

“I'm Done Dating White People”: Experiences of Intimate Partner Racism by AAPI in Interracial Relationships

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Race makes a difference in every sphere of our lives and, unsurprisingly, it affects our intimate relationships as well. The term “intimate partner racism,” coined by Yampolsky et al. (2022) refers to the racism that can occur within romantic relationships and dating. This study aimed to understand how Asians, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) experience and discuss racism from their intimate partners, and how gender dynamics can affect these interactions. This research hypothesizes that men and women experience similar amounts of intimate partner racism, but live and report the experiences differently as a result of differential gender stereotypes and norms. Eight Asian-American women and five Asian-American men were prompted to discuss their experiences dating opposite-sex partners outside of the AAPI diaspora. They were asked to reflect on their experiences of stereotyping, racism, and exotification within their dating lives as well as their mixed-race relationships. Data illuminated patterns in the types of racism that AAPI experience and differential ways in which men and women discuss them.

Keywords: Asian American, Pacific Islander, Race, Interracial Relationships, Racism

1. Introduction

Race makes a difference in every sphere of our lives, and we shouldn't be surprised to hear that it affects our relationships as well. The term "intimate partner racism," coined by Yampolsky et al. (2022), refers to the racism that can occur within romantic relationships and dating. The term, stemming from "intimate partner violence," encompasses the experiences of stereotyping, prejudice, and discriminatory behavior experienced by a racial minority in a mixed-culture relationship. This idea may appear counterintuitive: how can we imagine that the people we trust most, who are closest to us, may also discriminate against us? The answer lies in the subconscious nature of implicit racism and prejudice, and previous research has shown that racism can come from any source, even our closest family members and friends (Nadal et al., 2013)

When applied to relationships, intimate partner racism (IPR) manifests itself beginning with dating and sexual preferences, and can be difficult to distinguish from someone "having a type" (Zheng, 2013). In the example of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) women, stereotypes that depict them as exceptionally beautiful, petite, submissive, and successful in marriage exhibit how racism can find its place in the romantic sphere. These stereotypes, while sometimes considered positive, cause strain on the AAPI woman and her relationships. They put her at risk of encountering "Yellow Fever," wherein white men actively seek out Asian and Asian American partners due to the belief that they are more desirable than women within their own cultures. The reasons for this supposed "desirability" are often based in racist stereotypes (e.g. Asian women are more subservient and thus make better homemakers) and lead to expectations for the Asian partner that are unfair or unreasonable. These expectations, and the inevitable failure to meet them, often put a great deal of stress on the relationship and the Asian person within it, even if the expectations are not voiced directly. In more extreme cases, this can put AAPI women at increased risk of sexual, domestic, and gendered violence, but even the more "benign" cases can damage the victim's conceptions of herself and the world.

Displays of "Yellow Fever" and Asian hypersexualization directed toward women are studied frequently in the social sciences, but Asian men are often left out of the conversation. Asian American men are frequently understudied in research regarding intimate partner racism but they don't fare much better. Stereotypes regarding Asian men profile them as weak, feminine, and passive, in line with their female counterparts. The interaction with gender roles in White culture, however, desexualizes the Asian man rather than hypersexualizes him. The recent rise in Asian media such as a rise in K-pop and representation like Marvel's Shang-Chi, however, provide interesting implications of an emerging "resexualization" of the Asian-American man as androgynous and gentlemanly (Dalebroux, 2021; Lee et al., 2020). This may lend itself to a pattern of women seeking out an Asian American male partner, similar to what Asian American women have experienced in previous years.

This study aims to fill these gaps and will explore the types of intimate partner racism experienced by both AAPI men and women, as well as how they discuss these experiences. Eight Asian-American women and five Asian-American men were

prompted to discuss their experiences dating opposite-sex partners outside of the AAPI diaspora. They were asked to reflect on their experiences of stereotyping, racism, and cultural clashes within their dating lives as well as their mixed-race relationships, as well as how these experiences impacted the way they felt about their identities. Participant responses were then coded for themes and compared across genders to compile similarities and differences.

2. Background

2.1 Race and Racism Against Asian Americans

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and the subsequent backlash against people of Asian descent, many social activists and scientists have pointed out the public ways in which we discriminate against Asian Americans (Lee and Waters, 2020). As a nation, we often scapegoat these populations for our declining economy, argue falsely that they “steal” jobs from their white counterparts, and claim that their practices and cultures are corruptive factors in our society (Kawai, 2005). We assume that Asian-owned businesses are below-board and low quality, that Asian women are sex workers, and that all Asian people are penny-pinching and money-hungry (Huang et al., 2023; Zhu, 2010). These stereotypes are not harmless and come with real-world consequences for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI). Since 2020, the number of hate crimes towards the AAPI community has more than doubled, and shootings in Nail Salons, Chinatowns, and Lunar New Year parades are becoming a newspaper mainstay (Yam, 2021). Slurs are hurled at our youngest community members, and our elderly are met with fists and bullets. (Lenthang, 2022; Yam, 2021; Graham, 2021) These glaringly Anti-Asian attitudes and attacks are a clear example of racism, and it’s on the rise.

Racism can be obvious and explicit, but when we are discussing racism in the intimate spheres, implicit racism becomes much more relevant. Implicit racism, as opposed to explicit racism, consists of expressions of prejudice, discrimination, and negative attitudes that can sometimes be considered ambiguous. Implicit racism includes actions such as microaggressions, implicit bias, and ethnocentric worldviews that consider other cultures as “backwards.” (Sue et al., 2007) There are even “positive” stereotypes that fit under the label of implicit racism (such as the assumption that AAPI are shy, docile, and kind) that prove harmful. When applying the ideas of implicit racism to Asian Americans, we consistently come across two dominant ideas: the Model Minority and the Perpetual Foreigner (Park et al., 2021; Wing, 2007; Daley et al., 2022).

The “Model Minority Myth” argues that Asians are the minority that has “made it” in America by way of their exceptional intelligence, diligence, and emphasis on education. It serves as a way for those in power to argue that racism is not systemic, and that it can be overcome with hard work and determination (Walton and Truong, 2022). This rhetoric claims that Asian success is a clear example of how little racism matters, that intelligence, hard work, and education are the true markers of upward mobility in our society. These arguments pit AAPI against other minority groups, and generalizes our heterogeneous community to be the sum of our education and success

(Wing, 2007; Walton and Truong, 2022). It's also glaringly untrue, biased heavily by self-selection bias and overgeneralized data (Kochhar and Cilluffo, 2018; Jin, 2021; Walton and Truong, 2022).

