



The Anti-Asian American Pacific Islander Bias Survey: Anti-Asian Bias Spectrum from Microaggressions to Violence

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Abstract

Background: Anti-Asian bias is not a new phenomenon. The murders of eight victims at spas in Georgia with six of the victims being Asian women has caused a new generation to speak up about the discrimination that is directed toward those who identify as Asian American Pacific Islanders (AAPI).

Objectives: The brief Anti-Asian American Pacific Islander Bias Survey (AAPIBS) was developed to view how discrimination shows up from microaggressions to violence on the spectrum of Anti-Asian bias.

Methodology: A convenience sample of occupational therapy practitioners and Asian American women in academia in the U.S. were given the survey.

Results: Anti-Asian discrimination occurs on a spectrum which has two major themes: Perpetual Foreigner and Model Minority. One new item emerged which was cultural appropriation from AAPI practices which are sources of cultural strengths and support, e.g. Mindfulness.

Implications: Anti-AAPI bias hinders the complete participation of AAPI Peoples in our society.

Keywords: Cultural appropriation; Envied Outgroup; Microaggressions; Model Minority; Perpetual Foreigner

Introduction

Anti-Asian bias is not a new phenomenon. The murders of eight victims at spas in Georgia with six of the victims being Asian women has caused a new generation to speak up about the discrimination that is directed toward those who identify as Asian American Pacific Islanders (AAPI). The brief Anti-Asian American Pacific Islander Bias Survey (AAPIBS) was given to view how discrimination shows up from microaggressions to violence on the spectrum of Anti-Asian bias within a convenience sample of occupational therapy practitioners and Asian American women in academia in the U.S. This review sought to explore the prevalence of Anti-Asian bias as experienced from those who identify as Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI). There are generally two types of stereotypes for AAPI individuals: Model Minority vs. Perpetual Foreigner. Ways to buffer against Asian Hate are also discussed.

Model Minority

There is a range of Anti-Asian phobia which has risen during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Because of the "Envied Outgroup" (Akiba,

2020) status of Asians in the U.S., there are circumstances which are troubling especially since many of the Asians who have reported discrimination and bias during this time are children. There is a long history of K-12 schools neglecting the needs of Asian children due to the misperception of all Asian students academically performing well and also not having any behavioral issues. Asian children have been bullied by their peers from all racial categories without corresponding actions taken to alleviate the trauma (Akiba [1]). The stereotype of AAPI people as a successful monolithic group as a divider to keep other Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) down starts at an early age. Some students are perceived to have Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM) success. Because health science students need to be strong in the math and science coursework [STEM+H(Health)], Williams, George-Jones, and Helb study of five different trials on racial phenotypes research design is applicable to how students of color may be perceived. Racial phenotypes or how one's appearance is viewed as typical of one's racial group with respect to Asian Americans and African Americans specifically with white students used for comparative purposes in STEM success. For those who were perceived to

be more stereotypically East Asian, raters perceived them as stronger in Science and Mathematics as opposed to those within Asian groups who were not seen as stereotypically East Asian. For African Americans, those who appeared more stereotypically African American based on physical appearance of skin color, etc., raters scored them as having poor Science and Mathematics propensity. White students were perceived to have a good ability for STEM. Within group differences need more attention rather than a one-size-fits-all response to target inclusion of students of color in STEM or STEM+H. The bias is that East Asian individuals are automatically proficient in Science and Math, and there is a question on the survey which takes this stereotype into account.

Perpetual Foreigner

During the early days of the pandemic, anxiety, depression, sleep disturbance, and “vicarious discrimination” (Lee & Waters [2]) were responses to anti-Asian bias. Mental and physical health were affected by anti-Asian racism (Cheng et al. [3]; Yang et al. [4]). Vicarious discrimination refers to individuals not being targeted themselves but seeing attacks or anti-Asian incidents on social media, for example. Anti-Chinese racism has a long history but before the pandemic can be traced most recently to SARS in 2003 were placing blame for a disease infection on one racial group should be noted (Misra et al. [5]). The stereotypes of Asians being reserved, diligent, and intellectual and not having good social skills are often utilized to not challenge White privilege and works to keep the “bamboo ceiling” (Atkin & Tran [6]) in place at predominantly White institutions (PWI). Asians are seen as worker bees rather than in positions of leadership and influence at PWIs (Atkin & Tran [6]).

