

10-1-2013

# The Racial and Ethnic Identity Formation Process of Second- Generation Asian Indian Americans: A Phenomenological Study

Derek Kenji Iwamoto

*University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

Nalini Junko Negi

*University of Maryland*

Rachel Negar Partiali

*Wright Institute*

John W. Creswell

*University of Nebraska-Lincoln, jcreswell1@unl.edu*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/edpsychpapers>



Part of the [Child Psychology Commons](#), [Cognitive Psychology Commons](#), [Developmental Psychology Commons](#), and the [School Psychology Commons](#)

---

Iwamoto, Derek Kenji; Negi, Nalini Junko; Partiali, Rachel Negar; and Creswell, John W., "The Racial and Ethnic Identity Formation Process of Second- Generation Asian Indian Americans: A Phenomenological Study" (2013). *Educational Psychology Papers and Publications*. 236.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/edpsychpapers/236>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Educational Psychology, Department of at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Educational Psychology Papers and Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.



Published in final edited form as:

*J Multicult Couns Devel.* 2013 October 1; 41(4): 224–239. doi:10.1002/j.2161-1912.2013.00038.x.

Copyright © 2013 American Counseling Association; published by John Wiley & Sons. Used by permission.

## The Racial and Ethnic Identity Formation Process of Second-Generation Asian Indian Americans: A Phenomenological Study

**Derek Kenji Iwamoto,**

Department of Psychology, University of Maryland, College Park

**Nalini Junko Negi,**

School of Social Work, University of Maryland, Baltimore

**Rachel Negar Partiali,** and

Wright Institute, Los Angeles

**John W. Creswell**

Department of Educational Psychology, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

### Abstract

This phenomenological study elucidates the identity development processes of 12 second-generation adult Asian Indian Americans. The results identify salient sociocultural factors and multidimensional processes of racial and ethnic identity development. Discrimination, parental, and community factors seemed to play a salient role in influencing participants' racial and ethnic identity development. The emergent Asian Indian American racial and ethnic identity model provides a contextualized overview of key developmental periods and turning points within the process of identity development.

### Keywords

Asian Indian; racial identity development; qualitative

---

Media characterizations of Asian Indian Americans (AIAs) or other South Asians (from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Tibet, Kashmir, Burma, and Sri Lanka) as exotic and speaking with foreign accents have contributed to stereotypes of this population as perpetual foreigners at best and, at worst, as terrorists (see Rousseau & Jamil, 2008). Epidemiological studies indicate that experiences of discrimination in the form of overt and covert racism (such as stereotypes) have an impact on self-concept (Mossakowski, 2003; Yip, Gee, & Takeuchi, 2008) and are often associated with deleterious mental health consequences, including depressive symptomatology, suicidal ideation, and anxiety among Asian Americans (Lee, 2005; Yip et al., 2008). Despite considerable research indicating the adverse consequences of discrimination on self-concept, there have been little theoretical understanding and few empirical studies that examine how AIAs internalize racial messages, as well as how

discrimination influences their racial and ethnic identity development (Ibrahim, Ohinishi, & Sandhu, 1997; Tewari, Inman, & Sandhu, 2003).

Understanding the psychological processes that have an impact on racial and ethnic identity formulation among AIAs is increasingly relevant because there are few culturally adapted clinical interventions for this group (Inman, Howard, Beaumont, & Walker, 2007; Inman & Tewari, 2003), even though AIAs are the fastest growing Asian American subgroup in the United States (Le, 2013). Furthermore, although studies examining the processes of identity formation among Asian Americans exist, AIAs may have unique developmental patterns because of their distinct history and heritage. AIAs' cultural and social contexts may be very different from those experienced by other Asian Americans, particularly East Asians (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese, among others). Using Ibrahim et al.'s (1997) South Asian identity framework to inform our phenomenological qualitative study, we explored the racial and ethnic identity formation of second-generation (born in the United States) AIAs. We were interested in identifying the developmental patterns, key turning points, and social–environmental factors that influence their racial and ethnic identity development.

### **racism as a trigger to racial and ethnic exploration**

Discrimination has been cited in the literature as a significant factor that has an impact on racial and ethnic identity development. Personally experiencing discrimination or observing racism has been found to trigger racial and ethnic identity exploration (Quintana, 2007). Cross (1991) described these encountered experiences as being marked with the realization that racism exists, can no longer be denied, and has an effect on an individual's life. Longitudinal research supports the notion that earlier experiences of discrimination have an impact on a person's racial and ethnic identity developmental trajectory (Pahl & Way, 2006).