In tandem with the Model Minority Myth is the view of AAPI as “Perpetual Foreigners.” This view emphasizes AAPI as un-American, and this distinct idea of AAPI as Other remains unaffected by nationality, nativity, and length of residency within the United States (Devos and Ma, 2008), suggesting that the central condition for the “Perpetual Foreigner” stereotype lies in racial and ethnic background. AAPI are thus commonly perceived as people who “remain strongly connected to their cultures of origin and are therefore unassimilable” (Wong et al., 2012) The representations of this stereotype can be recognized in media, wherein AAPI characters are depicted with thick accents, strange and outlandish customs, and social ineptitude. As a whole, this bias emphasizes that Asian Americans will always be more “Asian” than “American” and thus will never be accepted into mainstream American culture. This can have harmful implications for the young AAPI person, who may never feel accepted socially and may struggle with their sense of identity, building community, and garnering platonic and romantic relationships.

It is also important to note that not every AAPI stereotype is salient to all Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders equally. There is considerable diversity within this community, and there are differences in the ways that AAPI are perceived, stereotyped, and discriminated against. For example, some research suggests that South Asian individuals experience greater prejudice in everyday life than East Asians, potentially due to darker skin tones and resemblance to some Middle Eastern identities. (Kaduvetoor-Davidson and Inman 2013; Ramakrishnan et al. 2017)

2.2 Intersections with Gender

Although the racist frameworks mentioned above apply to AAPI in general, it is important to note that interactions between race and gender result in very different manifestations of these stereotypes for men and women (Jackson et al., 1997). This concept stems from Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality, which argues that understandings of identity are non additive (1991) (Stewart and McDermott, 2004). In other words, the experience of an “Asian American Woman”, for example, cannot be explained by the sum of the experiences of being Asian, American, and a woman separately. When discussing the impacts of race and gender structures on how White America views Asian Americans, we can begin with the stereotypes applied to both genders. The Asian “personality” so often portrayed is one of docility, humility, and submission. Galinsky et al. (2013) argue that these stereotypes go hand in hand with gender, and that in the case of both AAPI men and women, individuals are stereotyped as feminine. Thus, when race and gender intersect, AAPI women are doubly feminized and sexualized, and AAPI men are stripped of their masculinity (Zheng, 2016). It is also important to recognize that South Asian men and women are differentially perceived, typically as more masculine (Goh and Vlada Trofimchuk 2022). This is especially salient to South Asian men whom have facial hair, due to perceptions of Islam and proximity to the Middle Eastern identity (Goh and Vlada Trofimchuk 2022; Ramakrishnan et al. 2017).

To elaborate on this concept of hyperfemininity imposed upon AAPI women, we can begin to discuss two common representations of them: “Dragon Lady,” and “Madame Butterfly” (Uchida, 1998; Zheng, 2016). The Dragon Lady is a seductress. In this image, the Asian American woman is depicted as mysterious, hypersexual, and alluring. The Dragon Lady is a temptress, whereas Madame Butterfly is innocent and self-sacrificing (Littlewood, 1996, pp. 109–124). Madame Butterfly, as described by Littlewood (1996), is characterized by her vulnerability. She is often depicted as small, even child-like, beautiful, subservient, and denied her true humanity. Here, the interactions with ethnic identity may render South and Southeast Asian women more susceptible to the Dragon-Lady stereotype, whereas East Asian women may be further stereotyped as Madame Butterfly. Regardless of ethnic identity, however, the combined effect of these stereotypes results in the Asian woman perceived as a sex-object (Kim, 2010). As a participant in Kim’s 2010 study aptly put it, many men see Asian women as “a princess in public and a whore in the bedroom. Simple as that...” These beliefs about the nature of Asian women can result in their increased desirability to men who seek to exploit them. Particularly relevant is the self identification of “Yellow fever” wherein men actively seek out AAPI partners due to the biases held as a result of these perceptions. In more extreme cases, the Madame Butterfly and Dragon Lady stereotypes can put AAPI women at increased risk of sexual, domestic, and gendered violence, but even the more “benign” cases can damage the victim’s conceptions of herself, her relationships, and the world (Zheng, 2016).

When discussing men, desexualization, as opposed to hypersexualization, becomes the primary issue. Much previous research has been devoted to the experiences of AAPI women, who deal with a much more perilous dating environment as opposed to AAPI men. However, experiences of engendered racism still affect this population and can impact identity development and well-being (Wong et al., 2012). AAPI men are consistently perceived as less masculine, less physically attractive, more socially inept, less able to provide/ protect, and as wholly undesirable as romantic partners (Wong et al., 2011; Chou et al., 2015; Yampolsky et al., 2022). Some participants of Chou et al.’s study (2015) suggested that they were uninterested in Asian men as a result of culturally informed conservative expectations for women, and traditionally masculine views. These perceptions can be related to the perpetual foreigner stereotype of AAPI men as culturally Asian rather than American, as well as presumptions about Asian ideas of femininity and gender relations. The demasculinization of Asian men can be linked to ideas of Hegemonic Masculinity, which argues that masculinity serves as a power structure within male spaces with White, heterosexual men in the dominant position (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Lu and Wong, 2013). This framework suggests that power structures regarding masculinity affect the way AAPI men perceive themselves and their value, their interactions with other men, and the ways in which they treat their intimate partners (Lu and Wong, 2013). These views of AAPI men may also impact the ways in which other-culture partners perceive their desirability.

2.3 Intimate Partner Racism

At the intersections of race, sex, and gender power dynamics lies the intercultural couple. This paper proposes that the power structures at play in the sections above can

have implications for how men and women interact as intimate partners, and thus creates conditions for sexualized and engendered racism within the relationship. Previous work has established that regardless of closeness within a social relationship, interactions between racial and ethnic groups can function to maintain racialized power dynamics in American society (Schuman and Jackman, 1995). This idea has been supported in friendships (Jackman and Crane, 1986), children-parent dyads, (Nadal et al., 2013), and intimate relationships and dating (Yampolsky et al., 2022; Lemay and Teneva, 2020; Chou et al., 2015).

Previous research by Yampolsky et al. (2022) found that within romantic relationships, implicit racism was much more commonly reported than explicit racism, and that participants used a variety of strategies to cope with the experiences, including standing up to their partner, making excuses for their partner, and disengaging from their partner. They also found that emotional responses to intimate partner racism varied, with some participants reporting that the experiences made them feel closer to their partner and with other participants sharing that the experiences eventually led to them ending the relationship.