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused burdens for everyone. Because of fear of contracting COVID-19 and lack of knowledge about the virus, participants of a survey regarding Anti-Asian sentiments scored higher for bias. In addition, participants who had a distrust of science, and were trusting in former President Trump also scored higher for bias (Dhahani & Franz [7]). Therefore, those who identify as Asian in the U.S. have an additional challenge during the COVID-19 pandemic to deal with Anti-Asian discrimination.

Support

Non-governmental organizations launched the STOP AAPI HATE tracker of COVID-19 related Anti-Asian violence and discrimination in March 2020. Asians with Asian Americans having the most mental disorders since the start of the pandemic compared to Whites has been demonstrated (Wu et al. [8]). In addition, “Minority Stress Theory” (Wu et al. [8]) is discussed in terms of racial trauma contributing to the mental health burdens of Asians in the U.S. Asians in the U.S. have had low rates of seeking support for mental health issues (Wang et al. [9]). Policy issues related to Asians and mental health must include attention to hate, violence, and discrimination experienced by AAPI individuals and groups (Wu et al. [8]; Akiba, [1]; Misra et al. [14]).

According to Murray-García, Harrell, García, and Gizzi, the focus of multicultural education for health professionals has often been on increasing cultural knowledge of the practitioners by extracting information from patients rather than on the crucial concept of the health professional being skilled at having a dialogue about race and racism (2014). The skilled dialogue on race and racism is integral to contributing to the health and wellness of the patient along with the development of a health care professional. The evidence from social psychology includes implicit bias, explicit bias, and aversive racism as key concepts to recognizing how to reduce health disparities. Knowledge of how one is perceived is key to resiliency (McConnell, [10]).

Being rooted to one’s ethnic identity and knowing about stereotypes of one’s racial group can be protective to one’s mental health and build resilience in facing racial discrimination (Atkin & Tran, [4]; Kodama & Dugan, [11]). In terms of when K-12 schools open up and Asian children return, there are several recommendations. The first is to denounce Anti-Asian hate, remediate the stereotypes, and provide information for others to see the humanity of Asians who are not a monolithic group (Akiba, [1]).

Materials and Methods

The initial survey was to gather the responses from an anonymous 20-question survey from voluntary participants with a Qualtrics link on the www.asianot.org website. Participants were asked to voluntarily complete the 20-question survey if they racially identified as Asian American Pacific Islander to allow the data to be used for research purposes. The link was on the website during the Summer of 2021. The survey states that 5 to 10 minutes are required to answer questions and write additional optional comments. The instrument has a consent question to publish anonymous responses to the survey. The survey also has a “Trigger Warning” to denote those painful memories may arise and to seek one’s own personal support if needed after taking the survey. The instrument does state that the purpose is to use the data to discuss Anti-Asian bias as experienced by those who identify as Asian American Pacific Islanders. Because of a low response rate on the www.asianot.org website, the survey was also included as a learning strategy in the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education (NCORE) Webinar Series: It’s Complicated: Asian American Women in Academia in the Fall of 2021. The anonymous survey was optional and over 30 participants took the survey. At the time of the close of the survey on October 13, 2021, there were a total of 37 useable responses of those who identified as AAPI individuals. Qualtrics features were used for data distributions.

