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Class, Family Involvement, and Asian American Four and Two-Year College Students' Experiences of Advantage and Disadvantage

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CLASS, FAMILY INVOLVEMENT, AND ASIAN AMERICAN FOUR AND TWO-YEAR
COLLEGE STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES OF ADVANTAGE AND DISADVANTAGE

A Dissertation Presented

by

BLAIR HARRINGTON

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

MAY 2022

Department of Sociology

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BLAIR HARRINGTON

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DEDICATION

This dissertation about family is for my family both here and in the Philippines. Thank you.

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As a first generation college student and Filipina American woman, I am extremely proud to have achieved this educational feat. I want to thank my family. Mom and dad, you have and continue to inspire my work ethic. Also, thank you and nani, grandpa, Lyndsay and now Cody, for always being there and reminding me of the importance of family. To my family in the Philippines: grandma, Uncle Ormecidas Jr., Uncle Felizardo, Auntie Denia, Auntie Gloria, Auntie Jovina, Auntie Delia, and my many cousins, I value you and my Filipino roots immensely. Matt, you're incredible. You support everything that I do and refuse to let me doubt myself.

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ABSTRACT

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MAY 2022

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While the significance of familial support in college receives substantial and growing attention, Asian American college students' experiences of such support remain unclear. In a series of three articles that draw on a total of 140 intensive semi-structured interviews, this dissertation explores the effect class has on students' experiences of three different types of familial support: 1) students' receipt of parental support, 2) students' provision of parental support, and 3) students' receipt of sibling support. The first article "*The Power of Class and Not Institution Type: Asian American Four and Two-Year College Students' Receipt of Parental Support*" employs a trichotomous class design and finds that class affects the amount of financial and academic support four and two-year students receive from parents. Across institution type, students from more disadvantaged backgrounds receive substantially less of this help; however, academic support most impedes college students' academic success. The second article "*It's More Us Helping Them Instead of Them Helping Us': How Class Disadvantage Motivates Asian American College Students to Help their Parents*" considers the support four-year students can provide for parents. Employing the same trichotomous class design, it illustrates that most students express the importance of helping parents (i.e., a facet of filial piety). Yet, only students from more disadvantaged class backgrounds supply translation support and speak seriously about

future provisions of financial support; both of which have implications for students' stress and struggle in college. The third article "*The Sibling Advantage: Asian American First Generation College Students and the Academic Support they Receive from Siblings*" shows how some Asian American first gen four and two-year students benefit immensely from the academic support their older, college-educated siblings provide. Comparing their receipt of support to that of Black and white first gen four-year students and Asian American continuing gen four and two-year students, it reveals that race—more specifically immigration—and class interact to shape students' receipt of sibling support. Together, these articles highlight the heterogeneity of family involvement for Asian American college students, demonstrating how students from different class backgrounds have experiences of both advantage and disadvantage.

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CHAPTER 1

THE POWER OF CLASS AND NOT INSTITUTION TYPE: ASIAN AMERICAN FOUR AND TWO-YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS' RECEIPT OF PARENTAL SUPPORT

While most scholarship on parent involvement with Asian American undergraduates centers either on the advantages or disadvantages these students experience, this paper considers their heterogeneity or range of experiences. Drawing on 101 interviews with four and two-year college students from diverse class backgrounds, it investigates 1) the kinds of financial and academic support students receive from their parents, 2) how class background and institution-type affect students' receipt of support, and 3) how receiving (or not receiving) support affects students in college. Dividing participants into three class groupings—advantaged, disadvantaged and ambiguous, the interviews reveal that class advantage is key in shaping parents' ability to supply support, but institution type—enrollment at a four or two-year school—appears to have little effect. And, the lack of academic support from parents, academic advising in particular, matters most for students in college. Thus, this paper shows that parent involvement in the college experience is highly diverse and unequal for Asian American students, and more complex than prior literature asserts. Challenging societal stigma concerning community colleges, however, it suggests that four and two-year students (who are similar in terms of class status) have comparable experiences of parental involvement. The findings also demonstrate the value of colleges supplying students with academic advising support. Disadvantaged students most need this assistance, but some ambiguous and advantaged students can also benefit from more targeted aid. Future research should explore if and how these results vary by race.

INTRODUCTION

College graduation is a key source of economic advancement in this country (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). Thus, identifying what factors affect undergraduates' ability to succeed in college addresses key aspects of the social reproduction and continuity of inequality—even among those who make it to college. Extensive literature documents how race creates inequity in college students' experiences. Much of this scholarship describes the racial discrimination students of color encounter, which can have negative implications for their mental health and resulting academic performance (Aries, 2008; Mendoza et al., 2002; Nora & Cabrera, 1996). In the last two decades, the ways in which parent involvement (or a lack thereof) contributes to college success has similarly become a popular topic (Banks-Santilli, 2014; Daniel, Evans, & Scott, 2001). Most institutions now have an office of family services or family relations (Daniels & Savage, 2008). Less research, however, examines how race shapes parent involvement in the college experience. This paper explores parent involvement in the college experience with Asian American undergraduates.

Asian Americans have the highest college enrollment and completion rates compared to all other racial groups (Hussar et al., 2020). Yet, reviews of major scholarly journals indicate that articles rarely center on Asian American undergraduates (Zhan & Museus, 2009). Nor, do they center on Asian American families (Fang et al., 2008). And, insofar as it receives attention, parent involvement with Asian American college students is the subject of heated debate. The media and some scholarship discuss how parents promote Asian American undergraduates' success. Other research, in an effort to dispel the model minority stereotype, highlights parents' lack of involvement and the hardship students endure as a result.

This paper argues that neither approach reflects the heterogeneity of Asian American college students' experiences. Drawing on interviews with 101 Asian American undergraduates from diverse class backgrounds who attend four and two-year institutions, it examines 1) the kinds of financial and academic support students receive from their parents, 2) how class background and institution-type affect students' receipt of support, and 3) how receiving (or not receiving) support affect students in college.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Though the topic of parent involvement in college now garners considerable attention, gaps in the literature still exist. In 2000, Arnett coined the term “emerging adulthood”, explaining that individuals who are 18-25 share many characteristics with those who are under the age of 18 and traditionally deemed to be “children” (Arnett, 2000). Yet, research on parenting drastically declines once children turn 18. And the research concerning parent involvement in higher education is no different; that is, much of it explores parents' involvement in the college application process—e.g., how parents help their children in high school complete their college applications and select a school to attend (Hossler, Schmit, & Vesper, 1999; Richards, 2020; Smith & Zhang, 2009). Even studies that analyze college students (Kranstuber, Carr, & Hosek, 2012; Mullen, 2010) tend to emphasize these pre-college experiences. Or, they focus on four-year students' transition to college: their first three weeks of college (Palbusa & Gauvain, 2017), first semester (Hiester, Nordstrom, & Swenson, 2012), or first year (Nichols & Islas, 2015; Roksa et al., 2020). Thus, this paper intentionally excluded four-year students who were in their first year of college and two-year students who had not completed at least one semester of college, and it describes students' receipt of parental support and the implications of such support during college.

