

Unionization of Asian Americans: The Effects of Race and Immigration Status*

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I. Introduction

Asian American population is growing fast in the U.S. As the number of Asians in the U.S. has increased, so has their participation in the country's socioeconomic arena. The Asian American population has increased 100% during the last 11 years, and now outnumbers African Americans in California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, New Hampshire, Oregon, Utah, Vermont, and Washington (Wu, 1995). A study on population demographics suggests that the population of Asian Americans will be almost ten million by 2003 (American Demographics, 1992). Of more importance to managers and unionists is the fact that Asians are concentrated in large metropolitan areas (e.g., New York, Los Angeles). While officially accounting for only 3 percent of the entire population (7.5 million Asian Americans out of 250 million living in the U.S.), 87 percent of Asian Americans live in one of the

* 본 연구는 1996년 CPS (Current Population Survey) 자료를 이용하여 수행한 적이 있던 저자의 연구를 1993년도 자료를 이용하여 그대로 반복(replication) 해본 것임을 미리 밝혀드립니다. 따라서 본 연구의 내용은 과거의 연구와 거의 동일하며, 이 점에 대해 편집인의 사전 양해를 얻고 게재함을 밝혀드립니다.

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15 key metropolitan areas, where they are sufficiently concentrated to have a highly visible presence and to be a major employment resource (Wu, 1995). Thus, the Asian work force will significantly influence the future of unions and labor-management relations in these key industrial metropolitan areas.

Despite the emerging presence of an Asian workforce in the U.S. labor market in recent years, a review of the business, industrial relations, sociology, economics literatures reveals that Asian Americans have been largely ignored in the analysis of American unionism. Although previous research has addressed labor-management and union issues of other minority groups, such as blacks and Hispanics (e.g., Borjas, 1987; Silverblatt & Amann, 1991), studies focusing on these same issues for Asian Americans are rare. While some studies involved inter-race comparisons on union coverage (e.g., Defreitas, 1993) or union membership (e.g., Funkhouser, 1993), the Asian component of the population has not been a major focus of these studies. This trend is in sharp contrast to the growing importance of Asians in American workplace.

Using the March 1993 Current Population Survey (CPS) data, this study examined the effects of individuals' race and immigration status on their union membership with particular emphasis on Asian Americans. The present study empirically tests three competing theoretical models which address the above research questions: the segmented-labor-market model, the assimilation model, and the self-protection model. These models are drawn from economic, sociological, and industrial relations perspectives, respectively.

II. Theoretical Framework

Theories of union membership suggest that the union status of workers is mainly determined as the result of separate decisions by workers and potential union employers. Workers decide whether they would prefer union or nonunion jobs based on the utilities that these jobs yield to them. Workers become union members either by accepting existing union jobs or by organizing a nonunion workplace. On the other hand, unionized employers are deciding which of the workers who want union jobs to hire. Thus, union status encompasses the job choices of individuals, collective choices of employees, and hiring decisions by employers (Farber, 1983; Hirsch & Addison, 1985). While the above general framework for determination of union status serves as a good starting point for the present study, this discussion provides little guidance for formulating a theoretical model for determination of the union membership status of Asian Americans.

Previous research on union membership rarely focuses on the effect of ethnic differences on union membership status. In typical studies dealing with union status, minority status is included as one of the many control variables (e.g., Antos, Chandler, & Mellow, 1980; Farber, 1983; Lee, 1978), and little attention is paid to theory development. Furthermore, most studies addressing majority-minority comparisons in union membership status allow the Asian identity to be merged within the non-white group that includes blacks, Hispanics, American Indians and Asians. Socioeconomic, cultural and historical differences among these ethnic groups, however, clearly suggest that merging them into a single group is inappropriate.

Due to the lack of previous theoretical discussion on this issue, it is necessary to rely on sociological, economic, and industrial relations literature dealing with immigration, minorities, and union membership.

Fortunately, these general theories have proven to be useful in generating various theoretical frameworks for determination of the union membership status of Asian Americans. The theory formulation process in the present paper involves blending general theories of immigration and union membership with the peculiar historical, socioeconomic, and cultural considerations of Asian Americans.

In the following section, three competing models -- (1) segmented-labor-market model from a labor economics perspective, (2) assimilation model from a sociological perspective, and (3) self-protection model from industrial relations perspective -- on the union status of Asians will be presented. Discussions of these models will be focused on the two research questions of the present paper: (1) Compared to other ethnic groups (e.g., whites and blacks), are Asian Americans more or less likely to be union members?; (2) Does the immigration status of Asians in the United States (e.g., length of stay in the United States and citizenship status) have any effect on their union membership status?

Segmented-Labor-Market Model

An economic model of minority immigration is based on the segmented-labor-market theory. While segmented-labor-market theory is by no means a dominant view among labor economists, it is the most relevant economics model addressing the relationship between minority group status and American unionism. Its main argument is that the progress of most immigrants is limited to peripheral sectors of the economy, because occupations in this secondary labor market have become almost identified as "immigrants' jobs." According to this view, the restriction of labor mobility by segmented markets tends to trap immigrants and minorities in dead-end jobs in the peripheral sector of the economy (Bonacich, Light, &

Wong, 1977; Piore, 1979).