Results/Observations

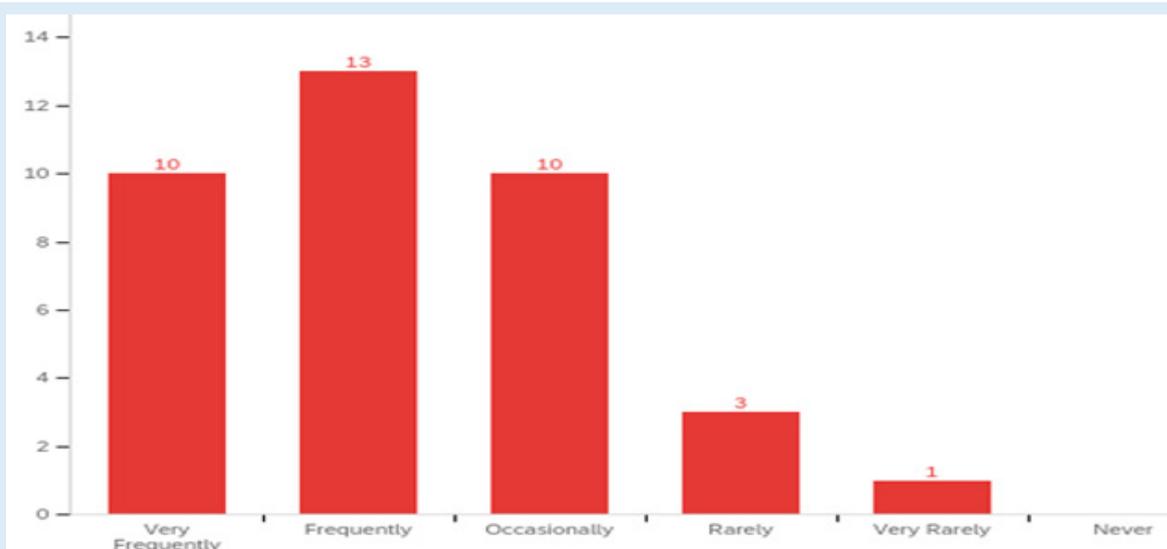
Thirty-seven participants identified as Asian American/Pacific Islander (AAPI) and agreed to participate in the study and completed the demographic questions. The majority of participants (n=34; 92%) identified their gender as female. The largest age group

was 25-34 (n=15; 41%) and their views shifted the distribution of most all items. Statistical data for all Tables and Figures were provided by K Davis. Demographics are listed in Table 1. Of the 20 questions included in the survey, there were 14 questions most closely aligned with the Perpetual Foreigner theme; there were 4 questions most closely aligned with the Model Minority theme. One question spoke to cultural appropriation and could also be seen as a source of cultural strength and support. One question was open-ended and closed the survey. The Anti-AAPI Bias Survey

is listed in the Appendix. Figure 1. This question exemplifies the Perpetual Foreigner theme. All 37 participants were related to this survey question as no one marked "Never" (Figure 2). This question exemplifies the Model Minority theme. There were 36 participants who related to this survey question with one participant who marked "Never" (Figure 3). This question exemplifies an area of cultural appropriation and/or cultural strength/support. There were 33 participants who related to this survey question with four participants who marked "Never".

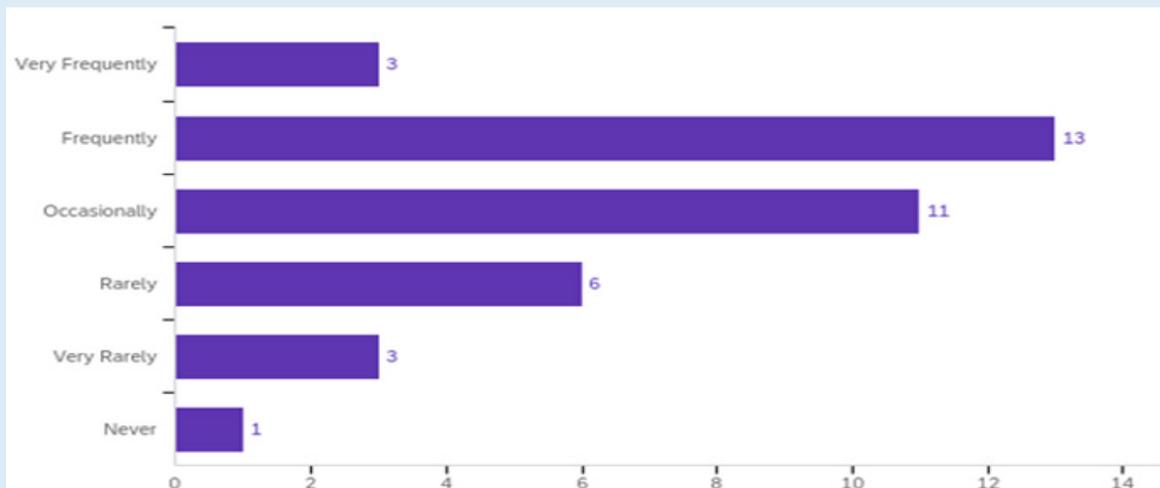
Table 1: Participant Demographics.

