

In my dissertation, *Partitioning a Monolith: Differential Racialization among Asians in the United States*, I examine how the discordant experiences and processes of racialization shape the lives of disaggregated Asian groups in the United States. The dissertation addresses three broad questions: (1) How do people of Asian descent experience racialization in the United States? (2) In what ways do experiences of racialization and racism vary within the monolithic ‘Asian’ category? (3) What are the consequences of racialization processes and racism on people of Asian descent? Considering the foregoing questions, my dissertation has three goals: (a) to articulate a re-conceptualization of *differential racialization* as a mechanism that links micro and macro processes of racialization; (b) to examine how differential racialization is experienced by individuals at the micro level; and (c) to illustrate the population-level consequences of differential racialization. In a manuscript based on my dissertation that is currently in preparation for submission to *Theory and Society*, I advance a novel theoretical re-conceptualization of the term *differential racialization* as the discordance between existing understandings of group membership (e.g., the general understanding of who is white, Black, Asian, Native American, etc.) and how people employ these logics in social interactions. This article expands on the extant literature by underlining not only the processes that attach meanings to different ‘types’ of people, but also the processes that determine who gets categorized under certain racial labels. Further, rather than framing racialized inequality through the ethno-racial pentagon, I theorize how racial stratification differentiates between and within existing race categories.

Another chapter of my dissertation explores how individuals experience differential racialization on the ground and how it patterns their encounters with the police. By analyzing data from thirty-six in-depth semi-structured interviews with young adults of Asian descent from across the U.S., I demonstrate how the evaluation and classification of individuals in face-to-face interactions produce inequality by tying ‘types’ of bodies to different behavioral expectations. Notably, while all the participants were of Asian origin, half of them described having limited access to the ‘benefits of Asian-ness’—that is, being seen as non-threatening—because they did not meet widely held criteria for how Asian persons look. For them, racial membership was a contested identity, consequently depriving them of certainty about their safety around the police. This study addresses the dearth of research on the experiences of people of Asian origin in relation to state-sponsored systems of social control (e.g., policing). This work adds a nuanced account to the race and ethnicity literature by underscoring how actors experience and interpret groupness; how they experience imposed categories; and how they resist racial classifications through the performance of race.

In the third chapter, I analyze data from the Multiple Cause of Death File and the American Community Survey to investigate the long-term trends in life expectancy and lifespan inequality between disaggregated Asian ethnic groups in the U.S. My goal in this study is to explore the temporality of differential racialization through a test of Bonilla-Silva’s theory that a ‘tri-racial’ system is developing in the U.S., whereby people will be racialized as white, honorary white, or collective Black. According to the ‘tri-racial’ hypothesis, disaggregated Asian ethnic groups will be mostly divided between honorary white or collective Black, depending on multiple factors including skin tone. The tri-racial hypothesis was originally presented as an *emerging* racial system, suggesting that it is an ongoing process; yet, to my knowledge no empirical tests of this aspect of the tri-racial hypothesis exists. As such, I test this proposition by looking at the temporal trend in health gaps between disaggregated Asian ethnic groups. If the tri-racial hypothesis is correct, then differential racialization should lead to a re-organization of ethnicities along new racial groups (e.g., honorary white, collective Black), observable through the divergence or convergence of health over time. This divergence would also reflect the population-level consequences of differential racialization within the monolithic Asian category.