this group of intellectuals. Other Asian American intellectuals such as Belle Yang and her novel *Baba* (1994) honored Asian heritage through commercial literature. What these Asian American intellectuals have in common is the display of ethnic identification in their works. My thesis asserts that ethnic identification in works of Asian American intellectuals allows them to voice their ethnic and cultural uniqueness in mainstream America (Tanaka 1976).

A deep understanding of Asian American intellectuals' ethnic identification in their works will provide insights into their reinterpretation of Asian American history. Furthermore, by examining Asian American intellectuals' ethnic identification in their works, one may begin to understand how they perceive and define themselves as

Americans. Awareness of Asian American intellectuals' visions and goals will be apparent when one appreciates their works' attempts to provide a more detailed and truthful account of Asian Americans' historical and contemporary experiences.

Asian American intellectuals' ethnic identification in their works symbolizes their continuing efforts to redeem the hopes and dreams first brought by Asians to America. In this regard, Asian American intellectuals are descendants of the dreams and legacies of Asians who arrived in the United States during the mid-nineteenth century.

American history has also accorded Asians their share of the societal trials that so often plague newly arrived ethnic immigrants. The trials centered on themes of ethnic/racial discrimination and economic competition, whether it pertained to Chinese immigrant laborers that ultimately led to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, or the Japanese American citizens that were interned because of their ethnicity in World War II American concentration camps.

Unfortunately, public interest in Asian American intellectuals is not apparent. Academia, including the Asian American academic community, has fragmented its interest to revolve around either Asian American issues or issues brought forth by intellectuals. A useful link was never proposed to unite the two groups into a salient population identifiable as Asian American intellectuals. As a result, there is a minimal amount of literature on the roles and histories of Asian American intellectuals, while ample literature exists about white intellectuals, that is, intellectuals from the dominant racial group of America (Brumberg 1991, Katsuda 1991, Lepenies 1991, Metz 1992, Siklova 1990,

Turner 1992, Uwazurike 1991).

As a result, there is a scarcity of literature on ethnic identification in Asian American intellectuals' works. There is also a scarcity of literature on Asian American intellectuals' search for their ethnic identity in their works. In contrast, ample literature exists on topics of ethnic identification in the Asian American community as well as Asian Americans in search of their ethnic identity (Hayano 1981, Le-Espiritu 1994, Muramaya 1976, Tran 1992-1993).

My thesis will not pertain to Asian American intellectuals' search for ethnic identity. Neither will my thesis pertain to ethnic identification displayed by the Asian American community, as I am interested in the views of Asian American intellectuals involved in academic pursuits or careers.

Instead, my thesis attempts to examine discrimination factors that may promote the display of ethnic identification in the works of contemporary Asian American intellectuals. I believe this potential link has too often been ignored by contemporary social scientists. Specifically, I will investigate the relationship between perceptions of class and ethnic discrimination and their relationship to ethnic identification in the works of Asian American intellectuals.

The research will be implemented within the framework of two competing models, the class model and colony model. Both models postulate that ethnic identification is the result of perceiving either class or ethnic/racial discrimination. The class model asserts that perceptions of social class discrimination against an ethnic group in the lower

class will result in ethnic identification by members of that class (Baran and Sweezy 1966, Bonacich 1992, Braverman 1974, Cox 1948, Geschwender 1978, Harris 1972, Legget 1968, Oppenheimer 1974, Tabb 1970). In contrast, the colony model asserts that perceptions of ethnic/racial discrimination will lead to ethnic identification by the ethnic group, regardless of social class (Allen 1970, Blauner 1972, Carmichael and Hamilton 1967, Chin 1976, Geschwender 1978, Handy 1984, Haywood 1948, Hurst 1972, Jensen and Abeyta 1987, Kuo 1981, Leger 1983, Maykovich 1972, Tanaka 1967). The two models were selected because of Handy's (1984) excellent clarification of how "both race and class consciousness may be defined as two distinctive types of group consciousness" (Handy 1984, 385).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Intellectuals and Asian American Intellectuals

Gordon (1964) provided an excellent ideal type of the intellectual which I also believe captures the essence of the Asian American intellectual:

Occupationally, they are characteristically found in the professions, particularly college teaching, research . . . and in the arts either as creators or performers. The academic world . . . which carries out or commissions research is the most salient concentration point of intellectual life, and this becomes increasingly so as writers, artists, and musicians begin to take on the role of faculty members alongside professors of the humanities and the natural and social sciences (Gordon 1964, 224).

Morson defined an intellectual as "someone who thinks for himself or herself, who explores ideas wherever they might lead, and who, above all, is animated by the spirit of a nonconformist" (Morson 1993, 20). Pandey provided a similar definition: an "intellectual, then, is that group which interests itself with the general questions of society and culture" (Pandey 1982, 47). Gordon also provided a definition of intellectuals: "Intellectuals are people for whom ideas, concepts, literature, music, painting, the dance, have intrinsic meaning--are a part of the social-psychological atmosphere which one breathes" (Gordon 1964, 224).

Asian American intellectuals in the present research are defined as those who are the educated American minority of Asian descent. They derive knowledge from observations

and interpretations of Asian American and mainstream American life. Their views are influenced by the nonconformist tradition born during the activist movements of the 1960s and 1970s coupled with their own understanding of various hardships that plagued Asian immigrants throughout American history. Asian American intellectuals' primary activities revolve around the redefinition, documentation, and communication of Asian American experiences through ethnic identification in their works.

Ethnic Identification

Attempts to examine the relationship between Asian American intellectuals and ethnic identification in their works are initially confusing. To begin with, the lack of literature about Asian American intellectuals' *ethnic identification* is indicative of how scholarly work has ignored this important behavior. Consequently, academic neglect of Asian American intellectuals' ethnic identification has also resulted in a scarcity of literature on *ethnic identification in the works* of Asian American intellectuals. Thus, no conclusive studies address topics about Asian American intellectuals' ethnic identification in their works.

To clarify this confusion, I would like to note the following distinction, which I believe to be highly important for understanding the aims of this thesis: though a minimal amount of literature limits analyses of Asian American intellectuals' ethnic identification in their works, there are notable examples of works by Asian American intellectuals that display ethnic identification behavior. The irony is that social issues addressed by Asian American intellectuals' works appear to be uniform (that is, racism, cultural adjustments,

demographics etc.). However, Asian American intellectuals rarely address in their works the consistent efforts by fellow Asian American intellectuals to better conditions of the Asian American community. Therefore, a clarification between ethnic identification and ethnic identity is needed if one is to appreciate the focus of this thesis.

Kumekawa (1993) provides an incisive definition of *ethnic identification* as compared to ethnic identity.

Ethnic identity is not the same as *ethnic identification* [italics added]. Ethnic identity is *introversive* [italics added], a self definition and a search for personal uniqueness that occurs within the minds of individuals. Ethnic identification, or the conscious ethnic identity as it is commonly used in the literature, is *extroversive* [italics added], a self comparison with others and a search for shared cultural traits that places an individual in a *public social context* [italics added] (Kumekawa 1993, 206).

Kumekawa's definition is highly valuable for two reasons: (1) a clear distinction is made between ethnic identity and ethnic identification and (2) the distinction paves a more refined path toward understanding ethnic identification as displayed in the works of Asian American intellectuals.

An excellent example of an Asian American intellectual work displaying ethnic identification behavior can be found in Hatamiya's (1993) *Righting a Wrong: Japanese Americans and the Passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988*. Hatamiya documented the political processes leading to a national apology and monetary payments toward surviving Japanese Americans once interned in America's concentration camps.

Ethnic identification behavior displayed in the works of Asian American intellectuals may also revolve around the creation or documentation of stories and research,

respectively, on their American experiences and its connection to their Asian heritage (Duc 1995, Tan 1989). Many Asian American intellectuals examine the historical and contemporary arrivals of Asians to America and its resulting cultural and socioeconomic adjustments (Takaki 1989). Still other Asian American intellectuals contemplated their uneasy cultural relationship with America by researching their families' intergenerational experiences in America (Divakaruni 1995, Kothari 1993, Kudaka 1995, Lee 1993).

Shortcomings of the Assimilation Perspective

The majority of past studies on ethnic identification have been examined through the assimilation perspective. These studies have been helpful in showing that the degree of ethnic identification is a result of the immigrants' duration of stay and immersion in the culture of the host society (Kitano 1981, Langberg 1986, Omatsu 1991, Shinagawa 1988, Tseng 1994, Yamanaka and McClelland 1994, White et al. 1993). However, for us to fully understand the emerging debate between the class and colony models, we need to touch briefly on reasons pertaining to the assimilation model's declining popularity.