Defining Parent Involvement as Parental Support

Parent involvement is a multifaceted term, and Roksa and Kinsley (2019) critique most research for only investigating a single form or aspect of parental involvement in college. This paper analyzes both the financial and academic support undergraduates receive from their parents. Existing scholarship—that which centers on Asian American college students (Chhuon et al. 2010; Russell, Crockett, & Chao, 2010; Tang, Kim, & Haviland, 2013) and that which does not (Covarrubias, Jones, & Johnson, 2020; Roksa & Kinsley, 2019; Ziemniak & Lamkin, 2010)—often discusses parent involvement in terms of the emotional support parents supply undergraduates. While the participants in this study affirm the significance of parents' emotional support, there already appears to be a consensus among researchers that undergraduates (regardless of their race, class, or institution type) overwhelmingly receive this support from their parents, and it aids their success in college.

A second prominent way studies have defined parent involvement is by speaking about parents' beliefs—their aspirations, expectations, and preferences for undergraduates (Hicks, 2006; Workman, 2015; Yosso, 2005). Since this paper draws on interview data with Asian American college students and not their parents, analyzing students' perceptions of their parents' attitudes seemed somewhat inappropriate. Further, parents' educational beliefs are already the most explored area of parent involvement with Asian American undergraduates, and—again—researchers largely appear to be in consensus: Most parents of Asian descent—due to their immigrant backgrounds—have high educational aspirations and expectations for their children and prefer that they major in math or science-related fields (Hanson & Gilbert, 2012; Kim, 2014; Louie, 2001). Therefore, by investigating Asian American college students, this paper fills gaps

in the literature by focusing on parent involvement in the form of financial and academic support rather than in the form of parents' emotional support or educational beliefs.

Parents can provide undergraduates with various kinds of financial and academic support. With financial support, parents may pay for college students' educational expenses (e.g., their tuition, books, and supplemental tutoring) as well as their noneducational expenses (e.g., supplying students with spending money). Padilla-Walker (2012) found that parents' typically contributed more to the former as compared to the latter. Hanson (2021) analyzed national data and revealed that parents paid for less than half (40%) of undergraduates' educational expenses. Still, their contributions were more than that of any other single source—e.g., loans, scholarships and grants, or students' personal contributions.

Academic support also may take a variety of forms: Parents may track students' academic progress (Westbrook & Scott, 2012). They may interact with college personnel to address students' academic needs (Hamilton, 2016). They may provide students with direct academic assistance on their assignments (Covarrubias et al., 2020). They may also supply important academic advice or knowledge about college and help students with their academic decision-making (Nichols & Islas, 2015). This paper considers these forms of financial and academic support; it also looks to see if students, in their interviews, discuss any additional forms of assistance their parents provide.

Effect of Class on Parental Support in College

Social reproduction theory purports that disadvantages are cumulative (Bourdieu, 1984): Children from disadvantaged class backgrounds receive less social and cultural capital—whether in the form of financial or academic support—from their parents than children from advantaged class backgrounds. Using Bourdieu as her theoretical guide, Lareau is much cited for her

examination of the processes of social reproduction between parents and their young children (2002). Her later work (Lareau, 2011) emphasized how advantaged parents' employment of concerted cultivation continued to benefit their children into emerging adulthood, as most entered college and continued to receive support from their parents while there. Since Lareau, numerous researchers have exposed that inequities in parents' provision of financial and academic support also exist between advantaged and disadvantaged undergraduates (Armstrong & Hamilton, 2013; Hamilton, Roksa, & Nielsen, 2018; Nichols & Islas, 2015). However, usually this research—which intends to be representative of college students more broadly—includes few or no Asian American participants. Most of the scholarship that centers on Asian American college students also centers on students from disadvantaged class backgrounds; thus—like Lareau (2011)—it provides an incomplete view of how class affects parent involvement in college. Much of this literature (Chhuon et al., 2010; Louie, 2008; Palmer & Maramba, 2015; Shen, 2015; Tu & Okazaki, 2021) affirms the research not specific to Asian American students, demonstrating that disadvantaged Asian American students received minimal financial and academic support from their parents.

Some scholarship, however, suggests that the processes of social reproduction may be unique for Asian American college students. Tang, Kim, and Haviland (2013) found that disadvantaged students lacked academic support, some though spoke about their parents' financial contributions. Lee and Zhou (2014; 2015), whose work is seminal in the field of Asian American Studies, advanced that disadvantaged immigrant parents of Asian descent drew on their immigrant backgrounds (i.e., ethnic capital) in order to “help override their class disadvantage” (2014, p.51) and supply their children with support. Since 71% of Asian American adults are immigrants (Budiman & Ruiz, 2021), this means that many Asian American college

students are immigrants; even more have immigrant parents. While Lee and Zhou's findings (2014; 2015) are significant, they focused on students' receipt of support pre-college. Other researchers have examined the college experience and highlighted ways that parents' immigrant backgrounds benefit Asian American undergraduates' academically (Braxton, 1999; Mordkowitz, Elliot, & Ginsburg, 1987; Museus, 2013); they, however, did not investigate if and how immigration intersected with class. And several studies (Maramba, 2008; Samanta, 2018; Teranishi, Alcantar, & Nguyen, 2015) challenge that immigration actually poses challenges for parent involvement with Asian American college students: Parents who earn their college degree outside of the US may not be able to provide academic support in the US context.

While this literature on Asian American undergraduates contains highly divergent, even contradictory arguments, it does share a common theme. Rarely is it ethnically diverse. Many studies focus on a single ethnic group (Chhuon et al. 2010; Maramba, 2008; Tang et al., 2013) or two ethnic groups (Braxton, 2019; Lee & Zhou 2014, 2015; Louie, 2008). That which does include more ethnic groups, often focuses on Southeast Asian American undergraduates (Museus, 2013; Palmer & Maramba 2015). Nguyen et al. (2016) estimates that 48 different ethnicities comprise the Asian American population, and current scholarship on Asian Americans overlooks most of these groups. Some research contends that Asian Americans individuals' tremendous heterogeneity may be lost when looking across ethnic groups (Maramba, 2011; Tang, 2008). This paper, however, argues that research restricting students' ethnic backgrounds provides a narrow view of parent involvement with Asian American undergraduates. To address literature's competing claims concerning the effect of class, it intentionally recruited an ethnically diverse sample—participants self-identifying with 17 ethnicities.

Effect of Institution Type on Parental Support: Four-Year vs. Two-Year Colleges

In addition to not being ethnically diverse, most scholarship on parent involvement with Asian American undergraduates centers on four-year students. Asian American literature is not alone in this prioritization of four-year students. In general, research on parent involvement in higher education overwhelmingly centers on four-year students, despite over a third (34%) of undergraduates being enrolled in two-year institutions (NCES, 2019). Community colleges also cost substantially less to attend than four-year schools (Ma & Matea, 2021). Still, research demonstrates that—at least to some extent—societal stigma against community colleges exists (Griffith, 2021; Shaw, Spink, & Chin-Newman, 2018). In his recent dissertation, Griffith (2021) surveyed 314 high school seniors; students believed community college was a good option for other people but not for themselves. This stigma may also explain why nearly all of the research on family involvement with two-year students (Boehmer 2014; Martin, Galentino, & Townsend, 2014) pertains to better supporting them overcome the struggles they endure as a result of class disadvantage. Interestingly, Reeves and Guyot (2019) analyzed national data and revealed that middle class students (i.e., the middle three income quintiles) were more likely to attend community college (40%) than they were to attend public, four-year schools (36%). And Shapiro et al. (2017) found that, for two-year students, higher parent income correlated with an increased likelihood of going on to earn a Bachelor’s degree.