In the segmented-labor-market theory, greater attention is given to the outcomes of the dual economy than to structural and institutional barriers blocking the achievement of racial minorities and immigrants. Segmented-labor-market theory regards boundaries between primary and secondary labor market sectors as a main characteristic of the American labor market, and argues that labor-intensive sweatshops, small establishments, and low-value-added retail and service companies are the typical places where newly arrived immigrant workers can find jobs. This labor market segmentation perspective has distinguished desirable jobs from undesirable ones on the basis of a dichotomy that separates the primary sector (i.e., large, monopolistic, capital intensive, unionized firms) from the periphery (i.e., small, competitive, labor intensive, nonunion firms). Although subsequent researchers have moved away from the idea of closed boundaries between these sectors, they have retained the concepts of core and peripheral segmentation of the labor market (Gordon, Reich, & Edwards, 1982; Kalleberg, Wallace, & Althausen, 1981).¹⁾

In a similar vein, one group of scholars (e.g., Portes & Bach, 1985; Wilson & Portes, 1980) has formulated the enclave economy hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, the enclave economy -- small-scale, ethnically-oriented, geographically-concentrated entrepreneurial activities, such as Chinatowns and Koreatowns -- represents an alternative opportunity that permits immigrant minorities to achieve wages or economic returns comparable to those available for majority members of the society. According to this view, the enclave economy offers immigrant workers important mechanisms for fair rewards and self-employment, which are not normally available to them in

1) Critics of segmented-labor-market theory have questioned whether the distinction between core and peripheral labor markets is real or nominal (Cain, 1976), and whether inter-ethnic economic transactions eventually lead to a growing mixed economy (Nee, Sanders, & Sernau, 1994).

the secondary labor market. A main argument of this hypothesis is that the ethnic enclave mobilizes ethnic solidarity and kinship to create opportunities for immigrant workers.

The ethnic enclave theory also postulates a segmentation, but views the peripheral sector dominated by an ethnic group as an alternative opportunity for further progress rather than a trap. However, it is noteworthy that both the segmented-labor-market and the enclave theories agree that the access of immigrants to the primary or core labor market is effectively blocked by the dual nature of the American economy. In this sense, the enclave theory can be considered a variant of the segmented-labor-market theory.

Previous empirical research on Asian immigrants shows some evidence supporting the segmented-labor-market and the enclave economy perspectives. First, previous research documented a concentration of immigrant Asians (especially, Chinese, Koreans, and Filipinos) in low-skilled manual, service, or retail-trade occupations in the secondary labor market.²⁾ Asian immigrants in this sector tend to cluster in relatively few occupations and, on average, earn lower wages than natives (e.g., Duleep & Sanders, 1992; Hirschman & Wong, 1981; Hurh & Kim, 1989). Second, Asians in the United States have been heavily over-represented in small-scale entrepreneurial activities, which are often coupled with an enclave economy based upon a large concentration of Asian people — Chinatowns, Koreatowns, and Japantowns (Hirschman & Wong, 1981; Scott, 1992).

The segmented-labor-market model provides straightforward implications for the union status of Asians. In the U.S., the degree of unionization is strongly related to certain organizational and industrial characteristics. Industries with higher rates of unionization are usually located in the

2) Asians also are more likely to be found in professional occupations than are whites (Hirschman & Wong, 1981).

primary labor market characterized by larger-than-average firm size, greater amounts of capital per worker, and higher-than-average wages and benefits (e.g., Freeman & Medoff, 1984; Hirsch & Addison, 1985; Kochan & Katz, 1988). In other words, the union membership ratio in the primary sector is substantially higher than that in both the secondary sector and the enclave economy. Because new Asian immigrants are more likely to be hired by small-scale, family-based, or low-wage firms located in the secondary labor-market or the enclave economy, they are less likely to be union members.

According to this view, it is unlikely that changes in the immigration status of Asians (e.g., longer stay in the United States, the status change from foreign nationals to naturalized citizens or U.S.-born citizens) significantly affect their union membership status, because the segmented-labor-market theory predicts "a fundamental dichotomy between the jobs of migrants and the jobs of natives" (Piore, 1979:35), and considers the dual economy as a deep-rooted characteristic of the U.S. labor market.

Hence, the following hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis 1a:

Asian Americans are less likely to be union members than are whites.

Hypothesis 2a:

Years of stay in the U.S. will not significantly affect the union membership status of Asian Americans.

Hypothesis 3a:

Among Asian Americans, the likelihood of being a union member will not be significantly different among foreign nationals, naturalized U.S. citizens, and U.S.-born citizens.

Assimilation Model

The assimilation model, which posits the reduction of ethnic differences in American society over time, has been the theoretical backbone of sociological research on race, ethnicity, and immigration. The assimilation model, also called the "melting pot" hypothesis, places less emphasis on the existence of institutional barriers in American society, such as employer discrimination and *glass ceiling*, and more emphasis on the integration process for immigrants.

According to assimilation theorists, when immigrants first arrive in the United States, they lack the skills, behavioral patterns, and norms valued by U.S. employers because of: poor English; lack of general knowledge about their host society, institutions, and economy; and cultural incompatibility. As a result, recently arrived immigrants usually start from the bottom of the existing hierarchy. Their jobs are usually located at the margins of the larger economy or in small-scale, family-based, and low-wage businesses often developed by ethnic minorities. However, with the passage of time, the assimilation model predicts that immigrants will pick up valued skills and behavioral patterns, adjust to the dominant culture and value, become incorporated into the larger economy, and eventually achieve higher occupational status (Carliner, 1980; Chiswick, 1978). Chiswick (1979) even argued that in approximately eleven to sixteen years after immigration, male immigrant workers were able to achieve earnings parity with their U.S.-born counterparts.³⁾

Interestingly, the predictions of the assimilation model for the union status of Asians are similar to those of the segmented-labor-market model.