Stereotypes about AAPI populations, including the Model Minority Myth and Perpetual Foreigner Stereotype can harm AAPI individuals' perceptions of themselves, their relationships, and the world around them. These stereotypes can also impact people's perceptions of AAPI, and thus result in prejudiced beliefs that can negatively impact the well being of AAPI individuals in the romantic sphere. Conceptions of AAPI women's hyperfemininity can result in dangerous and fraught dating lives, whereas AAPI men contend with feeling "less than" their counterparts. These experiences of racism, discrimination, and racialized violence within the romantic sphere can be especially damaging, as the racist acts occur within interactions that are built on vulnerability.

3. Methods

The current study utilizes the framework posed by Yampolsky et. al to explore intimate partner racism within the smaller population of AAPI. By employing a combination of both thematic and narrative analysis, this study aimed to further understand how AAPI experience and discuss racism from their intimate partners, and how gender dynamics can affect these interactions. Even with the scoping literature on racism experienced by Asian Americans, many in the community adopt a color-blind approach to understanding the conflict they experience (Chou et al., 2015). As such, literature suggests that when asked to discuss experiences of intimate partner racism, participants may avoid assigning blame to their partners or struggle to label their experiences as race-related. This may be particularly salient to Asian American men (Wong et al., 2012; Lu and Wong, 2013) due to interactions with masculine norms and power structures.

This study employed a semi-structured interview research design and recruited five AAPI men, and eight AAPI women who have been, or currently are, in relationships with partners who do not identify as AAPI. Participants were prompted to discuss their perceptions of stereotypes held about them and their communities and how those experiences of racism and stereotypes impact their dating lives and relationships.

Responses were then coded and thematic and narrative analyses were employed in order to further understand how men and women differed in their discussions and perceptions of these experiences.

It is important to note that this study only recruited cisgender men and women, and data analyzed pertained exclusively to dyadic heterosexual relationships (i.e. relationships between one cisgender man and one cisgender woman.) A “dating experience” was defined as any romantic correspondence occurring within a period of less than 3 months, and a “relationship experience” as any romantic correspondence occurring for a period of time longer than 3 months. These definitions are inclusive of purely sexual relationships, as well as “situationships” and other gray-area romantic experiences. Participants were recruited via purposive and snowball sampling, utilizing various social media channels and through connections with university AAPI organizations such as clubs, affinity groups, and greek life. As such, our participant pool skews younger, more liberal, and more educated. After connection, they were interviewed per the protocol found in Appendix A and responses were audio recorded to aid with transcription before audio records were destroyed.

As for operationalizing the concepts within intimate partner racism, this research utilizes a modified version of the framework presented by Yampolsky et al. (2022) This framework categorizes the experiences of participants into explicit racism and implicit racism.

3.1 Operationalizing Explicit Racism within IPR

The framework employed for this study defines explicit racism as overtly hostile and/or unfair treatment of the AAPI partner as a result of racial power dynamics within the relationship. This would include Yampolsky’s categories of insults and system justification. Insults, which are defined as verbal attacks stemming from racist conceptions, can be exemplified by the use of slurs and dismissal of one’s religious beliefs. System justification, or defending “the system” of race and racism, is exemplified by comments that argue white supremacy, or that attempt to explain racist stereotypes as correct in some way (e.g. “black on black crime proves that black people are violent.”) In addition to Yampolsky’s framework, the participants in this study frequently discussed what this study terms as partner complacency, wherein a partner fails to call out the racist actions of others or to support the AAPI person when they felt victimized as a result of racism. For example, a partner may fail to stand up to a close friend or family member who behaves insensitively towards their racial minority partner.

3.2 Operationalizing Implicit Racism Within IPR

Implicit racism is defined as indirect expressions of racist or prejudiced conceptions, and can manifest as microinsults, microinvalidations, and other uncategorized microaggressions. Experiences of racism will be inquired about by asking the participants to share a time when their current or past partner behaved in a culturally insensitive manner, as well as a question regarding their encounters with stereotypes within their dating lives.

Microinsults are similar to insults, but function as a result of prejudice rather than outright racism, and are broken down into the smaller categories of (1) inferiority/racial hierarchy, (2) stereotyping relational practices, (3) targeting cultural practice, (4) targeting body/racial fetishization, and (5) targeting identity. For example, in a previous study, a perpetrator told his girlfriend that “those people speak broken English and act in a ghetto kind of way...” and that she was the exception. (Yampolsky et al. 2022) While this may be meant as a compliment, it implies that the minority girlfriend’s culture is inferior as opposed to the dominant culture, thus coding it as inferiority/racial hierarchy. Other microinsults target the minority’s relational practice, such as the common stereotype that AAPI women make exceptional wives because they “serve their husbands.”(Kim, 2010) Some comments target cultural practices, such as comments that eating with one’s hands is dirty or inappropriate. Comments based in stereotypes that depict AAPI women as thin, petite, and sexually desirable and AAPI men as short and scrawny can be seen as targeting body/racial fetishization, wherein a microinsult centers around the victim’s appearance, racialized features, or sexual desirability. This is particularly relevant when discussing matters of attraction and sex in relationships. Microinsults that target identity include comments that the AAPI partner is “white-washed” or “fresh off the boat,” emphasizing a partner’s lack of connection with their native culture or the dominant one.

Microinvalidations are defined in this study as behaviors that ignore the AAPI partner’s identity and issues with racism. This category encompasses comments and behaviors that argue that the AAPI partner is “essentially white” or that AAPI don’t experience racism as a result of their status as the Model Minority. Other uncategorized microaggressions included utilizing positive stereotypes may initially appear positive, such as the Model Minority Myth and ideas of AAPI women as especially attractive. These conceptions, however, reduce the minority individual to stereotype and rob them of their individuality and humanity. Dehumanization, constitutes the treating of the AAPI partner as an object, one-dimensional, or less than human.

3.3 Positionality Statement

Before discussing findings, and in the spirit of reflexivity, it is important to acknowledge researcher positionality. This study was conducted by a single researcher who identifies as South-Asian American and is in an AAPI-AAPI relationship. The researcher also identified himself to participants as AAPI in hope to make them feel more comfortable in sharing their experiences of racism, and many participants were either acquainted with the researcher directly or were acquainted with others who had been interviewed. While there are numerous benefits to being an insider when discussing such sensitive topics, it is important to note that participants may have shared their experiences differently than if they were speaking to a stranger. It is also possible that the researcher’s ethnic and relationship background influenced the way he interpreted data. Efforts were made to ensure that data was approached in an unbiased manner, but research involving humans can never be truly objective. While this work is in an understudied area and is one of very few, it should not be considered infallible and represents only a few experiences of a population that is vast, diverse, and constantly evolving.