### **parental influences**

Parental values and beliefs are theorized to influence children's racial and ethnic identity development (Ibrahim, 1993; Inman et al., 2007). First-generation (first to immigrate to the United States) parents have been found to be highly influential in the transmission of cultural values and, thereby, the racial and ethnic identity development of AIA youth (Inman et al., 2007). Inman et al.'s (2007) study found that first-generation AIA immigrant parents' ethnic identity retention was influenced by participation in Indian cultural activities, maintenance of traditional values and family ties, and rejection of Western values (i.e., individualism). Lack of support for traditional Indian cultural practices within the dominant U.S. culture and lack of familial guidance by extended family members (because of long distances between country of origin and the United States) were identified as barriers. AIA parents believe strongly in cultural values such as cultural continuity, educational and financial security, discouragement of dating and premarital sex, and associations with the "right kind of people." Both mothers and fathers indicated that imparting these values to their children was highly important and was passed on by modeling behaviors, maintaining religious practices, and discussing cultural knowledge with their children. Limited contact

with extended family, lack of community guidance, and the American lifestyle were identified as challenges to this cultural transmission (Inman et al., 2007).

### **south asian identity development model**

The framework that guided our study was Ibrahim et al.'s (1997) South Asian Identity Development Model. This model is one of the few conceptual models to explore factors that may potentially affect the racial and ethnic identity development of immigrant and native-born South Asian Americans. South Asian cultural values are derived from the sociopolitical and historical context of the Indian subcontinent, which often overlaps with the values of other Asian Americans, including self-respect, dignity, and self-control. Although South Asians are a heterogeneous group (with a diversity of languages, religions, food, and cultural practices), this group is often categorized and perceived as a homogeneous group within the United States. Ibrahim et al. contended that as first-generation Asian Indians adapt to the mainstream U.S. culture, they undergo a dynamic process of racial identity formation. This developmental process includes five statuses influenced by generation level: Conformity, Dissonance, Resistance and Immersion, Introspection, and Synergistic Articulation and Awareness (Atkinson, Morten, & Sue, 1998). Ibrahim et al. proposed that unlike other racial and ethnic minorities' process of racial and ethnic identity formation, first-generation Asian Indians do not experience being in the Conformity status. This is perhaps due to the fact that they are used to significant cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity in India and other South Asian countries. In the Dissonance status, they begin to realize that cultural differences and discrimination cannot be overcome, even through hard work. The Resistance and Immersion status is characterized by a critical event that leads the individual to revert to Indian cultural values and a rejection of mainstream American values. During this period, there is a strong identification with Indian culture. These individuals become more comfortable with their identity and are able to acknowledge positive mainstream values during the Introspection status (Uba, 1994). Lastly, in the Synergistic Articulation and Awareness status, the individual develops a bicultural identity and embraces the positive and negative aspects of familial and dominant cultures.

Although this model describes the racial and ethnic identity process of first-generation Asian Indians, it does not describe important turning points and factors that influence the identity development of second-generation individuals or those who were born in the United States (i.e., children of first-generation parents who were born in India and immigrated to the United States). The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study is to advance theory by exploring the essence of the phenomenon of racial and ethnic identity development among second-generation AIAs. Our aim was to explore and identify self-reported influencing factors that contributed toward AIAs' developmental transitions in their racial and ethnic identity formation. We were particularly interested in exploring how identity formation may be triggered by experiences of perceived racism (Quintana, 2007) among AIAs. Previous racial identity models such as the Minority Development Model (Atkinson et al., 1998), the People of Color Racial Identity Model (Helms, 1995), and ethnic identity development models (e.g., Phinney, 1992) tended to be based on the experiences of African Americans (Kim, 2001) and have been disproportionately understudied among Asian Americans (Cokley, 2007). Furthermore, although the concepts of racial and ethnic identity

have been examined in various studies, these have been mainly studied with the use of quantitative methodology (Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2007). Although these methods have advanced our knowledge of racial and ethnic identity constructs, an understanding that encompasses the complexity of racial and ethnic developmental processes has been missing (Miville, Constantine, Baysden, & So-Lloyd, 2005). Our approach for this study builds on previous works by exploring how significant events, people, and sociocultural factors affect a person's racial and ethnic identity developmental processes during childhood, adolescence, and emerging adulthood.