3) Critics of the assimilation model, however, argued that recent immigrants are not likely to reach parity with the earnings of natives during their working lives (e.g., Borjas, 1992).

Since the majority of Asian Americans are new immigrants,⁴⁾ the assimilation model predicts that Asians currently are more likely to be found in secondary sector or ethnic economies. Consequently, Asian immigrants are less likely to be union members than are their white counterparts because the union density in the secondary labor market and in the ethnic economies is substantially lower than that in the core labor market.

According to the assimilation theory, however, the union density among Asians will increase as they are incorporated into the mainstream of American society. If Asians eventually will be advanced into the primary labor market and obtain a higher occupational and socioeconomic status comparable with their majority counterparts, it is logical to expect higher union density among Asians who have been in the U.S. than among newly-arrived Asian immigrants. In particular, the assimilation model suggests that the second and later generations of Asian immigrants (e.g., the U.S.-born Asians) will be more likely to be union members than will the first generation (e.g., foreign nationals or naturalized citizens), because the former group will be more assimilated into the American society and more likely to be hired in the primary labor market⁵⁾ (See Table 1).

4) Prior to 1965, immigration was guided by the national-origins quota system, which essentially prohibited immigration from Asia. The 1965 amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act removed the national origin requirements, and have resulted in an influx of Asian immigrants. Asian immigrants accounted for 41.6 percent of all immigrants in the 1980s, while in the 1950s and 1960s the ratios were 6.1 percent and 12.9 percent, respectively (Borjas, 1992).

5) Although the assimilation hypothesis provides a useful hypothesis on the union status of Asians, there is a question of whether an assimilation process will be applicable to descendants of Asian Americans. The assimilation process of European immigrant groups into the mainstream of American society supports the assimilation model (Alba, 1985), since the second and later generations of European Catholics, Jews, and other white ethnics have integrated into mainstream American culture, becoming indistinguishable "Americans." However, such an outcome does not seem to occur for the U.S.-born Asian Americans (Portes & Zhou, 1993), because of the deep-rooted racial prejudice against Asians (Hurh & Kim, 1989) and the visible appearance of Asians compared to European descendants. Indeed, even U.S.-born Asians are found

In sum, the assimilation model suggests the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1b:

Asian Americans are less likely to be union members than whites.

Hypothesis 2b:

Years of stay in the U.S. will positively affect the union membership status of Asian Americans.

Hypothesis 3b:

Among Asian Americans, foreign nationals and naturalized citizens are less likely to be union members than are U.S.-born citizens.

Table 1 Three Theoretical Models:
Hypothesized Effects on Union Membership Status

Theoretical Models	Asian Americana (in Pooled sample)	Years in the U.S. ^b (in Asian sample)	Foreign nationals and Naturalized citizens ^c (in Asian sample)
Segmented-labor-market	Negative	No effect	No effect
Assimilation	Negative	Positive	Negative
Self-protection	Positive	No effect	No effect

^aThe effect of Asian American Dummy on union membership status, as compared to whites

^bThe effect on union membership status of Asian Americans' length of stay in the U.S.

^cThe effect on union membership status of foreign nationals and naturalized Asian citizens, compared to U.S.-born Asian citizens

Self-protection model

The self-protection model is built on the concept of employer discrimination and employees' self-protective response to discriminatory personnel practices. This model considers discrimination on the basis of racial and/or ethnic group membership as one of the most important factors in explaining varied patterns

to be victims of racial discrimination, and lag behind their equally qualified white counterparts in earnings attainment and occupational progress (Zhou & Kamo, 1994).

of economic assimilation among racial minority groups. According to this view, minorities usually are accorded an inferior position in the distribution of socioeconomic rewards in the American economy, and an individual's race and ethnicity frequently takes precedence over his or her individual ability.

Indeed, considerable empirical research has documented the wide socioeconomic gap between minority groups (e.g., blacks, Hispanics, Asians) and whites. Empirical results indicate that Asian Americans, despite generally having higher educational achievements, face racial barriers to equal participation and equal rewards in the U.S. labor market (e.g., Duleep & Sanders, 1992; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1992; Zhou & Kamo, 1994). These findings support the view that institutional discrimination and a glass ceiling exist for Asians because of prejudice against citizens of Asian ancestry.

The self-protection perspective, suggested mainly by industrial relations scholars (e.g., Freeman & Medoff, 1984; Kochan, 1979; Kochan & Katz, 1988), hypothesizes that minority members deliberately choose union jobs over nonunion jobs as a response to employers' potential discriminatory personnel practices. Union membership provides a work environment with highly structured work rules, seniority provisions, stronger job security, and less arbitrary personnel policies. Consequently, union membership provides better protection against employer discrimination for minority members who possess relatively weak individual bargaining power and employment mobility. Another reason for this hypothesis relates to the fact that the union-nonunion wage gap is greater for minorities than for whites (e.g., Hirsch & Addison, 1985). Therefore, minorities have a stronger incentive to join unionized firms than their nonunion counterparts.⁶⁾

6) Not surprisingly, previous studies show that those workers who show a stronger interest in unionization are racial minorities, female workers, and low-wage, low-skilled employees. The reason may be that the main effect of unions has been to improve the wages, benefits, and other working conditions of employee groups which lack individual bargaining power (Farber & Saks, 1980; Kochan & Katz, 1988).