Generally, the assimilation perspective is no longer unanimously accepted as an adequate model for describing Asian American dynamics for four important reasons: (1) the assimilation perspective's greatest shortcoming is its disregard for the impact of ethnic and racial discrimination upon an ethnic minority group, (2) Kuo (1979) described the model as biased because it assumes that "sources of ethnic conflict reside not within the structure of society but in the pathological behavior of the minority group" (Kuo 1979, 282), (3) assimilation theory also "ignores past historical factors in the immigration

process" (Kuo 1979, 283), (4) and finally, the assimilation perspective "neglects the conscious efforts of Asian Americans to renew or recreate their ethnic identity and cultural heritage" (Kuo 1979, 283).

Memmi (1965) suggested that assimilation is a social mechanism the colonizer uses to suppress the collective ambitions of the colonized. In this manner, emphasis is shifted to the achievement-oriented disposition of the minority individual rather than the collective societal progress of the minority group. He further elaborated that "under contemporary conditions of colonization, assimilation and colonization are contradictory, that is, assimilationists blur the crucial and unequal relationship between the colonizer and the colonized" (Memmi 1965, 127).

The conflict-oriented class model and the colony model offers potential alternatives to viewing ethnic identification processes (Memmi 1965, Fannon 1966).

The class model's assertions are derived from a reinterpretation of Marxian principles. It is popular with neo-Marxian researchers interested in examining race relations through social class and its proximity to economic resources. In contrast, colony model advocates tend to view the ethnic/race discrimination issue as reified social phenomena independent of class dynamics (Leger 1983). Therefore, adoption of either the class or colony model provides more incisive insights into areas of "race relations not accessible in the assimilation model" (Kuo 1979, 285).

The Class Model

The class model utilizes a Marxist-based perspective to explain ethnic identification.

In terms of race relations, the class model posits that ethnic minorities confined to the lower classes end up acquiring perceptions of social class discrimination, and therefore, react by displaying ethnic identification. Class discrimination results in ethnic identification because ethnic minorities have historically been exploited economically and relegated to the disadvantaged class, that is, the lower class where economic resources are most scarce (Bonacich 1992). Group solidarity through ethnic identification improves their competition for scarce economic resources (e.g., job opportunities). In ethnically diverse communities, such solidarity allows the ethnic minority group a fighting chance for economic survival (Chang and Leong 1994).

Traditional assimilation theorists, including Gordon, have hypothesized that perceptions of discrimination would decrease as minorities' knowledge of mainstream culture and language improved (Gordon 1964). However, recent findings by Portes, Parker, and Cobas (1980) dispelled Gordon's hypothesis. In their three year examination of Cuban and Mexican immigrants in America, it was found that their experiences of discrimination from the upper class had resulted in a more "critical appraisal of the host society" by the Cubans and Mexicans (Portes et al. 1980, 200). As a result of this perception, ethnic identification by the Cuban and Mexican community could be indirectly credited with the formation of Latino enclave economies in Texas and Florida. Portes et al. appropriately concluded:

We find it particularly noteworthy that the better the immigrants understand the host country language and the more they endorse its values . . . the more skeptical they are of the realities of that society and of their actual condition within it. The socialization process suggested by these findings is not one that necessarily leads to integration and

consensus-building, but one which can produce an increased awareness of an inferior economic and social position and, hence, a defense of common [class] interests through ethnic solidarity (Portes et al. 1980, 220).

In the case of first generation working class Asians, the traditional Chinatowns, the more contemporary Koreatowns, and Little Saigons appear to suggest that formation of ethnic enclaves from ethnic identification may be consistent across ethnic lines (Bonacich 1992).

Advocates of the class model also maintain ethnic identification to be the result of the profit-oriented nature of capitalism. The upper class then utilizes institutional racism as a tool for limiting the minority groups' chances of penetrating into the primary economy. The division of lower class minorities into ethnic factions means ethnic minorities are forced to compete against one another for economic resources such as jobs. Thus, interethnic economic competition divides the labor supply into weaker, more exploitable units. Minority groups are then manipulated into competition against lower class whites (Baran and Sweezy 1966, Braverman 1974, Cox 1948, Tabb 1970).

Because they belong to the same ethnic group as whites in the upper class, working-class whites are led to believe that they should fare better than working-class minorities. Institutional discrimination becomes reified at this point because working class whites, despite their lower class status, become concerned about protecting their economic interests from other ethnic groups viewed as economically threatening (Braverman 1974).

Oppenheimer (1974) and Braverman (1974) suggested that minorities are further relegated to what both theorists label the "subproletariat" or "reserve army" status.

Marx had conceptually introduced these terms to describe peoples in society for whom primary economic opportunities existed on a temporary basis. The lack of consistent mainstream employment results in minorities being forced into the unskilled and poorly-paid secondary economy.

Tragically, unskilled minority laborers' economic and cultural vulnerabilities are often preyed on and exploited by the aspiring elites of their own ethnic group. A notorious episode in San Francisco during the early 1990s occurred where "a high-living Chinese couple not only exploited hundreds of Chinese women in their garment factories, but also extorted the life savings of many of them" (Bonacich 1992, xxv). Both Braverman and Oppenheimer found this pattern to characterize the economic profile of many minority immigrants in the United States (Braverman 1974, Oppenheimer 1974).

As a result of perceiving upper class discrimination against them, ethnic minority groups end up living in segregated conditions. According to class model advocates, the capitalist system allows for the continuation of such conditions. Otherwise the working class would form an extremely powerful and united front (Geschwender 1978, 96). Despite these conditions, Legget (1968) argued that by sharing a common experience of being exploited by the upper class, ethnic identification and solidarity develops. This common experience lays the groundwork for a class consciousness based on ethnic identification and defense of the social class, stimulated by educated and concerned minority members who had once belonged to or still belong to that class (Geschwender 1978, 100). In this regard the aforementioned conflict theorists rejected the principles of

the colony model, arguing that *class* exploitation results in *racial* exploitation, and not the other way around.

The view that class exploitation results in racial exploitation is also shared by Harris (1972), who contends that the race issue is a by-product of capitalist exploitation of the working class. There is merit to this statement: since the 1960s, the arrival of mostly refugees from Southeast Asia has created a new pool of unskilled labor exceptionally vulnerable to economic exploitation. Unable to penetrate the primary economy and fearful of discrimination, many reside in ethnic enclaves operated by already established and seasoned business entrepreneurs. Bonacich (1992) noted that by working in secondary economies (which characterizes most Asian ethnic enclaves in America), newly arrived Asians are employed "extensively in restaurants and bars, in hotels and motels, in the garment industry, in electrical and electronics assembly plants . . . among the most poorly paid jobs in our society" (Bonacich 1992, xxiv).

To compound matters, unions are reluctant in their efforts to reach out to the Asian working class for a variety of reasons: (1) most Asian labor revolves around family workers based upon a paternalistic leadership, (2) numerous languages and dialects results in the difficulty of hiring organizers, and (3) on a cultural level many Asians are too respectful of authority to challenge it (Bonacich 1992, xxvi). Without adequate labor resources available ethnic identification displayed by this class represents one of the few cohesive forces that aids the minority groups' economic and cultural survival.

The Relationship between Class Discrimination and Ethnic Identification

The class model's assertions center around the notion that lower class minorities who perceive upper class discrimination against them, regardless of the upper class peoples' ethnicity or race, react through ethnic identification. Heavy interethnic economic competition and fear of economic exploitation by the upper class requires working class Asian Americans to have a social mechanism that maintains ethnic solidarity. Ethnic identification is the social mechanism that maintains ethnic solidarity, which in turn assists Asian Americans in their efforts to economically compete and survive.

Evidence reveals that minorities raised in the lower class attribute class discrimination against them to be influenced by: (1) economic discrimination against their lower class status and (2) ethnic discrimination against their ethnic minority status because they are viewed as "foreign" economic threats emanating from the lowest, least desirable strata of society (Baran and Sweezy 1966, Braverman 1974, Oppenheimer 1974, Portes et al. 1980). Therefore, advocates of the class model argue that ethnic identification through ethnic solidarity is first and foremost geared toward the defense of those *same ethnic members in the same class* (Cox 1948, Gordon 1964, Haywood 1948).

The Relationship between Class Discrimination and Ethnic Identification in the Works of Asian American Intellectuals

Class model advocates argue that lower class polarization of Asian immigrants is a result of class discrimination. Class polarization resulting from class discrimination imprints upon Asian American intellectuals an unfavorable perception of whether first

generation Asian immigrants are able to achieve upward mobility. Therefore, Asian American intellectuals' perceptions of class discrimination against the working class of their ethnic group translates into concerns on socioeconomic issues that affect their ethnic status.

Perceptions of class discrimination prompts Asian American intellectuals to display ethnic identification in their works because it encourages discussion on crucial socioeconomic issues that confine Asian Americans and immigrants to the working class. Ethnic identification in Asian American intellectuals' works will also result in dissemination of valuable information on community resources that working class Asian immigrants and Asian Americans can utilize to better their socioeconomic status. In addition, ethnic identification in the works of Asian American intellectuals serves to inspire ethnic pride and solidarity despite the dire economic conditions in working class Asian American communities.