4. Results and Discussion

This research was conducted on a total of 13 participants (further data collection pending,) with eight participants being female and five being male. Participants of the study came from diverse ethnic backgrounds within the AAPI diaspora, including individuals who identified as Filipino (n=4), South Asian (n=4), Chinese (n=2), Native Hawaiian (n=1), Korean (n=1), and Malay (n=1). Many participants (n=6) identified as mixed race as well. All 13 people within the study identified experiences of intimate partner racism by their long term partners or their partner's families per the definitions employed in this study, but many discussed these experiences from a color-blind lens, or downplayed their impact. Participants' experiences are coded and grouped into experiences of racism that were explicit and experiences that were implicit. Narrative analysis is then employed in all of these areas to understand how AAPI discuss racism within their relationships, and to explore any potential differences by ethnicity and gender.

4.1 Experiences of Explicit Intimate Partner Racism

The framework employed for this study defines explicit racism as overtly hostile and/or unfair treatment of the AAPI partner as a result of racial power dynamics within the relationship. In line with previous research, experiences coded as explicit racism were grouped into subcategories labeled as insults and system justifications.

4.1.1 Insults

Insults, or verbal attacks stemming from racist conceptions, were the least common experiences reported, with several of participants reporting this experience. One participant, Daniel (M1, Filipino/American)¹, discussed the stereotypes of Filipina women being “crazy,” and when prompted to share the experience said the following:

Yeah, I'll have fights with my sister and things like that where we'll get into it and we'll be just fighting and then when I try to talk about it with my partner, her response is “oh, well your sister's Asian, she's Filipino. You just kind of have to move on from that.” It's like, what do you mean? Do I? It's my sister. I can't move on from it because she's Filipino. It doesn't make it any less different. It's not about Filipino women being crazy, It's about me and my sister having an argument... I would say we don't have contact with my grandmother on my dad's side, and similar comments that have come up, she's a Filipino woman. It's like, oh, of course she's out of your family. She's crazy.

¹ These designations describe participants' pseudonyms and are not reflective of their actual identities. All designations are described as (Pseudonym, Participant ID, Ethnic background). Ethnicities are labeled by participants' identification in the research, and “American” denotes a mixed white American background alongside Asian ones.

Another participant shared that she had been the target of many stereotypical and racist jokes by her ex-boyfriend.

So with my ex, he [asked] if I ate dog, it was kind of those types of comments because it's a very stereotypical comment to ask someone that is Asian. And so that made me feel very pissed off thinking that "what was on your mind saying that question to me, or at least towards me, considering I am Asian?" It was joking, but he also kind of wanted to know the answer. (Rose, F5, Vietnamese)

A third participant (Seniya, F2, Malay/Chinese/American) discussed her experiences with her white father, and the racist insults he had directed towards her and her Asian mother. While not directly relevant to her own dating experiences, her discussion illustrates the ugly nature of explicit racism within a relationship that has progressed into a family which includes children.

That was the basis of their relationship, was my mom saw him, a white man, as a safe haven to get her out of her country that was in shambles. That's how we moved to the states. That's how she had me and my older sister, to save the marriage or to hold onto him longer. So just my existence alone, I already knew that... My dad has said some racist things to me before or about me before, one in particular being 'you are dark enough to be used but not lynched.'

When discussions of insults came up, many participants seemed to downplay their racist nature. Many participants, when first asked to share experiences of IPR, stated that they had never experienced it, or that they weren't sure if their experiences would "count" per this study's definitions. Participants often looked to the researcher for validation that their experiences were race-related, and downplayed their seriousness by citing that their partners had been joking or unaware of the racist undertones of their comments. The term "racist" was also seldom used by participants, who often opted instead to use terms like "awkward" or "uncomfortable" and centered the *situation* as the subject of discussion rather than the *partner*.

It was joking, but he also kind of wanted to know the answer. (Rose, F5, Vietnamese)

But yeah, stuff like that, it's just kind of weird comments that don't really mean anything that are just meant to be, I don't know, observatory in some way that are kind of weird... (Daniel, M1, Filipino/American)

For whatever reason, they would use the fact that I was brown in their dirty talking, which was uncomfortable. (Priya, F2, Indian)

[In regard to partner complacency] I always tried my best to separate that from myself. They have their own history. Two circles are okay with not being together and not mixing, but it still felt a little... you know (Vivian, F3, Chinese)

Some participants even discussed how racism and racist behavior was not the fault of the partner, but rather the result of living in a racist world. While these conceptions aren't necessarily incorrect, it points to an interesting pattern of avoiding blame and discussing these adverse experiences as inevitable and needing to be coped with rather than as negative and needing to be fought against.

Obviously you don't want to put your partner in that situation [of being called out] because it's not necessarily their fault, (Daniel, M1, Filipino/American)

Just realizing that, going back to that idea of if you grow up in a bubble and you haven't had anyone to break that bubble, then you're not going to be able to research outside of that bubble. You're just not going to be able to. And so especially living here now, I encounter that a lot of small town brains and small town thinking. And it's just like, yeah, if you've never seen a brown person before, then how are you supposed to know what's appropriate to say and what's not appropriate to say? you don't know. And so I think being as exhausting as it is, learning to be gracious and understanding that context also, and being willing to educate as far as you have the mental space to do so is going to be really important moving forward. (Priya, F2, Indian)

The ways in which IPR is discussed by AAPI points to common uses of color-blind conceptions within the AAPI community due to internalized ideas of Asian success, social mobility, and invulnerability to racism, also known as the Model Minority Myth (Chou et al., 2015).

While a few participants did share that they had been victimized by direct insults, many others reported that they had never experienced racism that was overt in their relationships. The absence of numerous reported experiences of explicit insults exhibits a potential for a filter effect that suggests that relationships that include explicit insults often ended before the three month period which characterized a relationship for this study. It is possible that when it is clear to the AAPI person that a partner or potential partner is racist, the choice to break up may be simpler. It is possible that AAPI may be well-versed in identifying these types of racism, and thus typically avoid potential partners who exhibit these behaviors earlier on in the dating process as well. One participant articulated that what he called his "vetting process" helped him avoid

experiencing racism in his partnerships, but wasn't able to filter out experiencing racism from his in-laws.

Yeah. The partners themselves were actually very open and very accepting, and they were fine. They actually treated me as equals, I'm very picky when it comes to who I date, and I really make sure that they're good. But their families, on the other hand, they have a lot of prejudices out of the people I've dated. (Ali, M3, Bengali)

Further, the age and demographics of the participant's partners (which skews young, liberal, and educated) suggests that this finding may be due to explicit racism simply being less socially acceptable for young people due to the positive effects of social advocacy, movements, and programs. This theory is further supported by the fact that many participants, while not often reporting insults from their partners, shared that they had been victimized by comments made by their partner's family members (parents, uncles, aunts, and grandparents).