Empirical studies examining worker preference for union representation repeatedly have found that minorities (e.g., blacks, Hispanics and Asians) are more likely to vote for unions than whites (e.g., Farber & Saks, 1980; Kochan, 1979). Although this higher union preference does not necessarily translate into a higher union membership ratio for that particular group, most empirical studies report that nonwhites also are more likely to be union members (Antos, Chandler, & Mellow, 1980; Farber, 1983; Lee, 1978; Hirsch & Berger, 1984). While little research has examined specifically Asians' (as distinguished from other minorities) preference for union representation or their likelihood of being union members, there is no convincing reason to believe that Asians are different from other minority groups in this regard. Indeed, Asian Americans have been a target of severe prejudice and institutional discrimination since their first arrival in America.⁷⁾ Thus, the self-protection model predicts that Asians are more likely to be union members than are whites.

The self-protection model predicts that the changes in the immigration status (e.g., years of stay in the U.S. and the change from foreign nationals to naturalized citizens or U.S.-born citizens) of Asians will not significantly affect their union membership status. There is evidence showing that even second or later generations of Asian Americans, who have achieved higher levels of acculturation and educational attainment than the first generation, often encounter institutional barriers and diminishing employment prospects (Takaki, 1989; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1992). Also, there has been no convincing indication that racial discrimination will decrease significantly in the near future. Thus, it is

7) For example, in the late 19th century, Chinese were formally prohibited from immigrating to the United States because of racial prejudice, and during World War II Japanese Americans were incarcerated in concentration camps due to their ancestry. Strikingly, these "open" discriminatory practices against Asians have been implemented by the U.S. Congress and federal government as a form of institutional racism (Huh & Kim, 1989).

unlikely that Asians change their preference for unionized jobs, as long as they perceive that discrimination in the process of unequal socioeconomic achievement for minorities and whites persists in American society.

According to the self-protection model, the following hypotheses were formulated:

Hypothesis 1c:

Asian Americans are more likely to be union members than are whites.

Hypothesis 2c:

Years of stay in the U.S. will not affect the union membership status of Asian Americans.

Hypothesis 3c:

Among Asian Americans, the likelihood of being union members will not be significantly different among foreign nationals, naturalized U.S. citizens and U.S.-born citizens.

The three competing models on the union status of Asians, drawn from diverse disciplines, such as labor economics, sociology, and industrial relations, have been discussed. Since the above theoretical models are based on unique perspectives according to the respective discipline, and since each of the above arguments is at least partially supported by empirical evidence, it would be premature to conclude that one model is inherently more valid than the others. In this sense, the research question is not theoretical, but empirical. In the following, research methods adopted to test these competing models will be discussed.

III. Research Methods

Data

Data used in this study were drawn from the March Supplement of 1993 Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is a monthly survey of about 50,000 households conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the U.S. Department of Labor. The CPS is the primary source of information on the labor force characteristics of the U.S. population, and is the most comprehensive survey data available on individual union membership. The sample is proportionally selected to represent the civilian population. Respondents are interviewed to obtain detailed information about each member of the household 15 years of age and older.

The CPS contains information on employment status, earnings, and personal and demographic characteristics. In particular, the 1993 March Supplement contains unique information on union membership status along with details on immigration status, citizenship, and years in the U.S. Thus, this data set serves as an ideal source for the purposes of this study. This study used a sample of 14,820 respondents who answered union questions in the March Supplement (i.e., pooled sample). In addition, to analyze the experience of Asian Americans from a comparative perspective, subsamples for Asians (N=528), blacks (N=1,273), and whites (N=12,881) were analyzed.⁸⁾

Measures and Analysis

The dependent variable in the study was dichotomous: whether the respondent was a member of a labor union or not (i.e., union status). Since

8) The remaining 134 respondents include American Indians, Aleutian Eskimos, and others.

the dependent variable was dichotomous, probit regressions were used for the pooled sample and the three subsamples of Asians, blacks, and whites.

Table2. Variable Definition

Variables	Definition
Union membership density	Proportion of union members in the sample
Age	Years
Earnings	Earnings in 1993
Earnings (Log)	Natural log of earnings in 1993
Full-time work	1=Worked at least 35 hours per week, 0=Other
Male	1=Male, 0=Female
Market experience	= Age - years of education - 6
Years in the U.S.	Years stayed in the U.S.
Citizenship status:	
Naturalized citizen	1=Naturalized U.S. citizen, 0=Other
Foreign nationals	1=Not a citizen of the U.S., 0=Other
Born U.S. citizen	1=U.S. citizen by birth, 0=Other
Education:	
High school	1=Finished 12th grade, 0=Other
Some college	1=Junior college or dropped out of college, 0=Other
College or higher	1=College or graduate school, 0=Other
Less than high school	1=Finished up to 11th grade, 0=Other
Race:	
Asian	1=Asians or pacific islanders, 0=Others
Black	1=Blacks, 0=Others
White	1=Whites, 0=Others
Native Indian	1=American Indians or Aleutian Eskimos, 0=Others
Occupation:	
Professional	1=Professional or managerial, 0=Other
Clerical	1=Clerical or technical support, 0=Other
Sales	1=Sales, 0=Other
Protective service	1=Protective or other service, 0=Other
Production	1=Production or machine operation, 0=Other
Transportation	1=Transportation or material moving, 0=Other
Region:	
East	1=New England or middle Atlantic, 0=Other
Midwest	1=East north central or west north central, 0=Other
South	1=South Atlantic, east south central, or west south central, 0=Other
West	1=Mountain or pacific, 0=Other
Industry:	
Construction	1=Construction, 0=Other
Durable manufacturing	1=Manufacturing-durable goods, 0=Other
Nondurable manufacturing	1=Manufacturing-nondurable goods, 0=Other
Transportation	1=Transportation, 0=Other
Communications	1=Communications, 0=Other
Trade	1=Wholesale or retail trade, 0=Other
Finance	1=Finance, insurance or real estate, 0=Other
Services	1=Services, 0=Other
Public administration	1=Public administration, 0=Other