AAPI		
Answer	%	Count
Yes	100%	37
Gender		
Answer	%	Count
Prefer not to say	3%	1
Non-binary/third gender	3%	1
Male	3%	1
Female	92%	34
Total	100%	37
Age		
Answer	%	Count
65-74	3%	1
55-64	14%	5
45-54	22%	8
35-44	14%	5
25-34	41%	15
18-24	8%	3
Total	100%	37



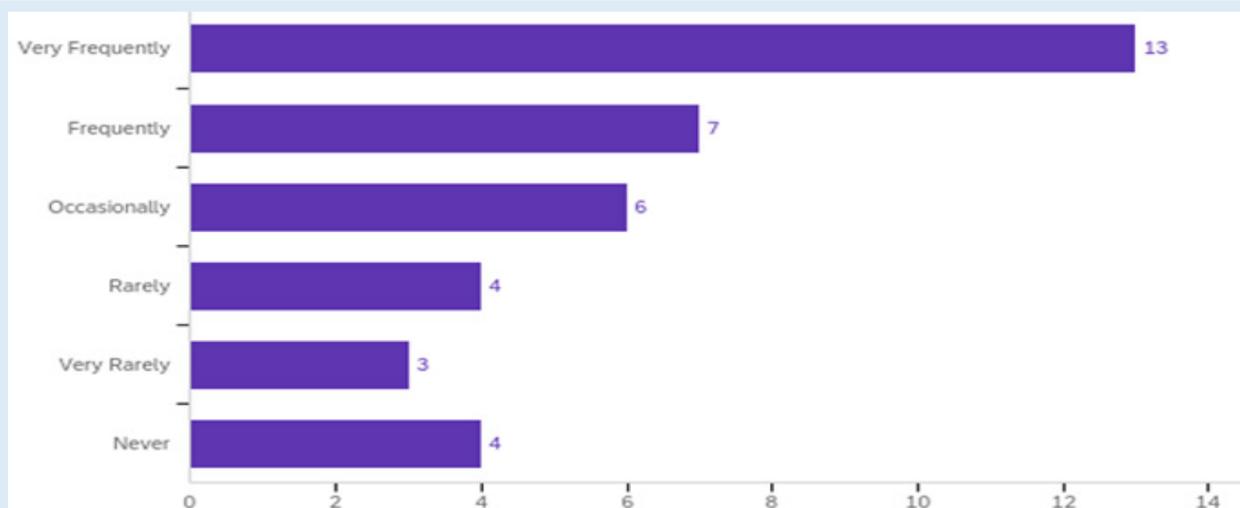
This question exemplifies the Perpetual Foreigner theme. All 37 participants were related to this survey question as no one marked "Never".

Figure 1: Q5 - I have been asked where I really come from.



This question exemplifies the Model Minority theme. There were 36 participants who related to this survey question with one participant who marked “Never”.

Figure 2: Q10 - People assume that I am wealthy or am from a high social economic class.



This question exemplifies an area of cultural appropriation and/or cultural strength/support. There were 33 participants who related to this survey question with four participants who marked “Never”.

Figure 3: Q14 - People have not given credit to some AAPI cultural practices such as the practice of Mindfulness having its origins in Buddhism.

Discussion

The findings of this study shows the prevalence of Anti-Asian discrimination occurs on a spectrum which has two major themes: Perpetual Foreigner and Model Minority. One new item emerged which was cultural appropriation from an AAPI practice which are sources of cultural strengths and support, e.g. Mindfulness. In the one open-ended question, three comments were most closely aligned with the Perpetual Foreigner theme and seven comments were most closely aligned with the Model Minority theme. Fourteen questions were most closely aligned with the Perpetual Foreigner theme (see Appendix). To varying degrees, participants answered affirmatively to these 14 questions.

Four questions were most closely aligned with the Model Minority theme (see Appendix). To varying degrees, participants

answered affirmatively to these 4 questions. In preparation for bias, openly discussing racism and race had a mitigating effect on the mental health impacts of racism on Korean American and Filipino American children (Park et al. [12]). One question exemplifies an area of cultural appropriation and/or cultural strength/support (see Appendix) [13-15]. To varying degrees, participants answered affirmatively to this question. Ironically, it appears that some AAPI cultural practices like Mindfulness and Yoga are not associated with AAPI cultures and “mainstreamed” while other cultural practices are “othered” and are the objects of derision. Pride in ethnic heritage may blunt the effects of discrimination in Filipino American and Korean American youth (Park et al. [16]). In the one open-ended question, three comments were most closely aligned with the Perpetual Foreigner theme and seven comments were most closely aligned with the Model Minority theme (see Appendix).