Experiences of discrimination from the partner's family may also be easier to identify and report due to the distance a partner's family has from the self. The AAPI person may have difficulty rationalizing why they stayed with a partner who was explicitly insulting them on the basis of race, and thus may downplay or delegitimize their experiences. This possibility, however, may be less salient to experiences perpetrated by partner's families, whom the AAPI person cannot choose or vet, thus making it easier for them to share and discuss without feeling ashamed. It is also possible that due to AAPI culture's general emphasis on family and collectivism, experiences of racism from family members may have been more tolerated due to social expectations that one should respect their elders and seek their approval. Further research would need to be done in this area in order to make any legitimate conclusions, but patterns prove interesting.

And so I guess going in those relationships, I wasn't trying to meet every expectation that the family put on me, but also I think sometimes we're only human, and so you get sucked into, I guess there were times where I did want to prove that I was masculine enough or I was good enough to take care of their daughter...it was kind of like if the family doesn't approve, then they can't approve because I guess for them family's everything. And so getting their approval was one of the biggest things. (Dhruv, M2, Indian/Middle Eastern)

4.1.2. System Justification

Experiences of racism perpetrated by the partner's family also creates a situation which may fit into the next subcategory of explicit racism: system justification. System

justification, or defending “the system” of race and racism, is exemplified by comments that argue white supremacy, or that attempt to explain racist stereotypes and actions as correct or justifiable in some way. For example, one participant shared that her ex-boyfriend often justified or downplayed racist remarks made by his family as a product of age, and another shared that his skin color was used as a justification for racial profiling.

At Easter dinner, his grandfather asked me, how do I like it here in the States? I was like, okay. Right, right. Cool, cool. So there were two instances at this one family function that I did speak to my partner about afterwards, and his excuse was just that they're old. They're old, they're senile, they don't know. And I was like, well, can you at least talk to your mom? Maybe your mom can talk to your aunt about it as them being sisters and whatnot. (Seniya, F2, Malay/Chinese/American)

Like, [she thought] it's okay that I'm being followed around in a store because I'm brown. From whenever I was with [partner], I was like, why is the security guard following us? And she was like, well... and she just wouldn't say it. She was like, well it's like kinda... you know...so the fact that she would justify the security guard instead of kind of saying like, oh, that's not very nice. It's racist. But she would rather justify the security guard. That was a pretty interesting one. (Antoni, M4, Filipino/American)

System justification also came up frequently in interviews via the behavior of *partner complacency*, wherein a partner failed to call out the racist actions of others or to support the AAPI person when they felt victimized as a result of racism. For example, one participant shared that her ex-boyfriend turned a blind eye to his friends making inappropriate comments about her race and culture.

My nine month partner had an online friend and I met that online friend. They made many racist jokes towards me. They started speaking either a mixture of the typical Japanese words that are used in anime. They talked about me possibly eating cats and dogs. It was like the basic elementary school stuff. But it still surprised me that people are still making these

jokes no matter how old you are. And my boyfriend didn't defend me in any kind of way. (Vivian, F3, Chinese)

Another example of partner complacency included a partner's failure to support his girlfriend during the aftermath of the Atlanta spa shootings.

There was a vigil [for the spa shooting victims] downtown. I had asked my partner at the time, hey, can we go to this? I really feel like I need support right now. And he hit me with a, oh, I'm really tired from work. And I was just like, do you not understand how huge of an event this is and how much it affects me as a person, as your partner?...You don't think that this would help support me in this time? Because he said, I mean, you can go by yourself. No, I don't want to go by myself because that could have been dangerous for me... but he saw things like that as kind of arbitrary or like, oh, it's not actually that bad. You're overreacting about these situations. (Seniya, F2, Malay/Chinese/American)

Experiences of partner complacency and system justification tended to make AAPI feel invalidated in their experiences, and they often internalized the ideas that the racism they experienced was “not that bad,” that they were overreacting, or that their experiences did not matter. There also appears to be a pattern of these experiences resulting in a rejection of one's cultural identity, which is exhibited by the examples below.

That most definitely hurt. I talked to him about it. Nothing really happened out of that conversation, but definitely didn't help the relationship. I just kind of kept it to myself after that. Yeah. (Vivian, F3, Chinese)

And I was falling into a thing where I was like, I'm kind of being proud of [being Filipino]. I want to learn more. I think I'm going to buy a Tagalog textbook to just try it, see if I can figure some of this stuff out. But

every time something like that happened, it would set me back a little bit because it would be like, am I focusing on this too much? It came to the point where it made me question if it really mattered or not what I was, or to have pride in who I was or anything, because at the end of the day, I'm still alive and I'm living, I can, I'll just be [myself], and it's easy to call myself an American in this area just because everyone would agree with me, and they would pat me on the head for not trying to say I'm anything else but American. (Antoni, M4, Filipino/American)

I always had to fight. I always had to fight, and it made me feel crazy. It made me feel like I was always overreacting about, I think that they were looking at me, not in a good way, not in an okay way, and my partners would just always just shut it down. (Seniya, F2, Malay/Chinese/American)

Yeah, I mean whenever you have something like that, you're like, oh, I wish this was simpler. It might be easier to be white. I wouldn't have to go through these awkward conversations. But yeah, just kind of that kind of feeling. (Daniel, M1, Filipino/American)

These experiences are discussed differently across gender as well. Both men and women discussed experiences of system justification, but only women brought up partner complacency directly. Men alluded to the idea of partner complacency, but often used a narrative that did not disclose a desire for their partner to stand up for them. To illustrate this, let's revisit Antoni's description of his experience being racially profiled while shopping with his girlfriend.

Like, [she thought] it's okay that I'm being followed around in a store because I'm brown. From whenever I was with [partner], I was like, why is the security guard following us? And she was like, well... and she just wouldn't say it. She was like, well it's like kinda... you know...so the fact that she would justify the security guard instead of kind of saying like, oh, that's not very nice. It's racist. But she would rather justify the security guard. That was a pretty interesting one.

While he discusses the experience of being racially profiled in a store, as well as his girlfriend's insensitive response and a potential correction (i.e. saying "that's not very nice" or "it's racist") he does not mention the potential correction of his partner confronting the security guard. This pattern is opposed to experiences posited by women, many of whom discuss wanting their partners to protect them and advocate for them during these experiences (i.e. speaking to an insensitive family member, interrupting when a friend was making inappropriate jokes, etc)

This may be linked to our society's emphasis on gender roles wherein the masculine person is expected to be a protector and safe-haven for his female partner. When this gender role interacts with race and racism, the female AAPI partner may expect her dominant culture partner to stand up for her due to his position of power and her need for support. "So I wanted you, as my white man partner, to maybe go with me to protect me and regardless." (Seniya, F2, Malay/Chinese/American) However, when the male partner is from the minority culture, he may feel ashamed to ask his female partner for help and support when faced with racism. Due to his positionality as the "protector" of the relationship, he may struggle to notice that his partner's positionality in the dominant culture may also serve as a protective factor when confronting racism. Thus, when men feel victimized by racism, they may be less likely to discuss this with their partners and/or ask for support, and may be more at risk for internalizing or invalidating the experience.