A few studies have explored family involvement—i.e., involvement by parents and other family members—specifically with two-year students of color (Jabbar et al. 2019; Sáenz et al., 2018; Sandoval-Lucero, Maes, & Kingsmith, 2014); however, this research largely excludes Asian American students. Due to the model minority stereotype, Asian American community college students are doubly stigmatized (Assalone & Fan, 2017). That is, most assume that Asian

Americans do not attend community college. Yet, aligning with the national average, 36% of Asian American college students are enrolled at these institutions (NCES, 2016). And, there is some indication that these students may be dissimilar from their peers (Nishimoto & Hagedorn, 2003)—though the researchers did not assess parent involvement.

Most existing literature that looks at Asian American two-year students ignores parent involvement (Ngo & Sablan, 2019; Park & Assalone, 2019; Yang, Rendon, & Shearon, 1994) or discusses it briefly and focuses on disadvantaged students (Teranishi et al., 2015; Wagoner & Lin, 2009). Samanta (2018) is the one piece, which emphasized the significance of parent involvement with Asian American two-year students; the researcher also utilized a sample that was diverse in terms of class and ethnicity but only spoke with nine college women attending two different two-year institutions. Nor, did they define parent involvement as financial and academic support. To increase societal understanding of Asian American community college students, Lew, Wang, and Chang (2005) posited that research should include Asian American two-year students who attend multiple institutions in multiple states. The participants in this research attended 10 different institutions located in six states in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions of the country.

This paper is also novel in that it compares the students at these two-year sites with four-year students. While minimal scholarship examines Asian American two-year students, no prior study has compared two and four-year students' receipt of financial and academic support from their parents. The CARE Project (2010) prepared a federally funded report that compared four and two-year Asian American students more generally. It indicated that—upon entering college—two-year students were less academically prepared than their four-year counterparts. If and how this impacts parental support in college is unclear. Parents may supply two-year

students with greater amounts of academic support to compensate for their lack of preparedness. Or, following the devaluation model of community colleges, these parents may supply less academic support, potentially explaining why these students are enrolled in two rather than four-year institutions. Thus, this paper compared four and two-year students with one another, and it also compared students by class across institution type. Teranishi et al. (2015) studied 366 two-year students and argued that parent involvement was similar and mostly nonexistent for both continuing and first generation college students. More scholarship though suggests differences in class background create tremendous inequity among Asian American two-year students (Lew et al., 2005; Samanta, 2008).

Effect of Parental Support on College Experience

Turning to the paper's final question: the effect of parental support on the college experience, most scholarship—on Asian American undergraduates and undergraduates more broadly—concur with social reproduction theory, suggesting that the receipt of more support leads to better academic outcomes. College students who receive greater financial support from their parents incur less loan debt (Furquim et al. 2017) and are more likely to engage in extracurriculars and unpaid internships due to their lack of economic constraints (Stuber, 2011), while those who do not constantly worry about their finances (Talusán & Franke, 2019) and work long hours—which can interfere with their ability to study and attend class (Teranishi et al., 2015) or even force them to drop out of college completely (Swartz, 2008). College students who receive academic support from their parents have higher GPAs (Nichols and Islas, 2015) and feel confident navigating college based on their parents' guidance (Hamilton et al., 2018), while those who do not struggle making academic decisions (Banks-Santilli, 2014). For instance, these students are more likely to change their majors and drop out of specific courses or college

entirely (Martin et al. 2014). Given the plethora of potential effects that scholarship describes, this paper looked for the effects most salient in students' interviews. It also considered students' tangible outcomes (e.g., the amount of time they worked and their grades) as well as their intangible experiences in college (e.g., their feelings of stress and struggle). Given that the effects of receiving financial and academic support from parents appear to be somewhat different, it examined the effects for each form of support separately.

This paper also considered several challenges to this assertion that “more support is better”. In their book, *Top of the Class: How Asian Parents Raise High Achievers—and How You Can Too*, Abboud and Kim (2005) dissuaded advantaged parents from providing their children with too much financial support, advancing that disadvantaged parents actually had an advantage in this regard: A lack of resources motivated their children to work harder in their academics. The authors, however, based their conclusions on their personal experiences and observations rather than empirical evidence. Research though made a similar argument with regard to academic support. That is, a lack of academic support can increase students' drive for college success, as they want to be the first their families to earn a college degree (Ziemniak, 2010). Still, other research counters all of these claims and speaks to the importance of students' agency (Bathmaker, Ingram, & Waller, 2013; Kaufman, 2005). Parents' provision of both financial and academic support are a nonfactor if students choose not to use these resources for their academic benefit. Thus, this paper interrogated how college students understood their receipt of parental support (or lack thereof) and how this process helped, hurt, or had a negligible effect on them during college.

METHODS

This paper draws on intensive interviews with 101 racially self-identified Asian American undergraduates, which are part of a larger project funded by the Spencer Foundation (Ide et al., 2010; Harrington, 2022). The larger project’s objective was to examine how race, class, and gender shaped family involvement in the college experience, focusing largely on traditional age college students.

Participants in this paper ranged in age from 18-26 (mean=20, median=20.5). The gender composition was 58% women and 42% men. This paper intentionally excluded international students—given that they do not fit the designation “Asian American”; still, immigration was central in participants’ lives. Only two students (one four-year and one two-year) did not have an immigrant parent and/or were an immigrant themselves. However, the majority of students (72%) were born in and/or had grown up in the US. Participants were also ethnically diverse, identifying with 17 different ethnic groups. A portion (32%) did not have two married parents; this paper defined parent as any parent or stepparent that students described having had at least some interaction with since being in college.

The interview schedule was broad, containing questions that pertained to parents and other family members and multiple forms of involvement (e.g., the emotional, practical, financial, and academic support students received as well as the support they provided). Most significant for this paper, questions gauged students’ receipt of financial and academic support from parents during college. For financial support, students were asked to identify if and how much family members were contributing to their educational expenses (e.g., their tuition, books, and supplemental tutoring) and non-educational expenses (e.g., spending money). Most participants did not report the exact monetary amounts parents provided (as they were unaware of this information), which is common for college students—particularly those under the age of

30 (Chen & Volpe, 1998). Still, they were able to describe the magnitude of parents' financial support in general terms and often compared these contributions to other funding sources (e.g., their parents' contributions versus financial aid). For academic support, students described their typical conversations with family members, their general familiarity with higher education, how much they knew about their school life (e.g., their current classes and grades), and if and how they assisted students with their schoolwork or major choice. To assess the effect of this support—students were asked to explain how they believed receiving or not receiving support affected them in college. They provided their current GPAs. For those who worked or who had at some point during their college experience, they provided descriptions of their job(s): what they did, their work hours, and what—if anything—they saw as potential implications of working.

Of the 101 participants, 61 or 60% were four-year students, all of whom were fulltime students in their sophomore year or above at a large public research university in the Northeast. This site was selected because of the author's access to it. The research team for the larger project requested and was provided a list that contained information for every non-international, full-time student at the school who was in their sophomore year or above: students' self-identified race and gender, receipt of financial aid, current GPA, and email address. This list and respondent-driven sampling was used to recruit four-year students.