Rationale for the Selection of the Class Model

The rationale for the selection of the class model was based upon the variety of social stratification patterns that exists among Asian Americans. With an established upper, middle, and working class, intraethnic interaction across class lines could be examined for evidence of discrimination against Asian American intellectuals who had grown up in a lower class environment (Bonacich 1992). The class model may also shed some insight on whether ethnic identification in the works of Asian American intellectuals is a result of their belief that lower class polarization is a greater threat to Asian Americans than

ethnic/racial discrimination.

The Colony Model

The colony model, or colonial model, was first conceptually proposed by African American Communists in the decades following the Civil War. Theorists in this school believe that class stratification *and* identification are not necessarily achieved at the expense of ethnic identification, that is, ethnic identification may exist autonomously from class consciousness. As Handy (1984) noted:

Those who support this view point to the effects of racial segregation . . . and racial prejudice and discrimination which serve as a constant reminder . . . that they are seen as inferior to whites (Handy 1984, 384).

Advocates of the colony model, primarily Chin (1976), Handy (1984), Haywood (1948), Leger (1983), Tanaka (1976) conceded that racial exploitation was initially borne from economic exploitation, but argued that reification of institutional racism solidifies institutional discrimination based on ethnicity and race. Thus, economic oppression was transformed into oppression of the ethnic or racial group. Discriminatory actions were thus based less on economic exploitation and more on the desire to oppress ethnic minorities via the mechanism of economics.

Colonial theorists argue that institutional discrimination of ethnicity/race and its subsequent economic exploitation are no different from the legacies of colonial imperialism in third world countries. According to advocates of the colony model, *racial* exploitation eventually results in *class* exploitation. Thus, African Americans were

described as an exploited colonized nation existing in a colonizing host nation (Carmichael and Hamilton 1976, Haywood 1948).

Therefore, Black Communists advocated a return to ethnic identification via culture, a return to controlling their social institutions, and a return to racial and cultural consciousness (Carmichael and Hamilton 1976). This was presented as the ideal social remedy against further exploitation and oppression by the colonizing hegemony. Colony model advocates subscribed to this ideology until the end of the Korean War.

The end of the Korean War saw diminishing support for Communist-oriented ideology. Many factors contributed to this: the subsequent successes of American capitalism in the 1950s, the industrial boom, increasing overall national prosperity, and the belief that equality could be earned through individual merit, along with the McCarthyism's negative attacks on communism, all contributed to the diminishing momentum of a class revolution to be led by blacks. Harry Haywood (1948), an African American intellectual involved with the black Communist struggle since the 1920s conceded in 1948 that:

Blacks had developed their own intelligentsia who contributed to science, literature, art, and music; a class of businessmen including a few large capitalists; a small black industry producing primarily for ghetto consumption; and the beginnings of a black proletariat. The major missing ingredient was black national consciousness (Haywood 1948, 21-22).

The colonial model thus went through major revisions with contributions from African and white intellectuals alike. Perhaps one of the more significant developments and contributions toward the colony model came in 1967, from Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton's *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America*. Both wanted to

build a national consciousness that Haywood had advocated:

Both were victims of the same capitalist system: Third World peoples were colonized *externally* [italics added] while blacks were colonized *internally* [italics added]. It would require a common struggle to liberate each (Geschwender 1978, 82).

Carmichael and Hamilton argued that blacks and other American minorities are exploited economically as cheap labor and forced to compromise their culture within the social institutions managed by the White America. Carmichael and Hamilton further suggested that like a colony:

Members of the subject people are given to believe that they can improve their positions through individual effort and merit, providing that they learn the dominant culture, develop the attitudes and values displayed by members of the dominant group, and acquire skills useful to members of the ruling class (Geschwender 1978, 82).

Therefore, Carmichael and Hamilton refined the colonial model and renamed it the *internal colonial thesis*. In fact, both noted their concept of *internal colonialism* is synonymous with *institutional discrimination* (Geschwender 1978, 80). Carmichael and Hamilton's model is simple: internal colonialism (or institutional discrimination) perpetuates economic and cultural exploitation of ethnic minorities. To do away with internal colonialism requires ethnic identification on a macro-level by all black Americans. Furthermore, Carmichael and Hamilton believed this process of building ethnic awareness would be led by black intellectuals. Black intellectuals would achieve liberation through a new "black-oriented mentality" so as to "achieve dignity, and to achieve their share of power" (Carmichael and Hamilton 1967, 184-185). Thus, one strength of the internal colonial thesis is its encapsulation of ethnic discrimination practices by individuals as well

as social institutions.

If we operationalize violent acts by racial groups as an extreme form of ethnic identification, then Allen's (1970) explanation deserves some attention. According to Allen, black ghetto insurrections are an indicator of communal ethnic identification in progress. It is a direct result in which an "emerging ethnic group has political independence but is indirectly and subtly dominated by political, economic, social, or military means" (Allen 1970, 14). Blauner supported this notion, claiming that common to all colonized systems are economic and racial exploitation processes "masked in some rhetoric" (Blauner 1972, 82). Mass ghetto riots are also a result of social class divisions within that ethnic group, introduced by the colonizing power to divide the minority group into competing factions (Geschwender 1978, 83).

Blauner (1972) explained that Black revolts of the late sixties and seventies resemble colonial uprisings in the third world. Blauner argued that colonial uprisings are contingent upon ethnic identification and mobilization of the ethnic group experiencing a threatened culture and way of life. Therefore, mass uprisings against discrimination and exploitation may actually be healthy for the group because it strengthens ethnic awareness through the development of ethnic pride and solidarity (Blauner 1972). Unlike Allen, Blauner's incisive examination of colonial processes allowed him to conclude that preceding any type of uprising a "cultural revival and revitalization movement is *necessary* [italics added]" and it is to be led by educated and professional black Americans (Geschwender 1978, 87).

Hechter (1978) provided further elaboration in support of the colonial thesis:

In societies having an egalitarian ideology it is rather difficult for persons in disadvantaged ethnic groups to imagine that poverty has befallen them entirely by chance. . . . It is far more likely that such individuals will sense a connection between their own position in the stratification system and that of the groups as a whole. Perhaps they will come to think their material disadvantage occurs precisely on account of their ethnic distinctiveness. Often they will not have far to look for evidence supporting this perception because discrimination abounds against all such groups. . . . Peoples' reactions to this dilemma . . . for whom escape is impossible, *will tend to identify on the basis of their ethnic distinctiveness* [italics added]; many will come to consider themselves members of a corporate group having similar interests. This . . . is the mark of high group solidarity (Hechter 1978, 299).

Hechter's findings were substantiated by other researchers. Hurst (1972) found that race is a greater factor in explaining why African Americans feel more politically manipulated by the mostly non-black hegemony. Though urban African Americans in the 1970s were often polarized in the lower classes, perceptions of social class discrimination, as a whole, did not significantly affect perceptions of political manipulation by the white hegemony. Leger (1983) tested the class and colony models on minority prisoners' mobilization against prison authorities. He concluded that minority prisoners' mobilization against prison authorities occurred because they perceived the authorities' discrimination against them to be based on ethnicity/race.

Contemporary findings still support the colonial thesis model, resulting in its successful application in examining Asian Americans' perceptions of ethnic and racial discrimination. Thus, Asian American social scientists and activists of the 1970s era adopted and refined the colony model based on perceptions of ethnic/racial discrimination and its effects on Asian American solidarity. As a result, Asian American intellectuals

were themselves practicing ethnic identification as a result of their own perceptions of ethnic/racial discrimination. For example, redefinition and research on ethnic solidarity by Chin (1976), Maykovich (1972), Jensen and Abeyta (1987), and Tanaka (1967) highlighted historical episodes in which violence and institutional discrimination against Asian Americans had forced them into ethnic ghettos. Bonacich (1992) argued that by forcing Chinese laborers to congregate together for survival, the mid-nineteenth century establishment of California's Chinatowns formed in this manner. Kuo (1981) also attributed the formation of ethnic enclaves such as Chinatowns to Chinese Americans' perceptions and reactions to experiences of institutionalized discrimination. According to Kuo, this type of enclave formation results in an ethnically and culturally cohesive community.

No wonder many Asian American intellectuals believed that the most effective way to understand oppression and discrimination in Asian American history is to view it through the process of ethnic identification (Chin 1976, Jensen and Abeyta 1987, Tanaka 1976). Only with a historical consciousness of discrimination and exploitation can societal transformation result. Only with such awareness can Asian Americans "become proud of being Asian" (Jensen and Abeyta 1987).

The Relationship Between Ethnic Racial Discrimination and Ethnic Identification

The main principles of the colony model center around the notion that contemporary American society has fully reified institutionalized ethnic/racial discrimination (Carmichael and Hamilton 1967, Geschwender 1978, Handy 1984). Regardless of social class

standing, the aforementioned colonial theorists argue that ethnic minorities are consistently resented purely on ethnic or racial grounds.