Specifically, to investigate the relationship between race and the extent of unionism, the following statistical model was estimated.

$$U = a + b * Z + e$$

where U is a dichotomous variable indicating union status, Z is a vector of exogenous variables affecting union status, and e is a disturbance term. The exogenous variables include demographic and socioeconomic variables, immigration and citizenship status, and occupation and industry dummies. Definitions and measurement of the dependent and independent variables are presented in Table 2.

IV. Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 3 provides the means and standard deviations of the dependent and independent variables. Union density was higher among Asians

(16.3 percent) than whites (13.9 percent) and the whole population (14.6 percent). Blacks (21.6 percent) showed the highest union density. The present pattern of racial differences in union status is generally consistent with previous findings that union density among non-white minority members is higher than the case of whites (e.g., Farber, 1987).

Asians had the highest average earnings (\$28,101), followed by whites (\$26,452), and blacks (\$22,002). The higher earnings of Asians can be partially explained by the fact that Asians had the most education among all groups. More than 39 percent of Asians graduated from colleges or graduate schools, while 26 percent of whites and 16 percent of blacks did so. These results confirm the conventional notion that Asians have more education and higher income than the population in general (e.g., O'Hare,

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Full Sample		Asian		Black		Indian		White	
	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev
Union Membership Density	0.1463	0.3397	0.1629	0.3602	0.2160	0.3977	0.1594	0.3380	0.1386	0.3251
Age (years)	39.2960	12.6953	38.8390	11.9112	38.6441	12.0275	38.0652	12.5432	39.3924	12.7904
Earnings (Log)	9.6451	1.3897	9.7179	1.3995	9.5794	1.1242	9.3837	1.2342	9.6514	1.4140
Full-time Work (0-1)	0.8121	0.3907	0.8542	0.3533	0.8680	0.3386	0.7826	0.4140	0.8051	0.3961
Male (0-1)	0.5291	0.4992	0.5227	0.5000	0.4407	0.4967	0.4855	0.5016	0.5385	0.4985
Market experience (years)	20.1019	12.8116	18.9337	12.5805	19.8637	12.3562	19.5725	12.7019	20.1790	12.8650
Years in the U.S.	36.7342	14.3820	22.1318	14.2076	36.2840	13.6703	36.1679	13.3915	37.3678	14.1567
Citizenship Status:										
Naturalized Citizen (0-1)	0.0384	0.1922	0.3239	0.4684	0.0330	0.1787	0.0217	0.1464	0.0274	0.1633
Foreign Nationals (0-1)	0.0784	0.2688	0.3352	0.4725	0.0644	0.2456	0.0580	0.2345	0.0695	0.2543
U.S. Citizen (0-1)	0.8832	0.3212	0.3409	0.4745	0.9026	0.2966	0.9203	0.2718	0.9031	0.2958
Education:										
High School (0-1)	0.3210	0.4669	0.2159	0.4118	0.3661	0.4819	0.3913	0.4898	0.3201	0.4665
Some College (0-1)	0.2951	0.4561	0.2708	0.4448	0.3260	0.4689	0.3478	0.4780	0.2924	0.4549
College or higher (0-1)	0.2511	0.4336	0.3958	0.4895	0.1610	0.3677	0.0942	0.2932	0.2557	0.4363
Less Than High School (0-1)	0.1329	0.3598	0.1174	0.3457	0.1469	0.3129	0.1667	0.3390	0.1317	0.3014
Race:										
Asian (0-1)	0.0356	0.1854								
Black (0-1)	0.0859	0.2802								
White (0-1)	0.8692	0.3372								
Native Indian (0-1)	0.0093	0.0961								
Occupation:										
Professional (0-1)	0.2838	0.4509	0.2917	0.4550	0.1901	0.3925	0.1884	0.3925	0.2938	0.4555
Clerical (0-1)	0.1769	0.3816	0.1989	0.3995	0.2019	0.4016	0.1812	0.3866	0.1734	0.3786
Sales (0-1)	0.1231	0.3286	0.1288	0.3353	0.0872	0.2822	0.1159	0.3213	0.1265	0.3325
Protective Service (0-1)	0.1312	0.3377	0.1250	0.3310	0.2247	0.4175	0.2174	0.4140	0.1213	0.3265
Production (0-1)	0.1753	0.3802	0.1610	0.3679	0.1830	0.3868	0.2029	0.4036	0.1748	0.3798
Transportation (0-1)	0.0785	0.2690	0.0720	0.2587	0.1045	0.3060	0.0652	0.2478	0.0764	0.2656
Farming (0-1)	0.0311	0.1736	0.0227	0.1492	0.0086	0.0926	0.0290	0.1684	0.0337	0.1804
Region:										
East (0-1)	0.2045	0.4033	0.1799	0.3845	0.1925	0.3944	0.0942	0.2932	0.2078	0.4058
Midwest (0-1)	0.2430	0.4289	0.0833	0.2766	0.1822	0.3862	0.2681	0.4446	0.2553	0.4361
South (0-1)	0.3020	0.4592	0.1326	0.3394	0.5460	0.4981	0.1957	0.3981	0.2860	0.4519
West (0-1)	0.2505	0.4333	0.6042	0.4895	0.0793	0.2704	0.4420	0.4984	0.2508	0.4335
Industry:										
Construction (0-1)	0.0611	0.2395	0.0322	0.1767	0.0236	0.1518	0.0870	0.2828	0.0657	0.2477
Durable Manufacturing (0-1)	0.0917	0.2886	0.0909	0.2878	0.0864	0.2811	0.0725	0.2602	0.0925	0.2897
Nondurable Manufacturing (0-1)	0.0683	0.2522	0.0663	0.2490	0.0935	0.2912	0.0507	0.2202	0.0661	0.2484
Transportation (0-1)	0.0441	0.2054	0.0530	0.2243	0.0644	0.2456	0.0290	0.1684	0.0419	0.2004
Communication (0-1)	0.0242	0.1537	0.0057	0.0752	0.0291	0.1681	0.0217	0.1464	0.0245	0.1547
Trade (0-1)	0.2092	0.4068	0.2462	0.4312	0.1658	0.3720	0.2464	0.4325	0.2116	0.4085
Finance (0-1)	0.0633	0.2435	0.0663	0.2490	0.0652	0.2470	0.0217	0.1464	0.0634	0.2437
Services (0-1)	0.3526	0.4778	0.3731	0.4841	0.3833	0.4864	0.3188	0.4677	0.3491	0.4767
Public Administration (0-1)	0.0468	0.2113	0.0455	0.2085	0.0809	0.2728	0.1232	0.3299	0.0427	0.2022
Agriculture (0-1)	0.0386	0.1926	0.0208	0.1430	0.0079	0.0883	0.0290	0.1684	0.0425	0.2017
N	14820		528		1273		138		12881	