## method

### Participants

Twelve second-generation AIAs (six men, six women) participated in this study and were from two regions: the San Francisco Bay Area ( $n = 3$ ) and southern California ( $n = 9$ ). Most of the participants' parents immigrated to the United States between 1965 and the early 1970s. Half of the participants' parents grew up in the southern region of India, whereas the other half were dispersed in northern or other regions of India. The majority of participants grew up in middle-class to upper-middle class communities; their parents had a college degree or higher and lived in communities that were ethnically diverse. We included participants whose ages ranged from 19 to 34 years (mean age = 27 years,  $SD = 5$ ) to provide a broader range of development. Participants also had high levels of education: two had medical degrees, two had doctoral degrees, three had law degrees, two were graduate students, and three were completing their bachelor's degree. The demographics of the sample are similar to the demographic patterns of AIAs in the United States (Tewari et al., 2003). The current demographic data were the only information besides the interview data that were collected.

### Procedure

We obtained institutional review board approval prior to data collection. Snowball and purposive sampling techniques were implemented to obtain maximum variance within the sample. Key informants within each community were identified and informed about the study. They provided information about potential participants who met the study criteria, and these participants were then contacted by phone and informed about the study. A \$15 gift certificate was provided as a token of appreciation for participating. Data collection was discontinued when saturation of cases was reached (Creswell, 2007). Semistructured interviews were conducted by the first author, who has extensive qualitative training by an expert (fourth author) in qualitative methods. The development of the interview protocol was based on literature pertaining to racial and ethnic identity development (Atkinson et al., 1998; Inman et al., 2007) as well as the South Asian Identity Development Model (Ibrahim et al., 1997). The interviews lasted between 30 minutes to 2 hours and were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. The five open-ended questions in the study were as follows: (a) Tell me about your cultural, racial, or ethnic identity development experiences; (b) What are some important Asian Indian and American values? (c) What were some of your turning points with respect to your racial/ethnic identity? (d) Tell me about your familial, peer, and

social influences with respect to your identity development; and (e) What were your ethnic/racial social group preferences during your ethnic/racial identity development?

### **Data-Analytic Plan: Phenomenological Inquiry**

We selected a phenomenological approach because it is aligned with the study's aims to capture the essence of how individuals interpret, process, and experience racial and ethnic identity development. Phenomenological research is considered a rigorous and thorough scientific method of research that aims to "explore and search for the essential, invariant structure (essence) or the central underlining meaning of the experiences that contain both the outward appearance and inward consciousness based on the memories, images and meaning" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 52) of the participants (see also Creswell, 2007; Wertz, 2005). This method attempts to elucidate the hidden and complex facets of the phenomenon being studied; thus, this approach is suitable for exploring racial and ethnic identity because it is a dynamic, fluid, multidimensional developmental process.

Phenomenological data-analysis procedures (Creswell, 2007) were implemented. The first level of analysis was to find, list, and identify significant statements of the individuals—this is the process of *horizontalization*. We identified and extracted all significant statements that reflected the participants' racial and ethnic identity development. After rereading and reflecting on the significant statements and all the transcriptions, we used the Van Kaam method (see Moustakas, 1994) to determine if the statements could be labeled and grouped together. This method entailed aggregating statements into clusters of themes and meaning units. Significant statements were grouped into coherent units and themes, and then significant identity formation processes that the individual went through were identified, classified, and listed (see Table 1). The cluster of themes and meaning units reflected how racial and ethnic identity development among AIAs is a continuous and unique process marked by distinct turning points during developmental periods. The clusters of significant statements and common themes are presented in Table 1 and include (a) social reference groups, (b) core values, (c) turning points, (d) self-concept and conflictual experiences, (e) experience with racism and stereotypes, and (f) continual development.

After the clustering of themes, structural and textual descriptions were constructed (see Table 2). Structural descriptions highlight the context and setting in which the phenomenon is experienced. Textual descriptions illustrate how the phenomenon is experienced and explicate the meaning that the individual attributes to the experience (Moustakas, 1994). The context and setting in which racial/ethnic identity was developed were found to be within social reference groups and level of engagement with cultural activities. The phenomenon was experienced through self-concept and experiences with racism and stereotypes. Turning points generally occurred during various developmental time periods, such as childhood, early adolescence, emerging adulthood, and early adulthood, which are described in depth and presented in Table 2. Accordingly, the results are presented in developmental time periods and are contextualized through social reference groups and level of engagement in cultural activities.

## results

### Childhood

**Social reference groups**—During childhood, participants' social group was identified as the dominant/majority racial or ethnic group in their community (e.g., if the participant grew up in an all-White community, he or she is able to relate to this group well). Despite participants' cultural disconnect with their ethnic group, parental values such as education, collectivism, and community were internalized and became core values for them. One participant said, "I definitely got the pressure from my parents to do well academically. You have to respect your family ... stay close to your family."