4.2 Experiences of Implicit Intimate Partner Racism

In contrast to the prevalence of explicit racism, experiences of implicit racism came up quite frequently. Implicit racism, as opposed to explicit racism, consists of expressions of prejudice, discrimination, and negative attitudes that can sometimes be considered ambiguous. Implicit racism can manifest as indirect expressions of racist or prejudiced

conceptions, and participant's experiences were coded into the categories of microinsults and microinvalidations.

4.2.1 Microinsults

Microinsults are similar to insults, but function as a result of prejudice rather than outright racism. For the purpose of this study, the larger category of microinsults is broken down into the smaller categories of (1) *inferiority/racial hierarchy*, (2) *stereotyping relational practices*, (3) *targeting religious or cultural practice*, (4) *targeting body/racial fetishization*. The concept of inferiority/racial hierarchy was best exhibited by a muslim participant's discussions regarding being pushed to drink by his ex-girlfriends family.

There were times where they kind of pushed me to drink to just have a good time and things like that, which I was understanding of why they would want that within their culture. But them having prior context to my culture, it made me feel like mine was being belittled, and so that my values weren't as important as theirs... (Dhruv, M2, Indian/Middle Eastern)

In this example, the participant discusses how he felt that his values and cultural norms weren't being taken seriously by his in-laws, and he felt that they regarded their cultural norms as superior and more correct, while his were perceived as overly conservative or backwards. Other participants shared that they felt othered, less than, and made to feel as if their culture was a flaw that had to be removed

From day one, this partner and their family, just, again, I was the first brown woman he's ever been with, ever taken home, and I thought that they would be okay with it, but they very much just shut down any part of Asianness that I brought to the table, they only liked my white side, essentially, or the side that they are agreeable to. But anytime it came, anytime I made food for them that was Asian, it was always like, oh, these are strong flavors. These are strong scents. I don't know about it, yada, yada. But I make 'em hamburgers and hot dogs, and it's fine. Or just when any anecdote that I would talk about some things that my mom and I did growing up, they would always be puzzled by it with a disgusted look on their face. Like, oh, we don't do that here. That's interesting. Why do you do that? And it was just exhausting...not being heard about my asianness. They kept trying to take that away from me. (Seniya, F2, Malay/Chinese/American)

Other comments made negative assumptions about relationship practices, such as the belief that a male AAPI partner would be traditional or misogynistic, or that a female AAPI partner would "serve her husband." This was termed *stereotyping relational practices*.

And right off the bat, they're just like, oh, he's Muslim. We don't like him. I'm the furthest thing away from Muslim, first and foremost. And no matter how nice I was to them, no matter how well I treated their daughter, no matter what I did, that prejudice stuck and nothing... [they assumed I'd be] violent, ill tempered, unintelligent. (Ali, M3, Bengali)

Going back to the term machista or misogynistic or being very traditional, they see that me personally, I don't align with those values. So I guess in those relationships, my partners had this preconceived notion of how South Asian men are, but then later it kind of just changes to them understanding that they were only viewing it from one lens or perspective. And so seeing that, oh, well, this is a South Asian guy who doesn't promote those misogynistic ideals or believes that the daughter is the liability and the son is the asset, or yeah. (Dhruv, M2, Indian/Middle Eastern)

We are known to be submissive and soft and quiet and subordinate and never stand up for ourselves. We don't have feelings or we just need to just be quiet and do as we say kind of thing. (Seniya, F2, Malay/Chinese/American)

Many of these comments regarding relational stereotypes can be connected to ideas of AAPI men and women as “perpetual foreigners.” There seems to be an assumption that AAPI people will hold on to their native culture’s traditions rather than assimilate into American culture. As such, many participants shared that they felt they were constantly having to combat stereotypes about themselves and their cultures so as to be desirable in the dating sphere. In the literature, this emotional response is often referred to as stereotype threat, or the experience of worry that one’s behavior will affirm stereotypes (Stoevenbelt et al.).

You're an ambassador to your culture, your religion, et cetera. And so it's very important with how you carry yourself to make sure that because it's so easy, it's so hard to build a reputation, and it's so easy to destroy it. And so it's like I'm very careful because there's lots of kids around and you want to make sure you're a good role model and influence on people. And so I definitely think that making sure that I'm fighting those stereotypes because I don't want people to perceive my people this way or have this negative connotation. And it's very difficult because I feel like at least being in America, I feel like at least with immigrants, we're always pursuing trying to feel validated or accepted by white culture to see that we're not subhuman or we are good enough, we're just as good. (Dhruv, M2, Indian/Middle-Eastern)

Comments that target religious or cultural practice serve to demean a culture’s customs and beliefs. One participant shared that when she expressed wanting to go to Garba, a South Asian cultural event involving music and dancing around a fire to celebrate womanhood, her ex-boyfriend made an insensitive comment.

And he said something about this, this was just wrong on many different cultures levels, but he was something about how Indians, native Americans dancing in a circle around fire and comparing that to Indians dancing the, because Garba goes around the idols usually. And bringing back that whole dots or feathers thing. I don't remember exactly what he said, but the context of it was Indians and Indians, we're the same essentially. (Priya, F2, Indian)

Comments based in stereotypes that depict AAPI women as thin, petite, and sexually desirable and AAPI men as short and scrawny can be seen as *targeting body/racial fetishization*, wherein a microinsult centers around the victim's appearance, racialized features, or sexual desirability. One participant shared that her "feminine" appearance was both praised and undercut by her partner in a conversation about her choice not to shave.

And he was like, I really like how feminine you are, and I just also wanting to talk to you about your armpit hair. I love how girly you are and how you wear skirts and dresses. And I also want to tell you, I am not really that big of a fan of your armpit hair...Oh, absolutely. [we're seen as] skinny, petite, short, small, light makeup, just very like the embodiment of ...not woman. No, no. We're seen as very girly. We're seen as very young as very, we're always put into this box of [mock gagging sound] ew...they just want us hairless, and it's like a prepubescent body. (Seniya, F2, Malay/Chinese/American)

It is especially important to note for this example that South and Southeast Asian women are often considered particularly hairy by white American standards, and so that this comment was made about a racialized feature. Other female participants shared experiences of their features being sexualized, fetishized, or commented upon in ways that made them uncomfortable or feel negatively about their racialized features.