Recruitment of the 40 two-year participants also began at a single institution in the Northeast. The community college did not provide a list of its students, but college personnel referred students. Also, respondent-driven and opportunity sampling were used. This latter strategy, however, became ineffective when the coronavirus shutdown took place (i.e., after the eighth interview). Given the difficulty of finding two-year participants at this time, the research design was expanded to include multiple sites—any community college in either the Northeast or

Mid-Atlantic region of the country. In addition to referrals by college personnel and respondent-driven sampling, the paper’s author used the LinkedIn platform to recruit many of the two-year participants (i.e., 55%). In total, these students attended 10 different institutions located in six different states. Given the paucity of research on two-year students (Lew et al., 2005) the institutional and geographic diversity of these participants may be advantageous even if the comparisons with four-year students located at a single university in the Northeast may be imprecise.

Table 1. Participants' Demographics (Including Class Status) By Institution Type

		Four-Year Students	Two-Year Students
Age	Mean	20.5	20.5
	Median	20	20
Gender	Women	57%	60%
	Men	43%	40%
Immigrant Generation	Has immigrant parent	98%	97%
	Student US born or came as infant	73%	70%
Ethnicity	# ethnic groups self-identify with	13	13
	List of ethnic groups	Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Hmong, Indian, Indonesian, Korean, Pakistani, Taiwanese, Thai, Tibetan, Sri Lankan, Vietnamese	Afghani, Bengali, Burmese, Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Korean, Nepali, Pakistani, Thai, Tibetan, Vietnamese
Other Characteristics	Parents married	66%	73%
	Live with parents in college	0%	87%
	Fulltime student	100%	94%
Class Grouping	Advantaged	32%	47%
	Disadvantaged	43%	28%
	Ambiguous	25%	25%

Table 1 shows the demographic breakdown of participants by institution type. Most two-year students were fulltime students (94%), and all had completed at least one semester of

college. A sizable portion (25%) had started at a four-year school but had not finished their degree and were now at community college. As a group though, they were educationally motivated; all intended to obtain at least a Bachelor's degree. The most significant demographic difference between the four and two-year students appeared to be their living situations. None of the four-year students lived with their parents during college (a criteria of the larger project), while 87% of two-year students did. These percentages are somewhat reflective of national statistics that indicate only 17% of public four-year students live with their parents during college as compared to 51% of two-year students (Urban Institute, 2016).

Table 1 also shows students' class groupings. Recognizing that class is multifaceted, this paper relied on three indicators—some of which students indicated during their interviews—to assign students' class position: parents' income, education level, and occupation. Students were designated as being more advantaged or more disadvantaged on each. Participants "more advantaged" in terms of parents' income had financially advantaged parents: Their combined incomes were the same as or higher than the median household income (at the time of the interview) of the state where the parents resided and/or the student was not a Pell Grant recipient. Participants "more advantaged" in terms of parents' education level were continuing generation students: They had at least one parent who held a four-year college degree (from any institution in or outside of the US). Participants "more advantaged" in terms of parents' occupation had at least one parent who held a professional or managerial occupation.

Some participants were more advantaged on all indicators (38%); they became the advantaged class group. Others were more disadvantaged on all indicators (37%); they became the disadvantaged class group. The remaining participants (25%) had a mix of more advantaged and more disadvantaged indicators; they became the ambiguous class group. Besides Harrington

(2022)—who analyzed four-year Asian American four-year students’ provision of support to their parents and applied this same trichotomous design—discussions of parent involvement in higher education and college students more generally largely ignore this ambiguous group. Instead, they often assume a binary model of class: Students are either advantaged or disadvantaged (Covarrubias et al. 2020; Lareau, 2011; Louie, 2008). Yet, according to Banks-Santilli (2015), approximately 50% of first generation college students are not low income (i.e., fit this paper’s ambiguous designation); and, these students are seldom recognized (Young, 2016). This paper recognizes these students and others who fall into this ambiguous position, examining how their receipt of parental support compares to the other class groupings.

Each interview lasted between 40 minutes and three and a half hours. The paper’s author conducted all of the four-year student interviews in-person, but given both COVID and geographic dispersion, the majority of two-year student interviews (82%) were conducted via Zoom. Students seemed equally forthcoming in both types of interviews; they averaged an hour in length irrespective if they were done in-person or virtually.

Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and then coded using NVivo. The research team for the larger project jointly created the initial coding scheme. First, broad codes were developed based on the initial open-coding of the interviews and existing theory and research (e.g., money and finances—including paying for college, academics aspects—including major and assignments, and frequency). After interviewing more students, and observing emergent themes among the Asian American participants, more precise codes were added (e.g., immigration and English proficiency).

To address the kinds of financial and academic support students received from parents and how class affected students’ receipt of it, each class grouping’s receipt of financial and

academic support was assessed and then compared. To address how institution type affected students' receipt of financial and academic support, four and two-year students' receipt of financial and academic support was compared. Their intersections were also assessed: advantaged four-year students compared to advantaged two-year students, disadvantaged four-year students compared to disadvantaged two-year students, and ambiguous four-year students compared to ambiguous two-year students. Finally, to address how receiving or not receiving support from parents affected students' during college, this paper compared students who received larger amounts of support to those who did not: analyzing their GPA data (the self-reported GPA data for the two-year students), the effects identified by students, and other effects suggested by previous research—which students may or may not be cognizant of (e.g., the number of hours they worked and their ability to make academic decisions).

Additionally, this paper looked to see if other characteristics, including students' age, gender, immigrant generation, ethnicity, or method of recruitment had an effect on any of these research questions; they did not. For instance, in their responses, participants born in the US did not appear different from those who immigrated to the country at a later age. Immigrant parents having no US education experience mattered, but it affected all three class groupings. This finding will be discussed further when explaining the study's results. The results section uses pseudonyms to maintain students' confidentiality.

RESULTS

For the Asian American four and two-year students respondents, class—and not institution type—greatly affected the amount of financial and academic support they received from their parents. That is, advantaged, disadvantaged, and ambiguous participants received disparate amounts of support, and—within each class grouping—the four and two-year students

were largely similar. And, participants' receipt of this support (academic support specifically), or lack thereof, affected their college experience substantially. The results section analyzes each class groupings' receipt of financial and academic support. It discusses four and two-year students together but, when applicable, notes their differences. Finally, it turns to the effects of receiving or not receiving such support.

Advantaged Four and Two-Year Students: A Story of Support

Advantaged four and two-year students, as a group, received large amounts of financial and academic support from their parents in college. Variation existed among the advantaged; some received more support than others. Still, their story was largely one of support.

Advantaged Students and Financial Support

Nearly all of the advantaged students reported their parents provided them with financial support in college. This help took the form of paying for students' tuition and other educational expenses (e.g. their school materials and participation in extracurricular activities) and also paying for students' noneducational expenses (e.g., their clothing and spending money to go out with friends). To the question, "How are you paying for college?", Mary a Chinese American four-year student responded, "They're [referring to her parents] paying for college", which was a typical refrain for these students. More than half of the advantaged four-year students (55%) said their parents had taken out loans; still most four and two-year students indicated that their parents paid for a large portion—if not all—of their schooling. These parents provided far less for non-school-related activities. For instance, when I asked Ana, a Nepali American two-year student how she paid for college, she commented, "My parents paid... We didn't even attempt getting FAFSA, because we were not going to get any money anyway." But when I asked Ana if her parents provided money outside of her schooling, she responded much differently, saying,

“I’ve been working for a while, so I kind of hesitate in asking my parents for money.” Like Ana, many advantaged students suggested that they worked during the school year and/or during breaks to fund their noneducational expenses.