**Engagement with culture and activities**—Many participants seemed minimally involved in Indian social engagements. However, participants indicated feeling as if they "could not relate" to other AIA children. One participant shared, "When I went to Indian parties I didn't really like all the little cliques that were there. I couldn't relate to that ... they were all religious and into the culture and the clothes."

**Self-concept**—Many participants relayed their realization of being physically or culturally different from Whites. Most reported hiding their cultural self because of a desire to fit in with peers at one point during their childhood. As one participant explained, "You didn't really feel that proud to be Indian. In second grade, I remember just hating how I would feel different and how everyone would ask me about it and I wouldn't know what to say."

**Experience with racism and stereotypes**—Some participants reported experiencing overt racism (such as racial epithets and stereotyping) or feeling alienated and different at school because of a lack of peer-group acceptance of Asian Indian culture. Several participants relayed that they would do anything during this time to "fit in" and "survive" among their peers. One participant shared the following:

I had to give up a lot of my Indian-ness, because, just to, like, interact, and be part of mainstream America, be accepted by my peers, I had to be American; I had to dress American ... I even lightened my hair ... I tried very, very hard to be White.

### Early Adolescence

**Social reference groups**—Most participants tended to relate and socialize with predominantly White American peers during this period. However, this was dependent on the region where the participants lived (e.g., those who grew up in mostly East Asian American communities socialized with East Asians because they were the predominant group in their community). Peers became the participants' primary means of socialization, and participants resisted their parents' culture and religious practices more during this period. As one participant explained, "In junior high school, there was nobody [Indian] around me. I was very self-conscious about my culture, my religious practices, my skin color."

**Engagement with culture and activities**—During this time, there was minimal involvement in social/family cultural functions because of participants' resistance or

reluctance to attend ethnic functions and their desire to separate themselves from cultural markers such as Indian attire or speaking Hindi or other Indian languages. This often created conflict with their parents, who wanted participants to take an active role in such community events.

**Self-concept**—Participants described becoming more conscious of their external appearance and an increased desire to “look cool” and “fit in.” Female participants relayed becoming more aware of the texture of their hair compared with their peers (curly vs. straight) and skin color (dark vs. fair). Male participants, in turn, generally desired to be “cool” and to excel in sports. One female participant shared, “I tried to make that real physical transformation with the hair ... because all my peers were blonde, and they wanted to have light hair. A real eye-opening experience for me was that ... I am never going to be White.”

**Experience with racism and stereotypes**—Many participants expressed having misconceptions and stereotypes about other AIAs, for example, that they are nerdy and want to grow up to be doctors. To further distance themselves from other AIAs and associated stereotypes, participants reported engaging in some educational self-handicapping strategies, including not studying as hard or deemphasizing the importance of education while highlighting the role of social activities. One participant said, “The way I perceived them [other AIAs] ... was like ... they’re all just dorky and all they want to do is grow up and be doctors ... I just don’t want to be part of that.”

## Adolescence

**Social reference groups**—Participants indicated efforts to seek out and befriend individuals with shared values and diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds during this period. Feelings of connection to friendships with other AIAs increased. Participants expressed having the realization that their AIA peers might have more similar values and experiences than they had previously thought. One participant shared, “Me and my [AIA] friend that lived over here, both talk about how when we first met we just avoided each other because we had a whole mentality that Indian people were just one track, you know?”

**Engagement with culture and activities**—In adolescence, many of the participants were uncomfortable attending Asian Indian community and family gatherings. However, toward the end of high school, many participants expressed feeling more comfortable wearing traditional Indian attire and becoming more involved in Indian cultural activities. One female participant said,

I was hanging out with other AIA girls, that were part of my group, that were from a different part of India than I am from, and they were much more involved in local Indian cultural activities than I was and this made me think a little bit more about being AIA.

**Self-concept**—High school marked the time when many participants began to deconstruct their own misconception of their ethnic group. Participants started to become more aware of their cultural heritage and its nuances. It was during this period that participants described

feeling more comfortable with their identity and when they began to actively explore and learn about their culture through their parents and peers.

**Experience with racism and stereotypes**—Participants indicated feeling at times uncomfortable about their Indian culture and as if they had to defend and justify their cultural self to non-AIA peers. Specifically, some participants reported having to explain and educate their peers about their religious practices (if not Christian or Catholic) or having to debunk peers’ stereotypes and misconceptions. One participant said,

The parodies like on the Simpson’s, the 7/11 Slurpee guy, and then I remember my uncle when he bought a 7/11, I thought, “Great, this just adds to the whole stereotype of Indian people.” You know ... the stereotype is like this little Indian guy with glasses who is very smart but still kind of naïve at the same time. I’m not like that!