So I have bigger lips...And then having high cheekbones and sharp, he called them sharp features, but a jaw and cheekbones whilst also having freckles. He was very into that. And I don't know, it was just the way he defined them as Asian...Yeah, he was very [???] about that. The whole Asian thing, I mean, he didn't make it a bad thing. He was like, oh, you're Asian. I'm so into that. (Ailiani, F4, Filipina/Hawaiian/American)

They like that I'm short. I think it's just the size kink of me being small and them being taller than me or just a little bit taller than me. I've been told many times in my middle school life when I was back in middle school that I looked like an anime character. And I don't know if that was something that they were into or not, but yeah. (Vivian, F3, Chinese)

When we would have sexual relations, I remember him specifically asking why I was darker down there or why I wasn't pink. And that, oh my God, that wrecked my self image of my vagina for years from 16 to 24. And I

only dated him for nine months... But for him to just explicitly say to me that, Hey, why is your vagina brown? Or why is it not pink? That ruined me a lot. (Seniya, F2, Malay/Chinese/American)

Many female participants shared that they felt that they were constantly being sexualized, with one participant even citing the ways that Asian women are depicted in porn. Their experiences illustrate the ways in which the AAPI stereotypes intersect with the gender roles to hyperfeminize and hypersexualize the AAPI woman.

While AAPI women often discussed the conflicting and negative experiences that came out of their increased desirability to non-AAPI partners, AAPI men often discussed that they felt less desirable as a result of being perceived as effeminate, gay, or weak.

Or another thing I wanted to add with the stereotypes for South Asian, that just made me think of also how maybe for other cultures that really want to see physical hard work, because South Asian men are so ingrained with studies and academics, it gives this preconceived notion that maybe they're not masculine enough because they're not showing those signs of physical hard work at younger ages because they're pursuing something in academics. And obviously in academics, it's not about how physically hard you work, but it's more of a mental thing. And so there's this stereotype of South Asian men being a lot weaker or smaller and I guess less masculine and things like that. (Dhruv, M2, Indian/Middle Eastern)

I wasn't [comfortable with my masculinity] then. Yeah, I wasn't then at all. I felt compared to other people, I felt weak. I didn't feel I was up to terms with what my friends and what [partner] would consider as a masculine person. I mean, now I'm pretty comfortable with where I fall on that spectrum, but back in the day, it was either you were masculine or you were feminine. You like sports and stuff, but you like to go for manicures and do your nails and talk about and do things that are considered feminine. It was like if you did any of that, you were feminine...I don't think being Asian fit into that [masculine] stereotype at all, just because, I mean, eastern Asian, I suppose, has the kind of that work to death type of thing. But whenever you see the eastern Asian, blue collar man or a lot of the blue collar Asian community in different cultures, they're not big. And they're not like 220 pounds, 6"4' guys with beards. They look more like me. They're kind of more skinny. (Antoni, M4, Filipino/American)

While AAPI men typically reported feeling undesirable, one male participant mentioned that popular media played an interesting role in sexualizing a particular type of Asian man.

Yeah. I feel like dating wise, a lot of people really like a Korean man nowadays. [prompted to elaborate by researcher: "please share"] There's a certain type of Korean man that's like, I don't get me wrong, it's a good looking dude, but they're like 6"2', 180 pounds type of Asian person. And I

just don't see Asian people as kind of super tall and super tall and stout like a European would be. But now there's the image of K-pop bands and stuff who have these very interesting, very tall built figures. (Antoni, M4, Filipino/American)

This discussion, while only coming up once, is particularly interesting, as Antoni mentioned that the masculine white man was also heavier and taller, suggesting that proximity to whiteness may be what makes an Asian man attractive to western audiences. While no conclusions can be made from one interview alone, it may prove interesting to ask about Kpop and the image of the masculine Asian man in future research.

4.2.2. Microinvalidations

Another common theme was that of microinvalidations, wherein a partner would invalidate or mock the AAPI person's identity, connection to it, or the value and importance of their experiences. This manifested often as a dismissal of their experiences of racism, or even a dismissal of their identity altogether. For example, one participant shared that when she would get uncomfortable looks from strangers, her partner would often dismiss that it had anything to do with her race.

It just made me feel crazy...Oh, no, they're looking at you because you're pretty, or, oh, no, they're not looking at you at all. But I'm like, no, I know growing up, I know the feeling, how it feels when someone is judging me based on my race... it was like they knew more about being an Asian woman than I did (Seniya, F2, Malay/Chinese/American)

Another participant shared that his partner would make unseemly comments about people of color, forgetting entirely that he was Asian and that those comments applied to him as well.

And I would rather her just at least acknowledged it because then it would be like, okay, well at least you're acknowledging the fact that I am Asian and not just focusing on the fact that I'm half white... Yeah. I mean, come on man. It's kind of, no matter how much you say that I'm white or you think that I act like a white person, I mean I'm still Asian. It seems like you have to cognitively denounce it. (Antoni, M4/ Filipino/American)

One participant was a Chinese transracial adoptee, and she shared that she would frequently feel like her dates wished she was more culturally Asian, and invalidate her experiences as an Asian woman.

Yeah, if I'm going out with a white person and they find out that I am from a white household, they're like, ... lose interest because they themselves are in a white household...so with that, I always feel like I have to put on a show or I have to, or sometimes I'll bring up some of my Hmong friends' stories to make my life seem a little bit more interesting. I dunno. It's

something like that. I just constantly feel like an imposter of my own culture, but also of the white culture. (Vivian, F3, Chinese)

This example is particularly interesting, as the participant cites that her cultural differences are seen as desirable by her white first dates. This suggests that these partners may have viewed her ethnic background as exotic and different, only to be “disappointed” by her cultural assimilation and upbringing. Another participant shared that his white partner dismissed his ideas of “authentic” Asian food in preference to what she had heard on social media, suggesting that she knew more about Asian culture than he did.

Yeah, I would say we would recently we were going around to grocery stores around [area] and stuff and I was like, there's this Asian grocery store that I like that I go to all the time. And because of TikTok and stuff, my current girlfriend was like, oh, well this one's not as authentic as a different one. And I'm like, well, to me it's kind of authentic. This is where I go and I buy my Asian groceries from. And it was more of like, oh, well you haven't been on TikTok, you don't know about it. And it's like, well, I feel like I would know about it...? (Daniel, M1, Filipino/American)

4.2.3 Other Uncategorized Microaggressions

Other microaggressions that were discussed included those that hinged on *positive stereotypes*, or the Model Minority Myth, as well as experiences of being racially fetishized. When discussing experiences of IPR that came out of positive stereotypes, the following experience shared by Priya (F1, Indian) serves as a good example.