1990).⁹⁾

The present data set shows that Asians were relatively new to the United States. About 32 percent of Asians were naturalized citizens, while 3 percent of blacks and 3 percent of whites were. Although 34 percent of Asians had foreign nationality, only 6 percent of blacks and 7 percent of whites did so. Thirty-four percent of Asian descendants were U.S.-born citizens, while 90 percent of blacks and 91 percent of whites were. On the average, Asians have been in the U.S. for 22 years, while blacks and whites have been for 36 years and 37 years, respectively.

Another distinctive characteristic of Asians was that 60 percent lived in the West, while 8 percent of blacks and 25 percent of whites did so. Compared with the pooled sample, Asian representation was substantially lower in the Midwest (9 percent vs. 24 percent) and the South (13 percent vs. 30 percent). Asians showed a distribution in job categories generally similar to the entire pooled sample, although Asians tend to be slightly over-represented in clerical jobs (19.9 percent of Asians vs. 17.7 percent of the pooled sample), and under-represented in production jobs (16.1 percent of Asians vs. 17.5 percent of the pooled sample). Finally, Asian representation in industries closely matched that of the pooled sample.

Results of Probit Analyses

Table 4 presents the results of probit analyses for the pooled sample and three subsamples (e.g., Asians, blacks, and whites).

The Effects on Union Membership of Asian Ethnicity and Immigration

9) Although Asians are found to have higher incomes than other ethnic groups, the higher incomes may be accounted for by over-education, longer working hours, and regional concentration of Asians in high-cost-of-living states such as California and New York. This fact suggests that Asians may have to pay a higher price than whites for achieving the same level of socio-economic status (Hurh & Kim, 1989; Hirschman & Wong, 1984).

Table 4. Results of Probit Estimation

Variables	Pooled sample	Asian	Black	White
Asian	0.2204 **	—	—	—
Black	0.3424 **	—	—	—
Native Indian	0.1340	—	—	—
Years in the U.S.	0.1412	0.1674 **	0.1489	0.1466
Naturalized citizens	-0.1483	-0.1713 **	0.1450	-0.1394
Foreign nationals	-0.3240 **	-0.2247 ***	-0.1432	-0.3045 **
Earnings (Log)	0.2424 **	0.2102	0.3207 **	0.2279 **
Age	-0.0828 ***	-0.0738	-0.0718 *	-0.0902 ***
Male	0.3122 **	0.1253 ***	0.3088 **	0.2866 **
Full-time work	0.1503 ***	0.2273 **	0.1486 **	0.1412 ***
Market experience	0.1150	0.1724 **	0.1362	0.1080
High school	0.1212 ***	0.2471 ***	0.1199 ***	0.1139 **
Some college	0.1286	0.2339	0.1273	0.1209
College or higher	-0.0978	-0.1690 **	-0.0967	-0.0920
Professional	-0.2253 ***	-0.1588 ***	-0.2229 ***	-0.2118 ***
Clerical	0.4703 **	0.1409	0.4652 **	0.4297 **
Sales	-0.0466	-0.1662	-0.0462	-0.0439
Production	0.6564 ***	0.3189 ***	0.3652 ***	0.6170 ***
Transportation	0.4882	0.1720	0.4756	0.4382
Durable goods industry	0.0862 ***	0.0930 **	0.0854 ***	0.0811 ***
Nondurable goods industry	-0.0968 **	-0.1796 ***	-0.1005 **	-0.0955 **
Transportation industry	0.4050 *	0.2996	0.3365	0.3739 **
Communication industry	0.4986	0.2116	0.4934	0.4687
Trade industry	-0.2500	0.3314	-0.2474	-0.2351
Finance industry	-0.1074	-0.0707	-0.1825	-0.1010
Service industry	0.1760	0.0355	0.1741	0.1730
Public admin. sector	0.3370 **	0.2512 **	0.2611 **	0.3169 **
East	0.1906	0.5352	0.1885	0.1792
Midwest	0.1374 **	0.1128 **	0.1360	0.1291 **
South	-0.5646 ***	-0.3648 ***	-0.5586 ***	-0.5308 ***
N	14820	528	1273	12881
Log-Likelihood	-468.8607	-247.9136	-302.1018	-450.5171