### Emerging Adulthood

**Social reference groups**—Generally, participants reported having an ethnically and racially diverse group of peers during this period. Participants developed deeper and more meaningful relationships with fellow AIAs as cultural similarities such as traditions, values, religion, and experiences growing up became salient factors for bonding. One participant shared, “When I went to college, I saw Indian people on campus, but it wasn’t the Indian people that I thought. There were people who lived just like me.” (The participants had stereotypical notions of how other AIAs were prior to entering college. However, once they entered college, they realized that there were Indian individuals who had similar values, beliefs, and life experiences as they did.)

**Engagement with culture and activities**—During college, many participants indicated becoming actively involved and immersed in AIA clubs and associations. Many participants began to realize that their AIA peers had similar experiences and that they could relate to one another. One participant stated, “I found myself becoming friends with Indians and it was almost an attraction and then I slowly got involved in the Indian Association.”

**Self-concept**—Emerging adulthood or the beginning of college was identified as a time when most participants began to embrace their ethnic “pride,” saw the “beauty” of their Indian heritage, and appreciated the values instilled by their parents. They began to willingly educate others about their culture and had an easier time doing so compared with during their high school years. As one participant explained,

College was where I was really comfortable with my Indian-ness. In fact, it was a gradual thing. When I came to college, there were tons of Indians and I started becoming friends with a lot of them... I think by me hanging out with them and me relating to them, I started realizing my culture was important and started becoming involved in it.

**Experience with racism and stereotypes**—Numerous participants reported being “looked at funny” or with suspicion after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. This

period of development marked their awareness of structural racism and led to related self-reflection about social justice issues concerning AIAs as well other ethnic and racial minorities.

I was in an airport somewhere in the Midwest or something and at that time I did feel like just walking down the terminal everyone was staring at me and this was after 9/11. With 9/11, people do perceive me as Muslim and it doesn't bother me, you know.

### Early Adulthood

**Social reference groups**—Most participants reported socializing predominantly with AIAs during this period but stated feeling equally comfortable socializing with individuals from other groups. Participants indicated that shared cultural values, customs, and experiences (i.e., racism, experiences growing up, or family matters) led to easier bonding with other AIAs, as well as relating and appreciating their parents more as they grew older.

**Engagement with culture and activities**—Many participants reported that during early adulthood, they participated in more Indian cultural activities and they began to model their parents' behaviors by hosting cultural social engagements. All participants reported that they further explored their Indian identity by asking their parents and peers, by researching on their own about their ethnic heritage and religion, and by trying to learn their ancestral language. One participant said, "It's always evolving I guess, right? I mean it doesn't really stop. I am learning new things about myself on a daily basis."

**Self-concept**—During this period, participants stated feeling comfortable with their cultural self and being able to freely express it to others. They were now able to more fluidly navigate through their multiple identities (cultural, career, parent, etc.). Their core values including family, education, and religion became solidified. One participant noted, "Loyalty to my family/extended family ... respecting elders ... filial piety... education ... religion [are important]."

However, new challenges with regard to their ethnic and racial identity emerged. Participants reported having to internally process and reconcile their experiences with job discrimination. Married participants or those who were married with children indicated that their ethnic/racial identity was challenged during this period as they grappled with the difficulty of how and what cultural values to instill in their third-generation children. One participant explained,

When you have kids you want them to have the good but you don't want them to have the bad, you want them to see the truth but not the falseness and so that is what you want to balance them with.

**Experience with racism and stereotypes**—In particular, participants experienced the "glass ceiling" effect, and some participants reported struggling with coming to terms with a work culture that may not be congruent with their cultural self (e.g., Eurocentric values might conflict with their Asian Indian values). One participant said, "With legal hiring for

larger firms, it is still very much a White, male, old boy's network for a lot of the big firms and so I think it would be easier to not be in a minority.”

## discussion

This is one of the first studies, to our knowledge, to explore the racial and ethnic identity development process among second-generation AIAs. Through an in-depth phenomenological analysis, a cultural-specific racial and ethnic identity development model for AIAs was developed. This emergent AIA racial and ethnic identity model provides a contextualized overview of key turning points and developmental transitions important in identity development among this population. Our study highlights the influence of discrimination as well as parents and reference groups on racial and ethnic identity during various developmental periods. In that regard, this model offers a developmental perspective that has been missing in previous identity models (Cokley, 2007; Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2007).