I think the general prioritizing school and work and career and stuff like that also came into play a bit with my college relationship because he would want to hang out sometimes, but would assume that I was studying and not even ask if I was free. At times, if he knew I had a test coming up, he would just not. And so that was a point of contention for whatever reason, and I was like, it doesn't even have to be, just ask me and if I'm not free, I'm not free, but if I am free, then we can hang out. So he just assumed that.

In this example, Priya discusses how her partner holding a positive stereotype about AAPI being hardworking and studious ended up being a point of contention for them. While not outwardly insidious, her partner's belief in the Model Minority Myth leads him to make assumptions about her, and thus reduces her to stereotype and strips her of her individuality.

Another theme of microaggressions that came up was that of *dehumanization*, wherein a partner would behave in a way that suggested that they saw the AAPI person as an object, one-dimensional, or less than human. For example, one participant shared an experience with a man who was attempting to hit on her, but did so in a way that served to make her feel othered and less than human.

[He asked me,] where are you from? And so I answered, I responded, and they're like, once I had an epiphany that those Filipinos and those Hawaiians, they actually are extraterrestrials because they're on an island. It's like a secluded island...but that was a little bit of a moment for me when somebody told me I was literally an alien. I felt very othered in that moment. (Ailani, F4, Filipina/ Hawaiian/American)

This happened in long term relationships as well, with the same female participant sharing that her intimate partner once discussed his love for Asian culture and "things," listing her amongst his hobbies and Asian-origin items.

So he was like, that was more of a quote. He told me that growing up, his mom took away his Asian cards and his game boy games that were Japanese and Nintendo because they were Asian. And then growing up, he told me, oh, now I love Asian things. And he referred to Thai food and Indian food and Pokemon cards and me [laughs] and me... diminishing me to just an Asian thing. (Ailiani, F4, Filipina/Hawaiian)

Many other female participants also discussed how they often received uncomfortable comments about their appearance, citing "size kinks," a penchant to be viewed as girlish, which resulted in feeling reduced to a sex object.

In the porn industry, it's that we're there to be fetishized and to be there to take care of your needs, but we're not a commitment thing. I dunno, that's just the best way I can describe it. The way I feel is we are pretty, people want us, but they don't want to be with us. (Vivian, F3, Chinese)

But he would see an API woman as someone who does as they're told honestly, someone who is dependent on him to live, someone who doesn't have their own thoughts, values, dreams, and just essentially a vessel of a person that he could shape and manipulate into what he wanted. (Seniya, F2, Malay/Chinese/American)

While many women brought up a feeling of dehumanization via objectification and sexualization, men typically discussed feelings of being treated as one-dimensional, or as "less than" their white counterparts.

And it's very difficult because I feel like at least being in America, I feel like at least with immigrants, we're always pursuing trying to feel validated or accepted by white culture to see that we're not subhuman or we are good enough, we're just as good. And so it's very tough because it's like, I don't want, we're all human beings. We shouldn't have to feel that way in any regard, whether you're different color, race, and culture. (Dhruv, M2, Indian/Middle-Eastern)

5. Conclusion

These findings serve as an introduction to the interracial relationship experiences of AAPI and the mechanisms by which intimate partner racism is experienced and discussed. The novel findings presented in this work illuminate relevant connections between experiences of intimate partner racism and gender roles, which may prove particularly useful to counseling or clinical work that seeks to ensure that AAPI feel safe in their interracial relationships. Particularly interesting is the assertions that AAPI have a difficult time viewing their adverse dating experiences as race-related and the positionality of AAPI men making it difficult for them to engage in help-seeking behaviors. A few participants mentioned interesting ideas for future research, including questions of pop-culture's effects on the perception of minority identities, as well as ideas of femininity and masculinity in American minority cultures. While the sample size for this study is small, these in depth interviews provide a jumping off point for further research that may prove more representative of the immense diversity within the AAPI community. This study was also limited in its ability to recruit and examine the experiences of AAPI men, and so further work must also be done to develop a greater understanding of their unique experiences.

6. Acknowledgements

I want to take this space to extend my deepest gratitude to my professors and advisors at UNCA, whose guidance and support were instrumental in shaping this paper. A special thank you to Dr. Marcia Ghidina for her generous and thoughtful comments, as well as her constant reassurances throughout this process. I am also immensely grateful to Dr. Evelyn Chiang for inspiring this research and encouraging my exploration of the AAPI space. The support and training provided in her lab have been pivotal in my academic journey, and I'm beyond grateful to have met and worked with her.

I also wish to express my appreciation to the various AAPI community organizations that played a crucial role in recruiting participants and disseminating the final work. Your collaboration and encouragement, both in research and personally, have been invaluable. This work is dedicated to you, and I am truly thankful for your involvement. A heartfelt thanks to my participants; this work is a reflection of their lived experiences, and I hope it serves as a meaningful representation of their lives and that these findings will prove helpful to others.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

The purpose of this study is to explore the stereotypes, prejudices, and racism you have encountered in your dating life and long-term relationships. I'll be asking questions about your dating history, experiences of microaggressions by your partners, and how these experiences have affected you. Please keep in mind that everything you say will be kept confidential and that you can skip any questions you prefer not to answer, or terminate this interview at any time. Do you consent to participate, and to have your audio recorded?

1. To begin, could you tell me a little bit about your relationship history?
2. What do you look for in a partner? What is attractive to you?
3. Okay, and can you speak a little more about your ethnic background and your connection to it?
4. What are some of the stereotypes of AAPI men/women (matched with participant gender) you've encountered?
5. What about stereotypes you've encountered in your dating life?
 - a. Prompt for longer term relationships AND casual dating/ first dates
6. How do these stereotypes come into play in your dating life?
7. Can you share any experiences you've had wherein a partner has made an insensitive comment about your race/culture? This could involve stereotyping, prejudice, or discrimination that was intentional or unintentional.
8. How did these experiences make you feel about yourself and your cultural group?
9. How did these experiences make you feel about your relationship with that partner?
 - a. What about relationships and dating in general?
10. How did you respond to that experience? Did you confront your partner? Why or why not?
 - a. If yes, how did your partner respond, and how did you feel about those responses?
 - b. If no, did the experience change the way you interacted with your partner?
11. In what ways did your partner change their behavior after that incident?

- a. Were any attempts at reconciliation successful?
12. What do you think would have been the best way for them to respond? Or what would you have done if you were in their shoes?
13. Thinking about your future, what's important to you in a partner/relationship, especially as an AAPI person?