Colonial theorists have also maintained that ethnic minorities in America are treated like colonized peoples abroad. And like colonized peoples abroad, America's ethnic minorities are prevented from achieving political power (Fannon 1966, Memmi 1965). Ethnic identification results as the ethnic minority attempts to mobilize behind the defense of their ethnicity and its cultural uniqueness. The mobilization process includes ethnic identification and solidarity that transcend class differences (Fannon 1966, Hechter 1978, Memmi 1965).

The Relationship Between Ethnic Racial Discrimination and Ethnic Identification in the Works of Asian American Intellectuals

Within the context of the colony model, Asian American intellectuals' perceptions of ethnic/racial discrimination against their group results in concerns toward ethnic or racial issues affecting Asian Americans, regardless of their socioeconomic standing. Asian American intellectuals assert that ethnic discrimination has been and continues to be a major obstacle toward societal recognition of many historical and contemporary Asian American achievements.

Since ethnic/racial discrimination exists as a result of social ignorance and fear, Asian American intellectuals are prompted to reinterpret history for all Americans in hopes of minimizing these fears. In this manner, intellectuals grant Asian Americans their legitimacy and rightful position in American history. To reinterpret and communicate

Asian American history. Asian American intellectuals have to, through ethnic identification, reinterpret their ethnic experiences within the context of American history. This process of reinterpretation may be most salient in Asian American intellectuals' works.

Rationale for the Selection of the Colony Model

The rationale for the selection of the colony model was based on the model's assertion that ethnic/racial discrimination represents the most oppressive force in society. So debilitating and oppressive is this form of discrimination, colonial model proponents argue, that American ethnic minorities are as vulnerable as colonized peoples abroad to institutional racism (for example, the colonial treatment of African Americans as second-class citizens) (Carmichael and Hamilton 1976). In addition, the selection of the colony model is appropriate because issues relating to perceptions of ethnic/racial discrimination is readily apparent in the works of Asian American intellectuals.

Therefore, from the review of relevant literature, my thesis attempts to examine which of the two models, the class or colony model, possesses more explanatory power in describing ethnic identification in the works of Asian American intellectuals. The assumptions of both the class and colony models are examined below:

Assumptions of the Class Model

- (1) Capitalism exploits and weakens the lower class by dividing it.
- (2) Ethnic minorities reside mostly in the lower classes.

- (3) Division of the lower class is most easily achieved along ethnic/racial lines.
- (4) Class discrimination relegates working class minorities to "subproletariat" and "reserve army" status.
- (5) Ethnic identification in working class minority groups is a result of perceiving and/or having experienced this class discrimination.

Assumptions of the Colony Model

- (1) Ethnic people in America have historically existed in a colonizer-colonized relationship.
- (2) Colonizer group is ethnically/racially different from colonized group.
- (3) Colonizer is discriminatory toward colonized, who are ethnic and/or racial minorities, resulting in cultural and economic exploitation of colonized group.
- (4) Ethnic/racial discrimination becomes reified in the social institutions.
- (5) Ethnic identification in the minority group is a result of perceiving institutionalized discrimination based on ethnicity/race.

From these assumptions, I will be testing the following hypothesis in hopes of providing more support for the colonial perspective: the colony model is hypothesized to possess more explanatory power than the class model regarding ethnic identification in the works of Asian American intellectuals. My conviction stems from the colony model's acknowledgment of the long-standing and damaging effects of ethnic/racial discrimination upon the Asian American community.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Scope Conditions

Respondents qualified for analysis if they were born and raised in the United States. First-generation Asian Americans were not included in the analysis because this thesis is interested in "Americanized" Asians.

Asian American intellectuals in this study were examined within the academic context, that is, the search for ethnic identification occurred through the examination of their academic works (any kind of published academic literature and/or research).

The observation of another popular group of Asian American intellectuals, that is, those intellectuals residing and producing works in the public sphere (professional authors, artists, journalists, etc.), could have also been included in this thesis. However, due to the exploratory nature of this research the scope of this thesis was kept narrow and focused on only academic Asian American intellectuals.

Asian American intellectuals under examination were assumed to be academically sensitized to various ethnic, economic, and cultural issues of their ethnic group (in other words, my interest did not revolve around Asian American intellectuals' works that pursue the merits of Shakespeare or the comprehension of *Beowulf* in Old English). The adoption of this criteria effectively excluded Asian American intellectuals who are not academically involved with social and cultural issues of their ethnic group. Examples of this group of

Asian American intellectuals may include, but are not limited to, those belonging to the academic pursuits of Engineering, Journalism, Agriculture, English Literature, etc.

Sampling Procedure

Due to the exploratory nature of this study, purposive sampling was used instead of random sampling. Because the non-random sampling method was used, the findings of this study should not be used to generalize to the larger population. Moreover, caution must be taken when interpreting and examining relationships using this sampling format.

Consistent with the scope conditions, the sample of Asian American intellectuals was selected from the University of California and California State University campuses containing Asian American Studies programs (no private universities, community colleges, religious or vocational institutes were involved). Prior to the research design I discussed strategies of this thesis with professors from San Jose State University's Asian American Studies Program. Therefore, Asian American intellectuals from San Jose State University were excluded from the sample.

Initially the sample numbered ninety-six faculty members (professors, lecturers, and graduate students). Six Ethnic Studies/Asian American programs from the California State University System and four programs from the University of California System participated. The universities with such programs released their Ethnic Studies/Asian American faculty lists, which served as my sampling frame. The list totaled 96 subjects.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection occurred between the beginning of May 1996 until the end of July 1996. Data were collected from survey questionnaires mailed to subjects at their respective universities. Ninety-six survey questionnaires were mailed to all prospective subjects. The response rate was 30.2%, indicating that 29 surveys were returned. All questionnaires contained a PIN code that identified the addressee. Eighteen surveys were returned within the first ten days, six were after the first follow-up mailing. Five surveys were returned after the second follow-up mailing.

Instrumentation

A four-page, thirty-seven item questionnaire, was implemented for data collection. Three of the questions were based on a one-to-ten scale. Six of these questions were open-ended questions that requested a percentage estimate. As a matter of convenience, the percentages from the six open-ended questions were later converted during statistical analysis to fit a one-to-ten point scale. The conversion was used in anticipation that the subjects' numerical responses would fall within the one-digit range.

There were three open-ended demographic questions in the survey. The remaining twenty-four question items were based on a Likert format which ranged from one to five response categories. Of the twenty-four Likert-based questions, a pair of questions was based on a contingency format because it inquired about the awareness of a historically-specific ethnic discrimination episode. The pair of contingency questions are presented in the instrument, question items 10 and 16, located in Appendix 1.

Eleven question items were designed to measure the first independent variable of perceived ethnic/racial discrimination. Eight question items were designed to measure the second independent variable of perceived social class discrimination. Nine question items were used to measure the dependent variable of ethnic identification degree. Nine additional question items were also used to provide a demographic profile of the subjects.

The questionnaire was designed to be answered in less than thirty minutes, so determining the number of question items to measure the independent and dependent variables was based on the question items' parsimony and clarity. Two variable items incorporated for analysis appeared most appropriate in capturing the theoretical assertions of the class and colony models (one question item for each model). In addition, two question items were also selected for the dependent variable of ethnic identification in the works of Asian American intellectuals. This is because the small sample size did not warrant a large number of variables to be included in the analysis. Each question item was carefully examined before the selection of the independent and dependent variables. Gender was also introduced as an additional independent variable.

Sample Profile

Table 1 indicates that 45% of the sample were females ($n = 13$) and 52% were males ($n = 15$), with one respondent who did not indicate his/her gender. Table 2 indicates the age distribution in the sample ranged from 22 to 57 years, with a mean of 37.6 years; four respondents did not indicate their age. Table 3 displays the Asian backgrounds of my subjects, revealing the sample's ethnic diversity. There was one Sri Lankan American, one

TABLE 1
Distribution of Gender

	Frequency	%
Males	15	52
Females	13	45
gender not indicated	1	3
total	29	100%

$n=29$

interracial respondent, and one Taiwanese American, each at 3.4% ($n = 1$) of the sample. Korean Americans and Japanese Americans each made up 13.8% ($n = 4$) of the sample, while 6.9% ($n = 2$) identified themselves as Okinawan Americans. Vietnamese Americans and Pilipino Americans each made up 10.3% ($n = 3$) of the sample. Most respondents in the sample, 31% ($n = 9$), indicated they were Chinese Americans. In addition Table 4 indicates that 17.2% ($n = 5$) of Asian American intellectuals were raised in the *lower class*, 62.2% ($n = 18$) indicated they were raised in the *middle class*, while 17.2% ($n = 5$) indicated they were raised in the *upper class* (one subject declined to state his/her family's income status).