The overall essence of the participants' experiences illustrates that racial and ethnic identity development is an ongoing and lifelong process, with the participants becoming more aware and building upon their racial and ethnic identity year by year. That is, the majority of the participants reported continual development beyond the Synergetic Articulation and Awareness status (Atkinson et al., 1998). This suggests that there might be another distinct status and evolutionary process beyond the five statuses in the identity formation of AIAs. Racial and ethnic identity development appears to be continuous even when individuals have a secure AIA identity. Young adult participants reported that new challenges with regard to their racial and ethnic identity continued to occur even after the development of a secure AIA identity, such as decisions about a life partner, what cultural values to transmit to their third-generation children, and challenges experienced when confronted with incidences of racism.

The results further identified unique features and multidimensional processes of racial and ethnic identity development among AIAs. Cultural and community events were found to be an important feature of AIA identity development. Although AIAs often perceived these events as discordant to the mainstream American values during their early to late adolescence, when they reached adulthood, many of them organized these same communal events with the hope that they would transmit Indian cultural values to their children. It is interesting to note that participants' resistance to attend such cultural events had often created conflict with their parents, who desired to transmit and maintain their culture through these events in the absence of extended relatives because of immigration (Inman et al., 2007). Indian cultural events may be particularly important for AIAs because they offer a communal safe space for them to celebrate their cultural heritage through traditional foods, clothes, dance, and music. Relatedly, choosing a life partner was stressful because many participants felt conflicted about the loss of their “Indian-ness” if their partner was not AIA or did not value the transmission of Indian cultural values to their third-generation children. The participants who had children found themselves grappling with which Indian values to share with their children.

Congruent with the literature, experiences with racism and parental and community factors seemed to play a salient role in influencing the racial and ethnic identity development of AIAs (Quintana, 2007; Sellers & Sheldon, 2003). Early experiences with racism had an impact on participants' self-concept and involvement with social groups such as peer and community members, especially during childhood. For young AIAs who experience racism, this may be particularly distressing because their first-generation parents often may not want to discuss such negative experiences because of culturally associated feelings of shame. This may, thus, lead to or exacerbate parent-child conflict (Ibrahim et al., 1997; Inman et al., 2007). Participants described experiences of racism throughout their life span, with events immediately post-9/11 being especially racially charged because many were perceived to look like "Middle Eastern terrorists" as discussed in the literature (Rousseau & Jamil, 2008). These experiences of discrimination and racism had varying levels of impact on participants' well-being depending on their developmental period. For example, although the crisis of "fitting in" in adolescence was mostly resolved by adulthood, everyday discrimination, including discrimination in the workplace, led adult AIAs to struggle with the notion that fitting in might never be an option.

Overall, this new developmental model advances the literature by elucidating key experiences and social group influences, turning points, and identity formation processes of AIAs. Although turning points experienced by AIAs may not be distinctive to this population, the contexts of discrimination, immigration, and associated features account for a unique identity formation model for AIAs. Future research can quantitatively validate this model with AIAs and potentially other Asian American subgroups as well. The results can be used to provide culturally adapted clinical interventions by leading to better understanding about the developmental processes of second-generation AIA clients. Particularly for clients struggling with their racial and ethnic identity, a presentation of the AIA model and inquiries about their experiences with racism can normalize their experiences and make the individuals aware of internal and externalized negative messages about their ethnic group. Such understanding may, thereby, facilitate insight about how racism relates to self-concept and racial/ethnic identity (Iwamoto & Liu, 2010).

Despite the numerous strengths of the current study, there are some limitations worth noting. The study is limited because of the sampling procedure and the small number of participants. However, the sample size is within the adequate sampling range for phenomenological studies (Creswell, 2007). Because the sample was purposefully drawn, it could be argued that the participants represent a biased sample. Most of the participants were highly educated, of middle to high socioeconomic status, and from ethnically diverse regions in the United States. Future studies may consider drawing a sample from predominantly White communities and different regions in the United States (e.g., Midwest or East Coast). Despite these limitations, this study advances the literature by formulating a theoretical model of racial and ethnic identity development for second-generation AIAs.

## references

Atkinson, DR.; Morten, G.; Sue, DW. Counseling American minorities. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill; 1998.