Some though did report that their parents also provided money for their noneducational expenses; a few even described receiving a surplus of funds. Kirana, an Indonesian American four-year student explained that her father gave her and her older sister, who also attended the university, \$1,500 each in spending money every semester. Others stated that they were given money whenever they asked for it. Andy, a Chinese American two-year student, relayed, “They don’t really give me money on a regular basis. It’s just like they put this amount of money in my account, so I just spend it...When I don’t have money, I just tell them I don’t have money.” However, even these students with seemingly limitless funding expressed how fortunate they were for the financial support they received and that they tried to watch their spending.

Advantaged Students and Academic Support

In addition to financial support, advantaged students often received academic support from their parents; they alluded to two main types of academic support in their interviews: direct academic assistance (i.e., parents helping with assignments) and academic advising (i.e., parents providing the kinds of help an academic advisor may provide). About half of the advantaged students (i.e., half of the four-year and half of the two-year students) indicated that their provided direct academic assistance, but most of these students described their parents’ help as being relatively infrequent. Kemala—an Indonesian American four year student—explained, “If I’m really desperate, it’s really late at night or something and I have an exam tomorrow and I still don’t get it, then I contact my dad.” And, Cung—a Vietnamese American four-year student—was a senior in college and relayed that he had only received help with one course while in

college. He said, “One time I took statistics, and my mom took accounting so she know much statistics. So she was helping me doing my homework and all that [*sic*].” A few students though conveyed that their parents provided this support on a regular basis.

More four-year than two-year students asserted that they received frequent direct academic assistance. Shelley, a Filipina American two-year student, discussed the process or routine she followed when she wanted her mom to edit her papers:

My mom's a good writer, so I like having her proofread my things...Usually she's super busy. So I'd give her advance notice. I'd be like, “Hey, mom, I'm about to finish this paper. Can you read it tonight?” And then she'd say yes. So I'd usually email it to her, so—when she's up in the wee hours of the night—she'd edit it and send it back to me.

Shrima, a two-year Indian American student, described how she worked with her mom on her chemistry assignments:

[My mom] did some chemistry in college when she was in India. So she knows some of the stuff. So we both work together actually sometimes. We look at videos on YouTube based on the class, like Chemistry 2 this semester. So we'd just look at organic chemistry videos for Chemistry 2.

The consistent, and often thorough, help that more two-year students received may stem from these students' need for greater academic support, or it may simply be attributed to their living arrangements. Recall that nearly all of the two-year students lived with their parents while none of the four-year students did. Also—looking at the examples of Cung, Shelley, and Shrima—it seemed that parents only supplied direct academic assistance if they had expertise in their child's field of study or assigned coursework.

More advantaged students reported that their parents provided the second form of academic support: academic advising. Demonstrating this, Lee—a Vietnamese American four-year student—said, “[My mom] didn't take organic chemistry, so she couldn't talk about organic chemistry specifically, but she could talk about test-taking strategies.” Jessica, a Cambodian and

Chinese American two-year student identified multiple pieces of information her father gave her to help succeed in college:

He has told me if I needed help, there are places around the campus that are able to help, like the tutor center. And that if I have questions, to ask the professor. They're really easy to talk to. And just like the general stuff.

Beyond tip or information-giving, many advantaged parents used their experiential knowledge to help students make academic decisions in college (e.g., select their classes and major), and a few monitored students' academic performance. Betty, a Chinese American four-year student, communicated about her mom, "She has my [school] password, so she can just check my grades herself...She likes to keep a tab on my grades." Parents' tracking students' grades, however, occurred substantially less than these other types of academic advising.

Two factors appeared to impact parents' ability to supply academic advising. For the two-year students specifically—the few whose parents had attended community college prior to obtaining a Bachelor's, asserted that their parents' help (i.e., experiential knowledge) was especially pertinent. Khant, a Burmese American two-year student, conveyed about his mother, "She's given me advice such as like trying to take most of my prerequisite classes in community college, so that I won't have to do them again in university or at a higher price basically." More than a third of advantaged students (35%) did not have at least one parent who was college-educated in the US, and many felt it lessened their parents' ability to provide academic advising. Justin—a Korean American two-year student—relayed, "I guess nobody really has had that like college experience here [in the US] other than myself in my family. So it's like, yea, certain things were new concepts that I can't really ask for [help] from my parents." Yet, even with this variation, the majority of advantaged students communicated that they received some level of academic advising from their parents.

Disadvantaged Four and Two-Year Students: Little to No Support

Compared to advantaged students, disadvantaged four and two-year students received significantly less financial and academic support from their parents. Students clearly and consistently articulated that their parents' class disadvantage and not their desire prevented them supplying this help. With regard to variation within the class grouping, disadvantaged students differed somewhat in their receipt of financial support but not in their receipt of academic support. And, variation between the four and two-year students was also minimal.

Disadvantaged Students and Financial Support

A portion of the disadvantaged students (approximately 35%) reported that their parents had contributed money toward to their tuition, but their contributions were usually substantially less than those of advantaged parents'. When asked how he paid for college, Bingwen—a Chinese American four-year student—responded, “I get a lot of financial aid. So just very little comes out of my parents' pockets, and the rest is from loans.” The majority of disadvantaged students communicated that their parents did not pay for any of their tuition; instead, they used some combination of grants, scholarships, loans (both federal and private), and—less often—money they earned from working to pay for their tuition. Ryan, a Chinese-American two-year student, explained, “Fortunately, financial aid was able to cover pretty much all of it. But if it didn't cover any of it, I would probably have paid for the remainder myself.” More four-year than two-year students indicated that their parents helped pay for their tuition, but many of the latter students—like Ryan—did not need their parents' assistance; grants and scholarships covered the entirety of their schooling, which is why most had opted to begin their college experience at a community college.

Turning to noneducational expenses, disadvantaged students seldom suggested that their parents—if they provided any financial support—gave them money for anything outside of their tuition. Hai, a Vietnamese four-year student viewed asking her dad for money as a final resort:

I work on campus, so I basically pay for everything I need unless I'm really tight with money. And I would ask my dad for money. Like, "Dad, can you give me \$50 or \$100?" And then he would put it in my bank, but rarely.

Jasmine, a Cambodian two-year student, lived with her mom and gave her money for rent. And, when I asked if she received any funding from her mom for personal expenses, such as food and clothes, she replied, "No, it's all me. I just use my own money... Sometimes I buy her things too." It was more common though that two-year students' parents did not charge rent or money for utilities or household groceries, and these costs in themselves are an essential—though often overlooked—form of financial assistance.

Disadvantaged Students and Academic Support

Disadvantage students' receipt of academic support was more uniform; none of these students said that their parents provided such help. Most—like Ava, a Vietnamese American two-year student—explained that their parents had a very limited understanding of college:

They don't know a lot about the credits or what majors [there are]. They just know you pick a career path and then you just like go try and study, try to get to your job that you want to get to through university.