*p < .10 **p < .05 ***p < .01, two-tailed tests.

Status. Results from the pooled sample show that Asians and blacks are more likely to join unions than are whites (both significant at the .05

level, two-tailed tests). The results are more compatible with the self-protection model (Hypothesis 1c) than the segmented-labor-market (Hypothesis 1a) and assimilation models (Hypothesis 1b). The finding suggests that Asians prefer union jobs to nonunion ones to protect themselves from employers' potential discrimination, and unions are perceived by Asians as an effective sheltering institution. The results are largely consistent with prior work (Farber, 1983; Hirsch & Berger, 1984) which found that nonwhites in general are more likely to be union members.¹⁰⁾

The results show that years stayed in the U.S. has a positive impact on union status in Asian subsample (significant at the .05 level, two-tailed tests), while this variable was insignificant in the pooled sample, black subsample, and white subsample. In addition, the two immigration status variables, foreign nationals and naturalized citizens, had negative relationships with union status only in the Asian sample. Again, these two variables were not significant in the other samples. These results suggest that the immigration-related variables are more important in explaining the union status of Asians than those of whites and blacks, reflecting the fact that Asians are a relatively new immigrant group.

The results indicate that (1) the longer Asians stay in the U.S., the more likely they are to be union members, and (2) U.S.-born Asians (e.g., the second and later generations of Asian immigrants) are more likely to be union members than are Asians with foreign nationality or naturalized U.S. citizens (e.g., the first generation of Asian immigrants). The above results are more consistent with the assimilation model (Hypotheses 2b and 3b) than either the segmented-labor-market model (Hypotheses 2a and

10) Analyzing a data set from the April 1983 Current Population Survey, Funkhouser (1993) found that black and non-Mexican Hispanics were more likely to be union members than were whites. The author's probit analysis further indicated that other male minority groups (including Asians) were more likely to be union members than were white males, while the unionization propensity of Mexican males was smaller than that of white males.

3a) or the self-protection model (Hypotheses 2c and 3c). The results imply that Asians will be advanced into primary labor market and eventually assimilated into the American economy. Taken together, these results clearly reject the segmented-labor-market model, while they show some support for the self-protection and assimilation models.

Other Results. According to previous studies, union membership has been found to be systematically related to a number of independent variables such as earnings, personal characteristics (e.g., age, gender, education, market experience, full-time employment), occupations, industry types, and region. In the present study, these independent variables generally have typical effects on union status, and were largely consistent with previous research. When the effects of such independent variables in the Asian sample were compared with those in other samples, however, some interesting patterns were found.

The results showed that earnings have generally significant and positive effects on union status.¹¹⁾ While age showed a significant and negative sign,¹²⁾ male employees,¹³⁾ full-time employees,¹⁴⁾ market experience,¹⁵⁾

11) Possible explanations for the positive impact of earnings on unionization are that union services are a normal good (i.e., they have a positive income elasticity) and that union membership is particularly unlikely for very low-income workers in the secondary labor market.

12) Unionism flattens earnings-age profiles and provides relative wage advantages to younger workers (e.g., Freeman & Medoff, 1984), which may encourage younger workers to join unions. The result is consistent with previous findings (e.g., Farber, 1983).

13) A main reason for this is that women tend to be in sectors of the economy -- industries, occupations, and firms -- where union density is below average. For example, union coverage is less likely in job settings with temporary labor force attachment or where part-time work schedules are common (Freeman & Medoff, 1984).

14) Part-time employees are less likely to be union members than are full-time employees, since the former group tend to possess relatively low-skilled jobs for short periods of time before moving on to other jobs.

15) Workers with greater labor market experience are more likely to be chosen by unionized employers (Abowd & Farber, 1982).

and employees with high-school education,¹⁶⁾ all had generally positive and significant relationships with union status in almost all equations. These results are consistent to those found in previous empirical literature (See Freeman & Medoff [1984] and Hirsch & Addison [1985] for literature review).

In this regard, one interesting result is that in the Asian subsample, the conventional explanatory variables of union status, such as earnings and age, failed to obtain significance. These results were contrasted to the significant effects of these two variables on union status in the pooled sample, and the black and white subsamples. These results lead to an interesting conclusion that for Asians, as a relatively new immigrant group, immigration-related variables (e.g., length of stay in the U.S., naturalized citizens, and foreign nationals) are found to be more significant determinants of union status than are the conventional explanatory variables of union status (e.g., earnings and age).