- Cokley KO. Critical issues in measurement of ethnic and racial identity: A referendum on the state of the field. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. 2007; 54:224–234.
- Creswell, J. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among the five approaches*. 2nd ed.. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; 2007.
- Cross, W. *Shades of Black: Diversity in African-American identity*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press; 1991.
- Helms, JE. An update of Helms' White and people of color racial identity models. In: Ponterotto, JG.; Casas, JM.; Suzuki, LA.; Alexander, CM., editors. *Handbook of multicultural counseling*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; 1995. p. 181-198.
- Ibrahim, FA. Existential worldview theory. In: McFadden, J., editor. *Transcultural counseling*. Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association; 1993. p. 23-57.
- Ibrahim FA, Ohinishi H, Sandhu D. Asian American identity development: A culture-specific model for South Asian Americans. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*. 1997; 25:34–50.
- Inman AG, Howard EE, Beaumont RL, Walker JA. Cultural transmission: Influence of contextual factors in Asian Indian immigrant parents' experiences. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. 2007; 54:93–100.
- Inman, AG.; Tewari, N. The power of context: Counseling South Asians within a family context. In: Roysicar, G., editor. *Multicultural competencies: A guidebook of practices*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development; 2003. p. 97-107.
- Iwamoto DK, Liu WM. The impact of racial identity, ethnic identity, Asian values and race-related stress on Asian Americans and Asian international college students' well-being. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. 2010; 57:79–91. [PubMed: 20396592]
- Kim, J. Asian American identity development theory. In: Wijeyesinghe, CL.; Jackson, B., III, editors. *New perspectives on racial identity development: A theoretical and practical anthology*. New York: New York University Press; 2001. p. 67-90.
- Le, CN. Population statistics and demographics. *Asian-Nation: Asian American history, demographics, & issues*. 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.asian-nation.org/population.shtml>
- Lee RM. Resilience against discrimination: Ethnic identity and other-group orientation as protective factors for Korean Americans. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. 2005; 52:36–44.
- Miville ML, Constantine MG, Baysden MF, So-Lloyd G. Chameleon changes: An exploration of racial identity themes of multiracial people. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. 2005; 52:507–516.
- Mossakowski KN. Coping with perceived discrimination: Does ethnic identity protect mental health? *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. 2003; 44:318–331. [PubMed: 14582311]
- Moustakas, C. *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; 1994.
- Pahl K, Way N. Longitudinal trajectories of ethnic identity among urban Black and Latino adolescents. *Child Development*. 2006; 77:1403–1415. [PubMed: 16999807]
- Phinney JS. The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure: A new scale for use with diverse groups. *Journal of Adolescent Research*. 1992; 7:156–176.
- Ponterotto JG, Park-Taylor J. Racial and ethnic identity theory, measurement, and research in counseling psychology: Present status and future directions. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. 2007; 54:282–294.
- Quintana SM. Racial and ethnic identity: Developmental perspectives and research. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. 2007; 54:259–270.
- Rousseau C, Jamil U. Meaning of 9/11 for two Pakistani communities: From external intruders to the internalization of a negative self-image. *Anthropology and Medicine*. 2008; 15:163–174.
- Sellers R, Sheldon J. The role of racial identity in perceived discrimination. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 2003; 84:1079–1092. [PubMed: 12757150]
- Tewari, N.; Inman, AG.; Sandhu, DS. South Asian Americans: Culture, concerns, and therapeutic strategies. In: Mio, JS.; Iwamasa, GY., editors. *Culturally diverse mental health: The challenges of research and resistance*. New York, NY: Brunner-Routledge; 2003. p. 191-209.
- Uba, L. *Asian Americans: Personality patterns, identity, and mental health*. New York, NY: Guilford Press; 1994.

- Wertz FJ. Phenomenological research methods for counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. 2005; 52:167–177.
- Yip T, Gee GC, Takeuchi D. Racial discrimination and psychological distress: The impact of ethnic identity and age among immigrant and United States–born Asian adults. *Developmental Psychology*. 2008; 44:787–800. [PubMed: 18473644]