These students, however, differed from Justin and other advantaged students who indicated their parents were not familiar with American colleges; often, they communicated that their parents' were not familiar with higher education in general. Quy—a Vietnamese American four-year student—said about her parents, "They both dropped out after 6th grade to find work. [So] even though they've been in America for like 18 years, they are unable to understand those kinds of concepts, like GPA." Many also acknowledged that their parents were not entirely fluent in

English. Discussing his parents' language barrier, Kaisik, a Chinese American four-year student said, "My parents don't really know English, so they can't really help me." So it seemed that multiple obstacles thwarted disadvantaged parents ability to supply academic support.

And these parents—far more than advantaged parents—had little involvement in students' academic lives. Summarizing his mom's awareness of what he did in college, Dean—a Cambodian American two-year student—indicated, "My mom just knows that I go to school." Mira, a Sri Lankan American four-year student, suggested that her mom was slightly more aware of her academics, but—still—her knowledge was very surface level:

[My mom] just needs to know that I'm doing good. That's all she asks. 'How are your grades? What are you doing?' That's all she asks. I don't want to say that's all she cares about, but that's all she understands."

Almost unanimously, disadvantaged four and two-year students asserted their parents were adamant they obtain at least a Bachelor's. Their parents' educational expectations or beliefs, however, did not align with their ability to supply academic support. A few students discussed how their parents attempted to give academic support by way of financial support. Lily, a Vietnamese American two-year student, relayed "My mom would always say, if I'm ever struggling, let me know. I can find somebody to help you, tutor you." Lily's experience of parental support is representative of most of disadvantaged participants in this study: Her receipt of financial support was minimal, and her receipt of academic support was nonexistent.

Ambiguous Four and Two-Year Students: Receiving Unequal Amounts of Financial and Academic Support

Ambiguous four and two-year students' experiences were different from both their advantaged and disadvantaged peers, and their receipt of parental support most clearly demonstrated the significant but also complex effect class background had on parent involvement in college. These students received unequal amounts of financial and academic

support. Ambiguous students whose parents were financially advantaged but not college-educated (i.e., 72% of ambiguous students) typically received more financial and less academic support. Ambiguous students whose parents were financially disadvantaged but college-educated typically received less financial and more academic support. This class grouping showcased Asian American college students' diverse range of experiences; they also exposed that parental income and education level each affected students' receipt of support in a distinct way.

Ambiguous Students Who Received More Financial and Less Academic Support

Describing their receipt of financial support, most ambiguous students whose parents were financially advantaged but not college-educated were similar to advantaged students. Their parents provided financial support—particularly for their schooling—but the amount they supplied varied. Alex, a Vietnamese American two-year student, relayed that his parents paid for the majority of his tuition. When asked how he paid for his personal expenses though, Alex answered, “I work. I work to get all that spending money.” Another ambiguous student, Vannak—a Cambodian and Chinese American four-year student—suggested he received ample funding from his dad for all of his expenses, and he was able to use this money as he pleased:

Anything I need money for, he gives it to me. If I need books, he'll do that... If I'm going out and I need some money, I will ask him for a little bit. He gives me *plenty* to make sure I'm on the safe side if anything happens.

Turning to their receipt of academic support though, it looked very similar to that of the disadvantaged students. Often, these ambiguous students indicated their parents—despite their sizeable financial contributions—did not supply academic support, nor did they have the ability to, because they did not have experiential knowledge of college. Speaking to his parents' familiarity with college, Alex said, “They're not very familiar with it... Their information they receive are like words of their friends, coworkers, and the internet.” He went on to say, “Other

than making sure you don't overwork yourself. That's the only advice [my parents] would give me." And Vannak similarly indicated that his father had little involvement in his academic life. He stated, "My dad doesn't know the process. So he just lets me do it. I never think to go ask for help." These students' receipt of financial and academic support did not align.

Ambiguous Students Who Received Less Financial and More Academic Support

Ambiguous students whose parents were financially disadvantaged but college-educated had the inverse experience. As a group, these students received minimal financial support from their parents, comparable to that of disadvantaged students. Haseka and Faran, a two-year Cambodian American student and four-year Pakistani American student, reported that their parents did not give them any money in college—even for their tuition. Financial aid covered Haseka's tuition. Explaining how he paid for college—Faran said, "It's probably like 75% grants and scholarships. And like 10% loans. And the rest from when I work." The students also used the money they earned from working to pay for their noneducational expenses. With academic support, however, these ambiguous students were more in line with advantaged students. Haseka conveyed how her father provided academic advising with regard to her major choice:

Right now I'm still struggling between the two major, like the computer science or engineering. But he said try first [to see] if I really like it...Next semester I will start the programming things, and if I really like it, I will continue doing computer science [*sic*].

Faran conveyed that his parents were unfamiliar with higher education in the US:

My mom's Bachelor's is in education and my dad's is in accounting...For them, the classes besides math and the sciences aren't that important, because that's how it was for them in their school system...And every time I go home on weekends, my mom thinks I'll like be in a bio class. I'm pre-med, so she just assumes that I'm in bio and science classes. And I'm like, "Oh no. I'm taking music and history next semester."

Still, his parents appeared to have some understanding of his academics—a far better grasp of them than most disadvantaged students' parents. Thus, ambiguous students' receipt of support

revealed the complex effect of class and its reproduction, and there was even a clear divide within the grouping. Such complexities may have been overlooked if these students had not been examined separately.

Ambiguous Students' Discussion of Class

Ambiguous students often noted their parents' precarious and unique class position in their interviews. Aimee, A Filipina American four-year student, said that her parents combined annual income was \$130,000 but continued to say that it came at a great cost:

They have more than average [in terms of income], like especially for somebody who hasn't gotten higher education. Like that's abnormally high. And I was talking to a teacher of mine. He was like, "Your parents make more money than I do, and I have a Master's." And I was like, "Yes, they do." But then I tell him it's really hard work, like as a factory person working for six days, twelve hours a day. Like that's a lot. It kills you.

Ejaz, a Pakistani two-year student explained that his father—despite having an MBA from Pakistan—could not find high-paying work in the US. He asserted that many Asian American students' parents encountered this same dilemma:

I have a lot of brown friends here—from Bangladesh, India—and their parents are overly qualified. They have Master's degrees, PhD degrees from back home, but they come here are their degrees don't qualify and they end being Uber drivers and taxi drivers and working pizza places, stuff like that. It's a very disheartening to see that, because these people work so hard to achieve these degrees and give a better life for the kids but end up having to work these kind of jobs below their standards. It's definitely a big issue.

These examples highlight the unique adversity ambiguous students and their parents experienced. They also demonstrate why research that studies class—and includes Asian American individuals—needs to examine multiple class indicators and consider degree location.

How Support from Parents Matters in College

While previous literature has largely posited that receiving more parental support benefits students; the interview data only partially supported this assertion. Support mattered tremendously; however, the receipt of academic support (academic advising in particular)

appeared to be most consequential for students. This section discusses the implications of each form of support, first focusing on the advantaged and ambiguous students who received the support—or larger quantities of it—and then comparing their experiences to the disadvantaged and ambiguous students who did not.