Conceptual Definitions

Perceived ethnic racial discrimination, my first independent variable derived from the colony model, is defined as the subjects' general perceptions of how much ethnic/racial discrimination has existed and still continue to exist in our society. *Perceived social class discrimination*, my second independent variable derived from the class model, is defined

TABLE 2
Age of Sample

Value Frequency Percent			
Age of Respondent	22	1	3.4
	24	1	3.4
	25	1	3.4
	26	2	6.9
	27	1	3.4
	28	1	3.4
	29	3	10.3
	30	1	3.4
	31	1	3.4
	33	1	3.4
	34	1	3.4
	35	1	3.4
	39	1	3.4
	40	1	3.4
	50	1	3.4
	52	1	3.4
	54	2	6.9
	55	2	6.9
	56	1	3.4
	57	1	3.4
missing		99	<u>4</u>
total			29
			100%
Valid cases:	25	std dev:	12.34
Missing cases:	4	Minimum:	22
Mean:	37.60	Maximum:	57

n=29

TABLE 3
Asian Ethnic Backgrounds

	Value	Frequency	Percent
Asian American Intellectuals' background:			
Sri Lankan	1	1	3.4
Korean	2	4	13.8
Japanese	3	4	13.8
Okinawan	4	2	6.9
Chinese	5	9	31.0
Vietnamese	6	3	10.3
Pilipino	7	3	10.3
Interacial	8	1	3.4
Taiwanese	9	1	3.4
Missing	99	<u>1</u>	<u>3.4</u>
Total		29	100%

n=29

TABLE 4
Income Bracket during Intellectuals' Upbringing

		Value	Frequency	Percent
Family's Income Bracket While Growing Up:				
lower class:	Up to \$19,999	1	5	17.2
middle class:	\$20,000 to \$64,999	2	18	62.2
upper class:	\$65,000 and Above	3	5	17.2
Missing		99	<u>1</u>	<u>3.4</u>
Total			29	100%
Mean: 2.89	Standard Deviation: 1.37			

n=29

as the subjects' general perceptions of how much discrimination the upper class exhibits toward people in the lower classes.

The dependent variable of *degree of ethnic identification in the works of Asian American intellectuals* is defined as the level of incorporating ethnic-based references such as language, attire, native cuisine, place of origin of ancestors, or cultural values into their works.

Operational Definitions

The colony model and the class model are each measured by one variable, while two variables measure the dependent variable of ethnic identification.

Independent Variable I: Perceived Ethnic Racial Discrimination

The independent variable (PD9) below is intended to measure Asian American intellectuals' perceptions of institutional discrimination based on ethnicity or race:

"To your best estimate how frequently do you perceive institutional discrimination based on your ethnicity/race?"

Response options: [1] "never," [2] "rarely," [3] "sometimes," [4] "most of the time"

Independent Variable II: Perceived Social Class Discrimination

The next question item pertains to my second independent variable: perceived social class discrimination. The question (PSCD8) below is intended to measure Asian American intellectuals' perceptions of how wealthy people treat people residing in the lower

classes, regardless of ethnicity or race:

"How do you generally feel about wealthy people's overall treatment of the lower classes?"

Response options: [1] "treat very badly," [2] "treat somewhat badly," [3] "treat somewhat well," [4] "treat very well"

Dependent Variables: Ethnic Identification in Asian American Intellectuals' Works

This open-ended question (ID2) item is intended to measure the degree Asian American intellectuals make ethnic references in their works. The percentage will then be converted to fit a ten-point scale by multiplying the figure by a .1 value.

"What percent of your formal works make reference(s) toward your ethnicity?
_____%"

My next open-ended question (ID9) item is intended to measure how often subjects have tried, through their professional works, to better the way Asian Americans are perceived in America. The percentage will then be converted to fit a ten-point scale by multiplying the figure by a .1 value.

"In your works, what percent of the time(s) have you tried to incorporate ethnic culture or imagery? _____%"

Additional Variable of Interest

This thesis also intends to examine if gender affected the ethnic identification in the works of Asian American intellectuals. The question below inquired about the respondents' gender. A dummy variable was later created, resulting in a new coding

classification for male ("0") and female ("1").

"What is your gender?"

Response options: [1] "male," [2] "female"

Statistical Procedure

Descriptives and frequencies of variables were incorporated in the analysis. Multiple linear regression was also performed for the analysis. With multiple linear regression analysis I am able to glimpse at the rudimentary relationship between the independent variables and its effects on degree of ethnic identification.

Unstandardized and standardized regression coefficients were also utilized. The unstandardized regression coefficient is a score "in the original metric," that is, not yet standardized into z-scores (Vogt 1993, 239). The unstandardized regression coefficient (b) will be used to determine the values of the dependent variable given certain values of the independent variable while controlling for the other independent variables. A standardized regression coefficient (B) allows one to "compare raw scores from different distributions" (Vogt 1993, 219). The standardized regression z-scores is effective when used to compare the relative strength of each independent variable while controlling for other variables. Therefore, the use of standardized regression coefficients allows the ranking of the class and colony variables through its indication of which model has the strongest effect upon ethnic identification behavior.

The standard error (SEB) will also be utilized for data interpretation. The standard error indicates "how much you are off when using the regression line to predict particular

scores" (Vogt 1993, 218). A lower standard error means a greater "degree of linear relationship between two variables in the regression" (Vogt 1993, 218). Conversely, a higher standard error results in less linearity in the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

The R-squared is a coefficient of "multiple determination between a dependent variable and two or more independent variables" (Vogt 1993, 186). The R-squared value will be used to determine the independent variables' collective ability to explain the amount of variance in the dependent variable.

Despite a violation of one of linear regression's assumptions, namely that my sample size should be larger, the robustness of regression analysis remains useful if my findings will not be generalized to other ethnic minority intellectual populations.

Finally, bivariate correlations were performed. Bivariate correlations were selected for its ability to discern the strength of the relationship between independent and dependent variables involved.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

Table 5 presents a descriptive profile of all variables involved in this study. Pertaining to the colony model, it was found that on the average Asian American intellectuals (AAIs) had, at least, "sometimes" perceived ethnic or racial institutional discrimination (variable PD9: mean = 2.93, std dev = .59).

TABLE 5
Descriptives

Variable and label	Mean	Std Dev.	Min	Max	Valid N
GENDER: What is your gender?	.46	.51	0	1	28
PD9: To your best estimate how frequently do you perceive institutional discrimination based on your ethnicity/race?	2.93	.59	2	4	29
PSCD8: How do you feel about wealthy people's overall treatment of the lower classes?	1.62	.56	1	3	29
ID2: What percent of your formal works make reference(s) toward your ethnicity?	7.22	2.77	1	10	29
ID9: % tried to incorporate ethnic culture or imagery ____	7.98	2.26	4	10	28

Pertaining to the class model, AAIs indicated that on the average the wealthy in their

ethnic group treated lower class members of their ethnic group "somewhat badly" (variable PSCD8: mean 1.62, std dev = .56). The first dependent variable measure (ID2) reveals that 72% of AAIs' works made references toward their ethnicity (mean: 7.22, std dev: 2.77). The second dependent variable measure (ID9) reveals strong ethnic identification sentiment in AAIs' works; roughly 80% of Asian American intellectuals incorporated "ethnic culture or imagery" (mean: 7.98, std dev: 2.26).

Table 6 presents regression results on perceptions of ethnic/racial discrimination upon AAIs' works that make references toward their ethnicity (ID2). Perceptions of ethnic/racial discrimination and works with ethnic references are significantly related ($B = .412, p = .029$), controlling for perceptions of class discrimination.

On the contrary, the effect of perceived class discrimination on ethnic identification is statistically insignificant ($B = -.046, p = .800$). Findings on perceived social class discrimination reveal no support for the class model pertaining to the first dependent variable measure. This supports my hypothesis that perceived ethnic/racial discrimination is more likely than perceived class discrimination to influence degree of works with ethnic references. The R-square value reveals that the combination of independent variables explains 17.2% of the variance in AAIs' incorporation of ethnic references in their works.

Consistent with findings in Table 6, Table 7 indicates that perceptions of ethnic/racial discrimination and degree of incorporating ethnic and cultural imagery in AAIs' works (ID9) are statistically significant ($B = .395, p = .041$), controlling for perceptions of class discrimination.

TABLE 6
Regression Analysis: Colony and Class Variables on
First Dependent Variable of Works that make References toward Ethnicity

Dependent Variable 1: ID2 - What percent of your formal works make reference(s) toward your ethnicity? ____%				
Independent Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient (b)	Standard Error B (SEB)	Standardized Coefficient (B)	Sig T
<i>Colony Variable:</i>				
PD9: To your best estimate how frequently do you perceive institutional discrimination based on your ethnicity/race?	1.927	.833	.412	.029*
<i>Class Variable:</i>				
PSCD8: How do you feel about wealthy people's overall treatment of the lower classes?	-.227	.881	-.046	.800
Constant:	1.944			
R-Square:	.172			

NOTE: * $p < .05$

Perception of social class discrimination upon ethnic identification in AAIs' works is not statistically significant ($B = .039, p = .832$). Once again, the results support my hypothesis that perceived ethnic/racial discrimination rather than perceived social class discrimination would result in higher levels of ethnic identification. The combined independent variables yield an R-Square value of .16, meaning that 16% of the variance in the dependent variable, AAIs' incorporation of ethnic culture and imagery, is explained by the two independent variables.