**Table 1**

## Clusters of Common Themes and Significant Statements

Theme	Statement
Social reference groups and influences	"Parents, siblings, extended family, Asian Indian American friends, and significant others."
Core values	"Loyalty to family/extended family ... respecting elders ... filial piety ... education ... religion."
Turning points	
College	"I finally came to a point where I accepted my culture and I can see beauty and uniqueness of the culture and because I saw it, therefore others can see it too." "College was where I was really comfortable with my Indian-ness. In fact, it was a gradual thing."
High school	"A turning point would have been probably high school, like junior/senior year when I really hung out with these girls and saw their interest in Indian culture and that kind of planted a seed."
Trip to India	"India was definitely a turning event. It wasn't a complete turning event but actually it was one of the things that got the ball rolling."
Self-concept and conflictual experiences	"There was definitely a time where I wanted to be so White, and there was a time where I rejected my Indian culture." "In junior high school, there was nobody around me. I was very self-conscious about my culture, my religious practices, my skin color." "I am a combination of the two and have beliefs that are probably a subset of belief systems of both and culturally and in other ways, more of a blend than any particular one or the other."
Experience with racism and stereotypes	"I did feel like just walking down the terminal, I felt like everyone was staring at me and this was after 9/11." "It was just kind of weird because there were some things that I couldn't really do that my classmates could ... that opportunity was not as available to me."
Continual development	"After I finished college, it just started avalanching, you know... I started absorbing a lot more information and once I started to understand where everybody fits in—why the sort of cultures are the way they are—that helped make me a lot more comfortable with myself." "It's always evolving I guess, right? I mean it doesn't really stop. I am learning new things about myself on a daily basis."

Table 2

Structural and Textural Description of Participants' Racial and Ethnic Identity Developmental Time Period

Developmental Time Period	Self-Concept and Conflictual Experience	Social Preference Groups	Engagement With Culture and Activities	Experience With Racism and Stereotypes
Childhood	Has a sense of feeling different Hides cultural self Has no strong sense of cultural pride	Relates to whatever dominant/majority ethnic group that is reflected by the community (e.g., if the person grew up in an all-White community, he or she is able to relate to this group well), despite cultural disconnect, parents' values become deeply internalized within the individual	Minimal involvement at Indian social engagements; feels like they "cannot relate that well" with other Asian Indian American kids	Some individuals experience overt forms of racism, others feel unwelcome and "different" at school—like their culture is not accepted
Early adolescence	More conscious of external appearance and strong desire to "look cool" and "fit in"; women might be more aware of hair texture and skin color compared with peers, whereas men desire to be "cool and athletic"	Relates to dominant/majority group reflected by where the individual lives Attempts to conform to peer norms and resists parents more	Minimal involvement in social/ family functions; might be resistant/relevant to wear Indian clothing or to speak Hindi or other Indian languages	May have own misconceptions and stereotypes of Asian Indian individuals such as "nerdy" or "all wanting to grow up as doctors"
Adolescence	Begins to deconstruct misconceptions of own group, starts becoming more aware of own cultural group Late high school: individual feels more comfortable with self and begins to explore and learn more about Indian culture May feel educational attainment pressure from parents or community members	Aligns self with diverse group of friends who have similar values May begin to connect and have more Asian Indian American friends Realizes that Asian Indian American peers have been raised similarly, have the same values, and bond because of similar experiences	Early high school: variant social interactions Late high school: individual might be more willing to wear Indian attire and may become more involved in Indian cultural activities	At times, the person feels uncomfortable about culture and has to defend and justify cultural self to peers (religious practice or stereotypes/ misconceptions others have) The person becomes more aware of various forms of racism: racism directed at own ethnic group as well as racism toward other ethnic groups
Emerging adulthood	A sense of ethnic "pride" and "beauty" of own group realized; the person may begin educating others about his or her culture and has an easier time doing this now as compared to when in high school Able to reconcile and "balance" the two cultures	Has mixed group of ethnically diverse peers May establish deeper and more meaningful relationships with fellow Asian Indian Americans and with parents Appreciates values instilled by parents Bonds over cultural similarities such as traditions, values, religion, experiences of growing up	Becomes actively involved and immersed in Indian clubs, associations Seeks out knowledge about own culture through family/ parents, extended family, friends, and/or taking classes	Aware of racism and self-reflective about all the injustices endured by own ethnic group as well as others After 9/11, some individuals are mistaken as Arab and "feel like they are looked at funny"
Early adulthood	Issues of marriage come up: person may consider marrying within group to "maintain traditions and values" The person is generally comfortable with cultural self and can generally freely express it Parenting issues arise: conflicts about how and what to instill in their third-generation children Able to integrate multiple identities (culture, career, parent, etc.) May have to internally process and reconcile job discrimination he or she may be experiencing	Continues to establish deep and meaningful relationships with fellow Asian Indian Americans and parents Relates to parents more when he or she gets older Models behaviors of parents such as hosting cultural social engagements	Is more invested in cultural activities Continues to accrue knowledge about heritage, language, and religion through parents and peers	Could experience racism such as the "glass ceiling" While looking for a job, getting overlooked, or if in a job, feeling that the job culture is not congruent with cultural self