The Receipt of Financial Support as a Luxury but not a Hindrance

Receiving financial support afforded advantaged students and ambiguous students whose parents were financially advantaged the luxury of not worrying about money while in college. Discussing the amount of financial support her parents provided, Ashley—an advantaged Chinese two-year student—expressed, “I never feel financially unstable or insecure.” Most of these students indicated that they thought very little about money. Often, when asked how they were paying for college, they could not give any specifics beyond saying their parents took care of these costs. Jerry—an advantaged Chinese American four-year student demonstrated this lack of financial literacy—as he said “I don’t really know finances at all. I know I should. Like it’s important, because what am I going to do when I graduate, but right now I’m like literally blind.” And, more than a third of these students (37%) said that did not work during the schoolyear. Anchali, an ambiguous Thai American four-year student explained how her parents had influenced this decision. She relayed, “They don’t want me to have a job, because their attitudes are that in college you have to focus on academics and work comes after college.” Gloria—an ambiguous Vietnamese American two-year student—communicated that she worked, but she did so minimally for the same reason. She said, “I don’t work more than like twice a week usually, so I don’t work very often. My mom, or my parents, encouraged me not to work so much so that I can focus on my studies.” To be sure, even with their parents’ funding, most of these students held jobs, and a sizable portion (28%) worked more than twenty hours a week while in college.

Yet, most explained that they opted to do so for professional development purposes rather than for the money they received. Eddie—an ambiguous Chinese American four-year student, stated he worked concurrent positions in college to enhance his résumé. He said, “I had never had an internship experience before I came here for undergrad and never worked before. But I’ve become proactive...I’ve taken on leadership positions...I’m a RA squared: resident and research assistant.” Thus, these students were not impeded by their finances and had the ability to concentrate on their academics, or whatever else they wished to (e.g., extracurriculars or their social lives) during college.

Disadvantaged students and ambiguous students whose parents were financially disadvantaged spoke about money very differently (recognizing their disadvantage), but—similar to their peers—few of these students suggested their lack of financial support negatively affected their college experience. A larger share of these students worked while in college (72% compared to 63%), and many perceived working to be an economic necessity. Nina—a disadvantaged Vietnamese American two-year student who held two positions and worked twenty hours a week—indicated that her reasons for working were two-fold: “my resume and for financial reasons.” Still, less than a quarter of these students (24%), reported working more than 20 hours a week, a statistic smaller than what financially advantaged students reported. And, some did not work at all. Agni, an ambiguous Indian American two-year student discussed his lack of work experience:

The closest thing I’ve had to an actual job was I did some community service in India helping some people with a website for a period of time, but this was unpaid, and it was even more informal than an actual internship. It was basically like helping out at a soup kitchen, except that you could come at whatever hour.

Most students though were unlike Agni.

Instead, financially disadvantaged students usually took deliberate—and sometimes extreme—measures to ensure that their financial disadvantage was not a hindrance in college. As noted, many (especially the two-year students) chose their institution, because of its cost . Several worked long hours outside of college (e.g., during summer breaks), so they did not need to while in school. Noah, a disadvantaged Chinese American four-year student explained that he had worked 60 to 70 hours a week the previous semester, but he also reduced his course load to parttime so he could keep his 3.89 GPA intact. Amy—a disadvantaged Korean American four-year student—implemented yet another strategy:

Whatever financial aid doesn't cover, I take out a private loan. I generally take out 10,000 each year...Financial aid and then the other loans [my parents and I] took out made it so I wouldn't have to pay back until I graduate.

Some financially disadvantaged students described their parents as being loan averse, but many others—like Amy—expected that they would be thousands of dollars in loan debt by the time they obtained a Bachelor's degree. These loans will likely become a massive challenge for students, and often their parents, upon graduation. And several students expressed concern over their future ability to repay this debt. Kamla, a disadvantaged Indo-Trinidadian four-year student—relayed, “I worry about it. I check with the accounts more than [my dad] probably does.” Focusing exclusively on the college experience, however, it seemed that most students who received minimal funding from their parents were successful in making it a nonfactor.

More “objective” measures support this view. Assessing students' GPA data even gives slight support to argument that parents should withhold funds from their children to encourage better academic performance (Abboud & Kim, 2005). The students who were financially disadvantaged and—on average—received less financial support from their parents had higher GPAs (mean=3.5, median=3.5) than students who were financially advantaged and—on

average—received more financial support from their parents (mean=3.3, median=3.3). Note, however, that the study’s sample size did not allow for significance tests nor are these numbers for the two groups substantially different.

The Negligible Effect of Direct Academic Assistance on Students’ Grades

For the advantaged and ambiguous students with college-educated parents who received direct academic assistance, it—like financial support—seemed to be a luxury but not essential for students’ success in college. Ariel, an advantaged Filipina American four-year student, viewed her dad to be useful academic resource. She said, “When I have a problem or am stuck in a paper, I talk to my dad about my ideas and he’s very helpful.” And, referring to the help her dad supplied, Jessica—an advantaged Cambodian and Chinese American two-year student—relayed, “When asked a question, he is able to answer it and give me some of the answers I can actually put on assignments.” Still, none of these students suggested that their parents’ direct academic assistance had a substantial impact on their academic performance, and the GPA data supported this: Of the few students who reported receiving consistent direct academic assistance, only one had a GPA above a 3.0, compared to the overall mean and median GPA for all respondents (3.4 and 3.4 respectively).

Turning to the disadvantaged and ambiguous students whose parents were not college-educated, some—like Tim, a disadvantaged Vietnamese American four-year student—asserted that they would like their parents to be able to help with their schoolwork:

If I ask my dad, “Can you help me with bio or chemistry?” He’d be like, “What are those?” Same with my mom...Sometimes I wish there was someone to help me out. Because sometimes I do get confused. I don’t know everything.

But, just as many expressed that direct academic assistance from their parents was unneeded.

Dipak—a disadvantaged Indian American four-year student—explained, “ If I need help with

something I use the resources here on campus.” And, when asked if he ever wished his parents could help him with his assignments—he replied, “It doesn’t really make a difference to me to be honest.” Kathy, an ambiguous Vietnamese American four-year student, answered the question similarly. She remarked, “I’m fine with how it is.” Students’ GPA data supported Dipak and Kathy’s responses. Educationally disadvantaged students had a mean GPA of 3.4 and median GPA of 3.5. While many factors can affect GPA (e.g., major choice, year in college, institution attended, etcetera), it did not appear that the frequent receipt of direct academic support from parents resulted in good grades, nor did a lack of direct academic support hurt student grades.

The Receipt of Academic Advising and the Navigation of College

Students’ accounts—both those who received academic advising from their parents and those who did not—revealed that this final type of support was most impactful for students in college. It outpaced both financial support and direct academic assistance. The continuing generation students who received academic advising from their parents suggested that it benefitted them in two ways. First, students learned what they needed to do to be successful in college. Second, through their academic advising, parents helped students in times of academic indecision—moments that were particularly stressful. Bouphe, an advantaged Cambodian American four-year student, communicated that her stepdad’s academic advising began during the college application process but remained just as significant now:

Since he went to college, he knows about how like hard it is and how hard it is to get through it. So he kind of helped push me through all these little details and make sure that not only I get in but stay in.

Bouphe went on to recount that she frequently called her stepfather to ask for his insights concerning employment positions on campus and when selecting classes; several students indicated that their parents helped them resolve indecision with their major choice. Prior to her

dad's academic advice, Maira, an advantaged Pakistani American two-year student, expressed that she was unsure what she should major in:

As I came into college, I had no idea what I was doing...My dad just gave me the suggestion one day. He was like, "Why don't you look into law? ...He was able to give me advice. He was able to guide me in the right direction.