The effects of the independent variables indicating occupations, industry types, and region are generally consistent with previous findings, and no notable difference between Asians and other ethnic groups was found. Professionals are negatively associated with unionization, while production and clerical workers are positively related to unionization.¹⁷⁾ Manufacturing sectors and public administration are positively associated with unionization.¹⁸⁾ Also, the present analysis shows that employees in the

16) Union membership may be less likely among those with more than a high school education, because education makes workers more mobile and less dependent on union protection.

17) Production and clerical workers are much more likely to be union members than are professionals. Professionals have less need for unions, since they usually receive higher pay, have more freedom on the job, and have more individual bargaining power than do production and clerical workers.

18) In the U.S., manufacturing sectors have traditionally been among the highest in union density. Public sector unionism has been greatly expanded since the 1960s, resulting in greater union density in the public sector than in the private sector.

South have a generally lower probability to be union members than their counterparts in the Midwest and East.¹⁹⁾

V. Conclusion

Despite the growing importance of Asian Americans in the U.S. labor market, previous literature on labor unions has virtually ignored the existence of this unique workforce. The Asian component of the population has long been ignored in the study of American unions, and very few theoretical discussions are available. The present study is intended to fill this research gap.

Utilizing the March Supplement of 1993 Current Population Survey (CPS) data, the present study examined racial and ethnic variations in union membership, focusing on Asians. Empirical findings were used to assess three competing theoretical perspectives -- segmented-labor-market, assimilation, and self-protection models -- which were drawn from labor economics, sociology, and industrial relations, respectively.

The present study found that Asians and blacks are more likely to join unions than are whites. Contrasted to the cases of blacks and whites, immigration-related variables (e.g., length of stay in the U.S., naturalized citizens, and foreign nationals) appear to be more important in explaining the union status of Asians than the conventional explanatory variables for union status (e.g., earnings and age). These results show a uniqueness of Asians, a relatively new immigrant group, as compared to other ethnic groups in terms of the determination of union status. This uniqueness of

19) Unionism is substantially less prevalent in the South than in the Midwest and East. Regional differences are believed to reflect differences in industry characteristics, occupational structures, and public attitudes toward unionism, which are not accounted for by other control variables.

Asians clearly demonstrates the inadequacy of research practices that merge Asians, blacks, American Indians, and Hispanics into one non-white group, and stresses the need for a separate analysis for each ethnic group.

The results of the present study seem to reject the segmented-labor-market, while the assimilation and self-protection models received some empirical support. Overall, the results suggest that Asians consider unions as an effective protective institution mitigating the adverse effects of employer discrimination, and the second and later generations of Asian immigrants are more likely to be union members than is the first generation, as they become more assimilated to American society.

The present results did not confirm the predictions of the segmented-labor-market model. However, we should not interpret this as meaning that the dual-nature of American economy is groundless, since both the assimilation and the self-protection models are based on an implicit assumption of the existence of secondary labor market and employer discrimination, and there is ample evidence of the significant under-representation of Asians in many sectors of the dominant economy and society. Perhaps the most important theoretical implication of this study is that the determination of the union status of Asians is a more complicated process than any of the three theoretical models assumes. The fact that none of the three models received full support from the empirical results makes this point particularly clear. Consequently, these results suggest the need for an integrated model which may incorporate the diverse perspectives from different disciplines into one coherent framework.

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Unionization of Asian Americans: The Effects of Race and Immigration Status

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ABSTRACT

Despite the growing importance of Asian Americans in the U.S. labor market, previous literature on labor unions has largely ignored the existence of this unique workforce. This study empirically examined the relationship between individuals' race and their union membership status with particular emphasis on Asian Americans. Using a data set drawn from 14,820 respondents in the March 1993 Current Population Survey (CPS), the authors evaluated the predictions of three competing theoretical perspectives -- the segmented-labor-market model, the assimilation model, and the self-protection model -- on the union status of Asian Americans. Probit regression results showed that Asians are more likely to join unions than whites. Contrasted to the cases of black and whites, immigration-related variables (e.g., length of stay in the U.S., naturalized citizens, and foreign nationals) were found to be more significant determinants of union status for Asians than the conventional explanatory variables of union status (e.g., earnings and age). These results are more compatible with the assimilation and the self-protection models than the segmented-labor-market model. Theoretical implications of the present results are discussed.

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〈초 록〉

미국 노동시장에서 아시아계 미국인의 중요성이 점점 커져가고 있지만 이들의 노조활동에 관한 연구는 매우 미미한 실정이다. 본 연구에서는 소수민족의 노조가입 연구를 통해 기존의 문헌에서 다루지 않았던 인종 및 이민 관련 변수의 효과를 분석하였다. 자료는 1993년 미국 상주인구조사를 이용하였으며 세 가지 이론(단절된 노동시장 모형, 동화모형, 보호모형)을 사용하여 아시아계 미국인의 노조가입을 연구하였다. 프로빗 회귀 분석 결과 소수민족이 백인보다 더 노조에 가입하는 경향이 높았으며, 소수민족의 경우 백인보다 이민 관련 변수(미국 체재 기간, 영주권자 신분, 시민 신분)의 영향이 컸다. 이러한 결과는 단절된 노동시장 모형보다는 동화모형 및 보호모형을 지지하는 것이며, 앞으로 소수민족의 노동시장 활동과 결과를 연구함에 있어서 이민 관련 변수를 고려해야 함을 시사한다.