Limitations

This study used a convenience sample of occupational therapy practitioners and Asian American women in academia in the U.S. which may not be wholly representative of a large swath of those who identify as Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) individuals. Another limitation of this study is the acronym “AAPI” as it was chosen to match the “Stop AAPI Hate” website acronym. However, Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIDA) is the term used in academic settings to be more inclusive of those who identify as South Asians. Some of the questions around eye shape may have been of more pertinence to those who identify as East, Southeast Asian, and/or Pacific Islander. Additionally, the sample size was very small and did not reflect the gender, age, and class diversity within the AAPI population as a whole. The convenience sample was comprised of occupational therapy professionals as well as Asian American women in academia. Presumably all the participants were professionals, and some were in academia which is not reflective of large portions of those who identify as AAPI.

Recommendations

Further research on bias towards Asian Pacific Islander Desi Americans (APIDA) across a large sample size is needed. More specific demographic data would be helpful especially regarding age, generation in the U.S., i.e. immigrant or born in the U.S., and country of origin. Finally, future research on sources of cultural strength and resilience should be explored. Asian American studies in K-12 schools are beginning to be required as one strategy to fight against racism (Bellamy-Walker, [13-17]).

Conclusion

This study explored the spectrum of bias directed towards a convenience sample of those who identified as Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI). The brief Anti-Asian American Pacific Islander Bias Survey (AAPIBS) was given to view how discrimination shows up from microaggressions to violence on the spectrum of Anti-Asian bias within a convenience sample of occupational therapy practitioners and Asian American women in academia in the U.S. Two themes were identified in the questions: Perpetual Foreigner and Model Minority. One question dealt with cultural appropriation of cultural strengths [18,19]. In the last open-ended question, most of the responses expressed experiencing bias in the Model Minority theme which may be influenced by the convenience sample of either occupational therapy professionals and/or Asian American women in academia. In the profession of Occupational Therapy, APIDA individuals and populations are often considered “White-Adjacent” and not People of Color (Model Minority) and/or invisible or tokenized (Perpetual Foreigner). Yet APIDA cultural practices, e.g. Mindfulness and Yoga are mainstreamed as valued occupations without historical and cultural contexts (Cultural Appropriation). The author hopes to give voice to a rising APIDA population who are often unseen, disparaged, and silenced. The collective Pan-Asian cultures of the APIDA communities in the U.S. are sources of cultural pride, resilience, and resistance to Anti-AAPI hate.

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Appendix

Table 2: Anti-Asian American Pacific Islander Bias Survey (Anti-AAPI BS)

Q1 - I have been a target of ethnic slurs or insults related to my race.

	%	Count
Very Frequently	3%	1
Frequently	3%	1
Occasionally	46%	17
Rarely	16%	6
Very Rarely	27%	10
Never	5%	2
Total	100%	37

Q2 - I have been targeted for violence or threats of violence related to my race.

Answer	%	Count
Very Rarely	19%	7
Very Frequently	0%	0
Rarely	32%	12
Occasionally	5%	2
Never	43%	16
Frequently	0%	0
Total	100%	37

Q3 - I have been mistaken for another person of AAPI descent at work or at school.

Answer	%	Count
Very Frequently	11%	4
Frequently	43%	16
Occasionally	27%	10
Rarely	5%	2
Very Rarely	11%	4
Never	3%	1
Total	100%	37

Q4 - I have been told that I speak English well.

Answer	%	Count
Very Frequently	22%	8
Frequently	24%	9
Occasionally	30%	11
Rarely	16%	6
Very Rarely	3%	1
Never	5%	2
Total	100%	37

Q5 - I have been asked where I really come from.

Answer	%	Count
Very Frequently	27%	10
Frequently	35%	13
Occasionally	27%	10
Rarely	8%	3
Very Rarely	3%	1
Never	0%	0
Total	100%	37

Q6 - I have been mistaken for a clerk when I am shopping at a store.

Answer	%	Count
Very Frequently	3%	1
Frequently	16%	6
Occasionally	22%	8
Rarely	16%	6
Very Rarely	19%	7
Never	24%	9
Total	100%	37

Q7 - When I am a target of Anti-Asian bias, others come to my assistance.

Answer	%	Count
Very Frequently	3%	1
Frequently	3%	1
Occasionally	19%	7
Rarely	19%	7
Very Rarely	27%	10
Never	30%	11
Total	100%	37

Q8 - I am included when there are discussions about People of Color.