TABLE 7
Regression Analysis: Class and Colony Variables on
Second Dependent Variable of Incorporation of Cultural Imagery

Dependent Variable 2: ID9 - In your works, what percent of the time(s) have you tried to incorporate ethnic culture or imagery? ____%				
Independent Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient (b)	Standard Error B (SEB)	Standardized Coefficient (B)	Sig T
<i>Colony Variable:</i>				
PD9: To your best estimate how frequently do you perceive institutional discrimination based on your ethnicity/race?	1.550	.720	.395	.041*
<i>Class Variable:</i>				
PSCD8: How do you feel about wealthy people's overall treatment of the lower classes?	.157	.732	.039	.832
Constant:	3.3138			
R-Square:	.160			

NOTE: * $p < .05$

Gender (GEN) was introduced as an additional independent variable to see whether being male or female significantly affected AAIs' ethnic identification in their works. Table 8 indicates that gender had no effect upon the first dependent variable (ID2) of making ethnic references in AAIs' works ($B = .021, p = .920$), controlling for perceptions of class and ethnic discrimination. Table 9 also reveals that gender had no effect upon the second dependent variable (ID9) of incorporating cultural imagery in AAIs' works ($B = -.067, p = .750$), controlling for perceptions of class and ethnic discrimination.

TABLE 8
Regression Analysis on Class, Colony and Gender Variables on
First Dependent Variable of Works that make References toward Ethnicity

Dependent Variable 1: ID2 - What percent of your formal works make reference(s) toward your ethnicity? ____%				
Independent Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient (b)	Standard Error B (SEB)	Standardized Coefficient (B)	Sig T
<i>Colony Variable:</i>				
PD9: To your best estimate how frequently do you perceive institutional discrimination based on your ethnicity/race?	1.645	.948	.356	.096
<i>Class Variable:</i>				
PSCD8: How do you feel about wealthy people's overall treatment of the lower classes?	-.105	.948	-.022	.912
Gender	.112	1.115	.021	.920
Constant:	2.635			
R-Sqaure:	.121			

With gender introduced in Table 8, the effect of perceived class discrimination upon the first dependent variable of making references toward ethnicity (ID2) remained insignificant ($B = -.022$, $p = .912$). In addition, the introduction of gender cancelled the previously significant relationship between perceived ethnic/racial discrimination and AAI's works that make ethnic references (ID2) ($B = .356$, $p = .096$).

The results displayed in Table 9 are similar to the results in Table 8. Gender did not significantly affect the relationship of perceived ethnic/racial discrimination upon

TABLE 9
Regression Analysis on Class, Colony, and Gender Variables on
Second Dependent Variable of Incorporating Cultural Imagery

Dependent Variable 2: ID9 - In your works, what percent of the time(s) have you tried to incorporate ethnic culture or imagery? ___%				
Independent Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient (b)	Standard Error B (SEB)	Standardized Coefficient (B)	Sig T
<i>Colony Variable:</i>				
PD9: To your best estimate how frequently do you perceive institutional discrimination based on your ethnicity/race?	1.460	.784	.372	.075
<i>Class Variable:</i>				
PSCD8: How do you feel about wealthy people's overall treatment of the lower class?	.235	.784	.059	.767
Gender	-.296	.922	-.067	.750
Constant:	3.413			
R-Square:	.163			

incorporation of ethnic culture or imagery ($B = .372, p = .075$). Once again, gender did not alter the insignificant relationship between perceived class discrimination and incorporation of ethnic culture or imagery in AAls' works ($B = .059, p = .767$).

Correlation analysis was performed on all variables. Results are displayed in Table 10. The colony independent variable was significantly correlated with the dependent variables of percent using ethnic references ($r = .412$) and incorporation of ethnic culture and imagery ($r = .398$). Predictably, the independent variable for the class model was not

significantly correlated with our dependent variables ($r = -.035$ for ID2 and $r = .07$ for ID9). The two dependent variables were also predictably correlated at .412, indicating a consistency in the dependent measures.

Table 10 also indicates no significant differences in gender perceptions of ethnic/racial discrimination and social class discrimination in Asian American intellectuals ($r = -.321$ and $r = .271$, respectively). In addition, there were no significant differences between male and female Asian American intellectuals' incorporation of ethnic references and cultural imagery ($r = -.099$ and $r = -.170$, respectively).

TABLE 10
Pearson's Correlation Matrix of Variables

	GEN	ID2	ID9	PD9	PSCD8
GENDER:	1.0				
ID2: What percent do your formal works make reference(s) toward your ethnicity?	-.099	1.0			
ID9: % tried incorporating ethnic culture or imagery ____	-.170	.412*	1.0		
PD9: How frequently do you perceive institutional ethnic/racial discrimination?	-.321	.412*	.398*	1.0	
PSCD8: How do you feel about wealthy people's overall treatment of the lower classes?	.271	-.035	0.07	0.03	1.0
mean:	.464	7.22	7.98	2.93	1.62
std dev.:	.508	2.77	2.26	.594	.562

NOTE: * $p < .05$

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The aim of this thesis was to examine the degree of ethnic identification exhibited in the works of academic Asian American intellectuals. Specifically, I was interested in examining whether Asian American intellectuals practiced ethnic identification due to perceptions of ethnic/racial discrimination or perceptions of social class discrimination. The research was implemented within the context of two models, the colony model and the class model. I hypothesized the colony model to possess more explanatory power than the class model. Findings supported the hypothesis: the colony model possesses greater explanatory power than the class model in its prediction of the degree of ethnic identification in the works of my sample of academic Asian American intellectuals.

The Colony Model Supported

Results support the general line of reasoning provided by the colony model: the more Asian American intellectuals in my sample perceived ethnic or racial discrimination, the greater degree of ethnic identification in their works. Asian American intellectuals indicated that one form of ethnic identification behavior in their works involved the incorporation of ethnic references. Another form of ethnic identification behavior involved the incorporation of their ethnic culture and imagery. Concrete examples of these ethnic identification patterns already exist. Asian American intellectuals such as

Chang (1993), Kuo (1979), Takaki (1989), Tanaka (1976), and Kumekawa (1993), are notable examples of intellectuals combining these general types of ethnic identification behavior in their academic works.

Results from my research allow me to cautiously speculate that Asian American intellectuals continue to view ethnic/racial discrimination to be a greater threat than the potential for upper class exploitation of working class Asian Americans. This means my sample of Asian American intellectuals communicated through their works perceptions of how the Asian minority group has been and continues to be exposed to episodes of ethnic/racial discrimination. Through this process valuable information is communicated to the overall American public and intelligentsia, further contributing to an awareness on ethnic issues that affect Asian Americans. Perhaps, the intellectuals' documentation of their ethnic groups' experiences fulfills their collective need to understand life in ethnically and culturally diversified communities of America.

Ethnic identification in the works of Asian American intellectuals has sparked the interest in other ethnic intellectuals to examine issues pertinent to Asian Americans. An excellent example is Dorothy and Thomas Hoobler's book *The Chinese American Family Album* (1994), which contains historical information contributed by Asian American intellectuals (the introduction was contributed by Bette Bao Lord, Chinese American author of stories depicting her personal and family's immigrant experiences in America). John Brenkman, editor of *l'eme*, an international literary magazine concerned with multicultural talent, expresses his interest on Asian American intellectuals' works:

Since the reform of immigration laws in 1965, Asian Americans have not only become an increasing presence within American society, but they also had the need to create their own literature, to tell the story of their history in the United States. Without that, we'd have mostly stereotypes, mythologies, and lies about Asians in U.S. society. What we call American literature is undergoing a profound transformation . . . Asian American literature is part and parcel of American literature today, as is African American or Latino American literature. None of these are truly separate, but they're distinct and making distinct contributions (Brenkman 1994, 36).

The appreciation of other ethnic groups' issues has been reciprocated by Asian American intellectuals. For example, the Los Angeles Riots of 1992 sparked a trend of multicultural intellectual activity that worked cooperatively to understand the complex issues of race, ethnic, and economic relations in Los Angeles. Commentaries and research on ethnic issues that were contributed by Asian, African, Latino, and white Americans were eventually compiled into a powerful book titled *Los Angeles--Struggles toward Multiethnic Community* (Chang and Leong 1993). Therefore, much of the historical knowledge of a specific American ethnic minority need not emanate only from intellectuals belonging to a specific ethnic minority, but from other interested ethnic intellectuals as well.

The colony model was useful in examining issues in this thesis because it effectively captured contemporary perceptions and experiences of ethnic/racial discrimination within the context of American history. The colony model accomplished this through its assertion that institutional discrimination is still very much alive in contemporary American society. Because the colony model asserts ethnic/racial discrimination has existed and still exists, ethnic identification in the works of Asian American intellectuals gains a historical *and* contemporary state of relevance.

The Class Model Rejected

My findings did not lend support to the assertions of the class model. For a variety of reasons, the class model was less effective than the colony model in its ability to explain ethnic identification in the works of Asian American intellectuals.

One of the factors affecting the class model's applicability may be due to the class distribution in my sample of Asian American intellectuals. Most Asian American intellectuals indicated they were raised in the middle class (62.2%); only five Asian American intellectuals (17.2%) considered themselves raised in the lower class, while the rest (17.2%) indicated they were raised in the upper class. This may be one of the reasons for the class model's failure to significantly affect ethnic identification in the works of Asian American intellectuals. Ideally, the sample should contain an even distribution of Asian American intellectuals from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

Furthermore, another problem centered around the class model's assertion of class polarization. Recall that in the state of class polarization ethnic minorities exploited as a source of cheap labor end up relegated and "polarized" to the lowest class. According to the assertions of the class model, this polarization should have resulted in my sample of Asian American intellectuals to perceive class discrimination affecting Asian immigrants' upward mobility. However, recent findings documenting Asian American upward mobility may have changed their perceptions on this matter.

For example, many Asian American intellectuals from traditional Asian immigrant families (predominantly Chinese, Japanese, and Pilipinos) attributed their upward mobility

opportunities to a strong educational background (Eljera 1996). Figures show that Chinese Americans displayed the greatest proportion of "any group with a college degree--25 percent as compared to the national average of 13 percent" (Kitano 1981, 130). Figures for Japanese Americans indicate this ethnic group to have "the highest high school completion rate of any group--including the majority group--and that their college completion rates were also high" (Kitano 1981, 132).

A recent phenomenon contributing to the upward mobility of many Asian immigrants is their use of a novel economic approach known as *immigrant entrepreneurship*. Immigrant entrepreneurships are characterized by privatized and highly specialized businesses that tap economic resources from (1) the population of first generation Asian immigrants and (2) the Pacific Rim market (Eljera 1996). Apart from the smaller and more conventional "mom and pop" businesses, newer examples of immigrant entrepreneurships range from Korean churches to Karaoke bars, Vietnamese manicure and hair salons, legal agencies serving the needs of non-English speaking Asians, to Asian American-owned technological firms (many based in the Silicon Valley) that attract billions in capital from the Pacific Rim (Eljera 1996). This economic profile is characteristic of the employed and recently arrived first generation Asian immigrants, that is, those who immigrated to America during the post-Vietnam War era (e.g., Laotians, Hmong Vietnamese, Cambodians, Koreans, and to a certain extent, Thais) (Eljera 1996, 12).

Unlike the traditional secondary economy of yesteryear in which Asian Americans

were dependent on mostly non-Asians for their economic livelihood, economics of immigrant entrepreneurship centers around meeting the needs of the established ethnic populations, whether they reside here or abroad. Because the smaller businesses do not require much English proficiency, immigrant entrepreneurs are now practiced by many first generation working class Asian immigrants as a means for achieving upward mobility (Eljara 1996).

As a consequence, Asian American intellectuals may simply assume, either through channels of education or immigrant entrepreneurial endeavors, following generations of disadvantaged Asian Americans will experience upward mobility. With such an optimistic forecast Asian American intellectuals' class consciousness and perceptions of class discrimination may never fully develop. Unless a specific ethnic group historically occupies an elite societal position that is able to economically and politically exploit a historically working class Asian immigrant group, the class model's explanatory power may be limited.

Although it is impossible to make a conclusive statement, lower class polarization may not have historically characterized Asian American social existence. One may also interpret that upper class attempts to polarize Asian Americans to the lower class were not viewed by my sample of intellectuals to be as great a threat as ethnic/racial discrimination. Studies with a more elaborated research design are needed to answer these questions.

Implications of Gender as a Variable

The gender of Asian American intellectuals also failed to influence the use of ethnic

references and incorporation of cultural imagery. The preliminary results reveal my sample of female Asian American intellectuals does not differ significantly from their male counterparts in perceptions of ethnic/racial and social class discrimination. The results from my sample also indicate that gender does not affect degree of ethnic identification in the works of Asian American intellectuals. From the findings I cautiously speculate that perceptions of ethnic/racial and social class discrimination are similar between male and female Asian American intellectuals.

Suggestions for Future Research

Methodological Considerations

Improvements for future research should first revolve around the refinement of methodology, especially as it pertains to effective sampling techniques. Newer random sampling techniques need to be reconsidered to minimize the likelihood of bias. Stratified random sampling may represent an excellent alternative because it allows samples to be drawn from "particular categories (or 'strata') of the population being studied" (Vogt 1993, 223). Stratified sampling allows many strata of Asian American intellectuals to be examined (e.g., those from the public environment, female Asian American intellectuals, and lower class versus upper class Asian American intellectual populations, etc.). Stratified sampling will also be useful when randomly sampling at the national level major universities with Asian American Studies programs or departments.

New variables need to be introduced and examined. Even though the colony model

was supported, its R-square value never exceeded 17.2%. A thorough search is needed for other external variables that account for 80% of the unexplained variance. Therefore, it would be premature to speculate that ethnic and class discrimination are sole factors contributing to ethnic identification in the works of Asian American intellectuals. Conversely, the resulting eradication of these factors may not necessarily result in Asian American intellectuals' abandonment of ethnic identification in their works.

Conceptual Considerations

I strongly believe that gender and its effects upon ethnic identification in Asian American intellectuals needs to be reintroduced as an independent variable. An examination of gender's effects upon ethnic identification allows (1) the validation of whether perceptions or experiences of ethnic/racial discrimination are similar between male and female Asian American intellectuals, and (2) an examination of whether female and male Asian American intellectuals display same degrees of ethnic identification in their works. The examination of gender's relationship to ethnic identification is also important because though Asian American intellectuals' works might display similar degrees of ethnic identification, female and male Asian American intellectuals may possess differing views on economic and political opportunities for Asian Americans. My preliminary findings have indicated no significant relationship between gender and degree of ethnic identification. However, a larger stratified random sample of Asian American intellectuals may indicate otherwise.

Age differences will be another crucial factor. Perhaps different generations of

Asian American intellectuals may display different degrees of ethnic identification. This study may have been somewhat compromised because roughly 60% of the subjects were under the age of forty. A more valid conclusion on discrimination factors and degree of ethnic identification could be drawn if age groups were evenly distributed. In addition, intergenerational perceptions of discrimination factors will provide fascinating insights into the unique attitudes of Asian American intellectuals from different age groups.

Since the exploratory nature of this thesis made possible only the examination of perceptions of class discrimination, future studies should compare and clarify the differences between the effects of perceiving class discrimination versus actual experiences of class discrimination. Valuable insights into ethnic identification in Asian American intellectuals' works could be gained through the examination of perceptions versus actual experiences of class discrimination.

Future research should also focus on Asian American intellectuals' *actual* social class of upbringing and its influences upon ethnic identification in their works. A good operationalization of social class could conveniently be defined by differing income brackets of the intellectuals' families during their upbringing. Thus, it would be feasible to examine the effects of social class as defined by differing income brackets upon ethnic identification in the works of Asian American intellectuals.

Finally, the improvements and suggestions aforementioned should be applied toward the analyses of all types of American minority intellectuals situated in the academic and public environment. For example, public Asian American intellectuals (intellectuals not

situated in an academic circle. that is, professional artists, painters, poets, etc.) should be included in future research to determine whether their ethnic identification levels differ from academic Asian American intellectuals. Research should also concentrate on whether other types of minority intellectuals (e.g. public or academic Latino, African American, and women minority intellectuals) reveal similar degrees of ethnic identification in their works.

Conclusion

Because so many Asian immigrants were confined to economic struggles, their efforts have yielded better educational and professional avenues for succeeding generations. At this time, Asian American intellectuals possess a unique historical opportunity to take advantage of the intellectual possibilities presented to them by preceding generations. In this regard, Asian American intellectuals' ethnic identification in their works represents a bridge of knowledge that informs not only contemporary intellectuals, but different generations of intellectuals as well.

All Americans will be affected, some negatively, some positively, by the information presented in the works of ethnic intellectuals. Therefore, the propensity for Asian American intellectuals' works to affect our community must be realized as their works appear in universities and commercial literature, resulting in valuable information that is readily accessible to other intellectuals and the public.