Answer	%	Count
Always	14%	5
Most of the time	16%	6
About half the time	24%	9
Sometimes	43%	16
Never	3%	1
Total	100%	37

Q9 - People assume I know about Mathematics, Science, and Technology.

Answer	%	Count
Very Frequently	30%	11
Frequently	22%	8
Occasionally	27%	10
Rarely	14%	5
Very Rarely	5%	2
Never	3%	1
Total	100%	37

Q10 - People assume that I am wealthy or am from a high social economic class.

Answer	%	Count
Very Frequently	8%	3
Frequently	35%	13
Occasionally	30%	11
Rarely	16%	6
Very Rarely	8%	3
Never	3%	1
Total	100%	37

Q11 - People have pulled their eyelids back in my presence.

Answer	%	Count
Very Frequently	0%	0
Frequently	3%	1
Occasionally	32%	12
Rarely	16%	6
Very Rarely	14%	5
Never	35%	13
Total	100%	37

Q12 - People have made derogatory comments about the shape of my eyes.

Answer	%	Count
Very Frequently	3%	1
Frequently	5%	2
Occasionally	24%	9
Rarely	22%	8
Very Rarely	16%	6
Never	30%	11
Total	100%	37

Q13 - People have made fun of some of my cultural practices.

Answer	%	Count
Very Frequently	5%	2
Frequently	16%	6
Occasionally	38%	14
Rarely	19%	7
Very Rarely	11%	4
Never	11%	4
Total	100%	37

Q14 - People have not given credit to some AAPI cultural practices such as the practice of Mindfulness having its origins in Buddhism.

Answer	%	Count
Very Frequently	35%	13
Frequently	19%	7
Occasionally	16%	6
Rarely	11%	4
Very Rarely	8%	3
Never	11%	4
Total	100%	37

Q15 - People have tried to shun or overly physically distance themselves from me.

Answer	%	Count
Very Frequently	3%	1
Frequently	8%	3
Occasionally	22%	8
Rarely	41%	15
Very Rarely	14%	5
Never	14%	5
Total	100%	37

Q16 - I do not perform or do activities I used to because I am fearful of being in public.

Answer	%	Count
Very Frequently	3%	1
Frequently	14%	5
Occasionally	30%	11
Rarely	16%	6
Very Rarely	19%	7
Never	19%	7
Total	100%	37

Q17 - People have made sexual comments to me based on my race.

Answer	%	Count
Very Frequently	5%	2
Frequently	22%	8
Occasionally	30%	11
Rarely	11%	4
Very Rarely	11%	4
Never	22%	8
Total	100%	37

Q18 - People have made comments that say how weak or inadequate I am based on my race.

Answer	%	Count
Very Frequently	0%	0
Frequently	11%	4
Occasionally	16%	6
Rarely	41%	15
Very Rarely	14%	5
Never	19%	7
Total	100%	37

Q19 - People have made fun of my name based on my race.

Answer	%	Count
Very Frequently	9%	3
Frequently	6%	2
Occasionally	31%	11
Rarely	20%	7
Very Rarely	11%	4
Never	23%	8
Total	100%	35

Q20 - Is there any other Anti-AAPI bias which was not covered in this survey which you would like to discuss? If so, please use the space below to write in your comments.

Is there any other Anti-AAPI bias which was not covered in this survey which you would like to discuss? If so, please use the space below to write in your comments.
Assuming you're apolitical, assuming you uphold model minority standards of respectability
Assumptions of age, many comments about my parents or family, being called a model minority, being judged for not fitting in to the model minority, people assuming I know other languages, the best Asian restaurants, assuming I'm shy or quiet.
Being told to go back to my country, being labeled as Muslim because I'm brown.
FYI I would be classified under Desi probably, but I am also read as Black. I am Sri Lankan American.
I experience dehumanization from my perceived super-human stamina at work, which I feel is associated with being Asian, Yellow Peril
Loss of voice, acknowledgement, social aggression, oppression - particularly in the workplace
N/A
No
People assume that I do not know what it is like to be marginalized because I am not LatinX or Black. As an immigrant and women in sciences I find that demeaning and silencing.
We are often overlooked or not included because we are quiet or sometimes too agreeable.
no
none
we are perceived as privileged equal to whites
white fragility; API women in leadership

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