Asian American intellectuals' ethnic identification in their works, when absorbed by interested members of society, could result in a positive contribution toward a historical

and contemporary understanding of the Asian American experience. As economic and political attention shifts toward the Pacific Rim in the coming millennium, this scenario may contribute to an acknowledgment and appreciation that Asian American intellectuals are a key American resource. This is why Asian American intellectuals need to reexamine the strengths and potential impact of their works upon the American public. Only then will they be able to forge an ethnic consciousness for all Americans to recognize.

A cautious conclusion of this thesis suggests that my sample of Asian American intellectuals engaged in ethnic identification because they perceived the continuation of institutionalized ethnic and racial discrimination in America. Through the incorporation of ethnic identification in their works Asian American intellectuals are able to express their concerns on ethnic, racial, and cultural issues which are important to them. If future research continues to validate the concerns expressed in this thesis, Asian American intellectuals' ethnic identification in their works will succeed in legitimizing the rewriting of their ethnic groups' historical and contemporary achievements in America.

Though my findings have provided preliminary support for the colony model, there is a greater need to provide more replicated and conclusive research on this topic. The aforementioned suggestions for improving this study should augment Americans' historical and contemporary awareness of its ethnic minorities. In this regard, I believe further refinements in research design will result in a greater understanding on Asian American intellectuals as well as other ethnic intellectuals' contribution to the American experience.

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APPENDIX I

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. While you were growing up how often did you feel that discrimination, based on your ethnicity, existed in your interactions with people that are *not* of your ethnicity?

☐ most of the time ☐ sometimes ☐ rarely ☐ never

2. While you were growing up whom did you associate with in the community?

☐ Mostly Asian Americans & Latinos
☐ Mostly Asian Americans & African Americans
☐ All minority groups and Anglo groups

3. While you were growing up how would you describe the interaction with strangers not of the same ethnicity as yourself.

☐ fairly equal ☐ somewhat discriminatory ☐ very discriminatory

4. While you were growing up how did you generally feel about non-Asian Americans' perceptions of you?

☐ as superior ☐ as equal ☐ as inferior

5. How much do you agree with the following statement: "There was widespread discrimination against your ethnic group *in the United States* while you were growing up."

☐ agree strongly ☐ somewhat agree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ strongly disagree

6. How much do you agree with the following statement: "There was widespread discrimination against your ethnic group *in your community* while you were growing up."

☐ agree strongly ☐ somewhat agree ☐ somewhat disagree ☐ strongly disagree

7. How much, overall, do you think discrimination in society presently exists against minorities?

☐ tremendous amount against all minorities
☐ moderate amount against all minorities
☐ minimal amount against all minorities
☐ virtually no discrimination against minorities

8. Which minority ethnic group do you feel experiences the heaviest discrimination today?

☐ Asian Americans
☐ African Americans
☐ Latinos
☐ Native Americans
☐ all groups equally discriminated

9. To your best estimate how frequently do you perceive institutional discrimination based on your ethnicity/race?

☐ most of the time ☐ sometimes ☐ rarely ☐ never

10. Do you know about the Vincent Chin incident?

☐ yes (if yes go to the next question)

☐ no (if no skip the next question)

11. How did the incident affect you?

☐ hardly affected you ☐ somewhat disturbed ☐ angered you ☐ infuriated you

12. While you were growing up would you consider the community of upbringing as:

☐ upper class ☐ upper middle class ☐ middle class ☐ lower middle class ☐ lower class

13. While you were growing up did you feel that your family's financial situation affected who you could associate with recreationally?

☐ most of the time ☐ sometimes ☐ rarely ☐ never

14. While you were growing up most peer interactions were with:

- ☐ people that were more wealthy than your situation
- ☐ people that were in a similar financial situation
- ☐ people that were in a more financially disadvantaged situation
- ☐ people in all types of financial situation

15. Please complete this thought: "An individual with the *same* ethnic background as yourself, but with more money. . ."

- ☐ "views the world very differently than you"
- ☐ "views the world somewhat differently than you"
- ☐ "views the world like you do"
- ☐ "does not view the world like you do"

16. When you see disadvantaged Asian Americans and other minorities, do you attribute this to:

- _____ fate
- _____ system
- _____ family's economic status while growing up
- _____ discrimination
- _____ lack of education
- _____ poverty while growing up
- _____ other (please specify _____)

How much do you agree with your selection?

- ☐ strongly agree
- ☐ somewhat agree
- ☐ somewhat disagree
- ☐ strongly disagree

17. While you were growing up how would you describe overall the interactions with strangers, friends, or relatives of your ethnic group, *but not of the same class* as yourself:

- ☐ very equal
- ☐ somewhat equal
- ☐ somewhat discriminatory
- ☐ very discriminatory

18. Do you generally feel that the majority of extremely wealthy people are concerned with the conditions of the poor?

- ☐ very concerned
- ☐ somewhat concerned
- ☐ not very concerned
- ☐ not concerned at all

19. How do you generally feel about wealthy people's overall treatment of the lower classes?

- ☐ treat very badly
- ☐ treat somewhat badly
- ☐ treat somewhat well
- ☐ treat very well

20. On an ethnic identification scale of 1 to 10; 1 being minimal ethnic identification and 10 being maximum ethnic identification, at what level does your work(s) contain *elements* of your cultural heritage (*elements* being anything physical or non-physical that one can find in your ethnic groups' ancestral home that is also found here in America; for example: native attire, language, imagery, native cuisine, mannerisms, etc.)?

minimal ethnic identification					maximum ethnic identification				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

21. What percent do your formal works make reference(s) toward your ethnicity? _____%

22. What percent of the time(s) do you mix your ethnic group's themes with other ethnic groups' themes in your works, that is, are your works multicultural in ethnic elements? _____%

23. On a scale of 1 to 10, would generalize your professional works as containing:

minimal ethnic-based references to your group					many ethnic-based references to your group				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

24. What percent of your professional works address themes from your parent(s)' generation? _____%

25. What percent of your professional works address themes from your grandparent(s)' generation? _____%

26. To the best of your estimate, what percent of your works address themes or episodes from your ethnic group's *historical* experiences in America? _____%

27. This is an introspective question. Please take a minute to think about it on a scale: As an Asian American intellectual, do you consider the majority of your professional works as attempts to better, or accept as is, the conditions of *newly arrived* Asian immigrants? (Please circle the number in order of degree)

attempt to better			neutral			leave as is			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

28. In your works, what percent of the time(s) have you tried to incorporate ethnic culture or imagery? _____%

29. While you were growing up did your parent(s)' ever remind you to be proud of your ethnic group's historical or contemporary accomplishments within the American experience?

- ☐ reminded you very often
- ☐ somewhat reminded you
- ☐ rarely reminded you
- ☐ never reminded you

30. How many generations of your *relatives'* American experiences are you historically knowledgeable about?

- ☐ one generation
- ☐ two generations
- ☐ three generations
- ☐ four generations or more

31. While you were growing up what percent of people in your community do you estimate are of the same ethnic background as yourself? _____%

32. In your community while you were growing up, was it considered formally or informally, an ethnic enclave of your ethnic group (that is, was it a Koreatown, Little Saigon, Japantown, Chinatown, etc.)?

- ☐ very much an enclave
- ☐ somewhat an enclave
- ☐ not an enclave

33. What is your gender? ☐ male ☐ female 34. What is your age? _____

35. What was the approximate income bracket of your family while you were growing up?

- ☐ up to \$19,000 ☐ \$20,000 to \$34,999 ☐ \$35,000 to \$49,999
- ☐ \$50,000 to \$64,999 ☐ \$65,000 and above

36. How many brothers and/or sisters do you have? _____

37. What is your Asian background? _____

APPENDIX 2

HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW APPROVAL LETTER

Office of the Academic Vice President • Associate Academic Vice President • Graduate Studies and Research
One Washington Square • San Jose, California 95192-0025 • 408/924-2480

TO: Jack Fong
2375 Edgehill Court
San Leandro, CA 94577

FROM: Serena W. Stanford *Serena W. Stanford*
AAVP, Graduate Studies & Research

DATE: May 7, 1996

The Human Subjects-Institutional Review Board has approved your request to use human subjects in the study entitled:

"Asian American Intellectuals' Ethnic Identification
in their Works: Testing Processes Within the Class
Versus Colony Model Framework"

This approval is contingent upon the subjects participating in your research project being appropriately protected from risk. This includes the protection of the anonymity of the subjects' identity when they participate in your research project, and with regard to any and all data that may be collected from the subjects. The Board's approval includes continued monitoring of your research by the Board to assure that the subjects are being adequately and properly protected from such risks. If at any time a subject becomes injured or complains of injury, you must notify Serena Stanford, Ph.D., immediately. Injury includes but is not limited to bodily harm, psychological trauma and release of potentially damaging personal information.

Please also be advised that all subjects need to be fully informed and aware that their participation in your research project is voluntary, and that he or she may withdraw from the project at any time. Further, a subject's participation, refusal to participate, or withdrawal will not affect any services the subject is receiving or will receive at the institution in which the research is being conducted.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (408) 924-2480.