Rhy, an advantaged Taiwanese American four-year student, had recently decided to switch her major based on her father's guidance. She said, "I spoke to my dad with regards to changing my major, because I had been thinking about it. And he urged me to research about these different majors that were available and to see which one actually interested me." Rhy, explained that she was much more content with her new major and that she was still on track to graduate on time.

Disadvantaged students and ambiguous students whose parents were not college-educated demonstrated the significance of academic advising to an even greater extent; many of these students struggled to make academic decisions in college and did not know what to do in times of crisis. And, students often attributed this difficulty to their parents' inability to provide useful academic advising. Rinchen, an ambiguous Tibetan American two-year student, explained that his academic progress would be severely delayed if he actually listened to the academic advice his father supplied:

I'm going to be a double major [when I transfer], but he's like, "Oh, why don't you be like a triple major or like a quadruple major? And I'm like, "Well, you know I want to get out in the two years that I have left."

Students also indicated that their parents staying out of their academic affairs (i.e., not attempting to provide academic advising) also came with serious consequence. Vivian, an ambiguous Chinese and Vietnamese four-year student, said she often felt unsure of what to do in college:

I don't know what to do if I have a conflict. Like whether I want to take this class or this class or like what I want to do with my life. It's kind of hard, because [my parents] they're just like, "Go do what you want to do." But if I can't decide, how is that going to help, you know?

Many participants indicated that receiving their parents' help selecting a major would have been especially useful. Discussing his parents' lack of involvement with his major choice, William a disadvantaged two-year student said, "I didn't know what I wanted to do. I wanted my mom to kind of tell me and give me an expectation...but [my mom] didn't tell me anything, so that was a bummer." Cai—an ambiguous Hmong American four-year student—conveyed, "They never like showed me the ropes...There was never any guidance. So I was just like okay, I'll just figure it out by myself." Cai had tried multiple majors in college and intended to simply finish out the one he had ended up in (education) and begin doing something entirely unrelated (photography) once he graduated. Chanthou, a disadvantaged Cambodian American four-year student, captured these students' sentiments; he also made a strong argument as to why parents' academic advising—or lack thereof—had a more profound impact on students' college experience as compared to other forms of support:

Coming to college is a big decision. And almost every step along the way can have a great impact on how further decisions will be made. And so I think [my parents] were not there when I made those decisions. So I had to make them alone. I think it creates a burden on me. Something that I see other peers getting assistance with that I don't. And so it almost creates a sort of mentality of why do they have these types of supports, and why do I not have these types of supports? And I think that the more subtle things are the more important. The more subtle things are the ones that have the huge impact on me...The implication of not having parents being there during times of need. So it's almost like you don't know where to go when you have to find someone to lean on.

Although some students posited that they appreciated the freedom they had to make their own academic decisions, more challenged this view: They sought academic advising from other sources (e.g., other family members or college personnel) when their parents were unable to provide such support. In fact, Kat—an ambiguous Vietnamese American two-year student—praised the Asian American center at the community college she attended for the help they gave first generation college students:

They are really good at trying to help you when you're struggling. And you get all the support that you need...[For example] help figuring out your schedule and registering for classes. And I just feel like they do a really great job at providing those things for students when some of the parents can't really do that if they didn't go to college when they were younger.

These analyses show that most students—regardless of their class grouping—believed that the receipt of academic advising from parents immensely benefited students' college experience.

CONCLUSION

Focusing on Asian American four and two-year students, this paper revisits inequality in higher education, highlighting the power of race and class in shaping the character and impact of parent involvement. It assessed parent involvement in the form of students' receipt of financial and academic support in college. While other literature has attempted to explain the relationship between parental support and Asian American undergraduates' aggregate level success in higher education (Lee & Zhou, 2015) or emphasized these students' challenges in an effort to disprove the model minority stereotype (Louie, 2008), this paper challenges the stereotype in another way: It exposes the notable heterogeneity of these students and their parents. Simultaneously, it challenges devaluation or societal stigma attached to community colleges, and specifically Asian American students at these institutions. Drawing on 101 interviews, it shows that class created immense variation and inequity in students' receipt of financial and academic support; institution type did not. And, the receipt of academic advising (a form of academic support) substantially affected students' ability to navigate college and make academic decisions. Overall then, this paper argues that for Asian American four and two-year college students inequality is transmitted from one generation to the next. This process, however, is far more complex than prior literature—both that which includes few or no Asian American undergraduates (Armstrong & Hamilton, 2013; Hamilton, Roksa, & Nielsen, 2018; Nichols & Islas, 2015) and that which

centers on these students' experiences (Chhuon et al., 2010; Samanta, 2008; Tang et al., 2013)—suggests.

In addition to these insights pertaining to class, this literature contributes to the scholarship on parent involvement with Asian American college students in two key ways. First, the sample included tremendous ethnic diversity, participants self-identifying with 17 different Asian ethnic groups. Most quantitative and qualitative research has looked at one or two ethnicities (Lee & Zhou 2015; Louie, 2008; Maramba, 2008) or investigated Southeast Asian American students (Museus, 2013; Palmer & Maramba, 2015; Wagoner & Lin, 2009). This study found that class had a similar affect across ethnicity; thus, this paper broadens societal understanding of Asian American undergraduates' by encompassing more ethnic groups. That is, ethnicity likely affects parent involvement but seems to matter less than class background.

This paper is also novel in that it compares parent involvement with both four and two-year Asian American undergraduates and finds little variation by institution type. Although there are methodological limits in this study, which reduce the comparability of these two groups (e.g. those at two-year schools were for more geographically dispersed and most lived with their parents), students at both institution types had diverse and unequal experiences based on their class status.

The Asian American four and two-year participants from more advantaged class backgrounds received greater amounts of financial and academic support than their more disadvantaged counterparts. Yet, this binary model other research has used to designate students' class status (Covarrubias et al. 2020; Lareau, 2011) and/or describe their receipt of support (Hamilton et al., 2018; Nichols & Islas, 2015) was insufficient for understanding the Asian American participants' class position and the effect class had on their receipt of parental support.

Students were advantaged (i.e., financially advantaged, continuing generation college students), disadvantaged (i.e., financially disadvantaged, first generation college students), and ambiguous (i.e., a mixture of advantaged and disadvantaged). Some ambiguous students (72%) were financially advantaged, first generation college students; the others were financially disadvantaged continuing generation college students. And, each received disparate amounts of support. Harrington (2022) similarly found this trichotomous class design useful when focusing on the support four-year Asian American college students gave their parents.

Most of the advantaged four and two-year students received both financial and academic support from their parents. With few exceptions, they indicated that their parents contributed money—often large amounts—toward their educational expenses (i.e., students’ tuition often being the greatest expense). Many advantaged parents also gave students money for their noneducational expenses, but there was tremendous variation in the monetary amounts students received. This finding that parents contributed more toward students’ educational expenses as compared to their noneducational expenses is consistent with other research (Padilla-Walker, 2012). Advantaged participants also varied in the type and amount of academic support they received. Approximately half (half of the four-year and half of the two-year students) reported receiving direct assistance from their parents on their assignments—but they typically discussed this help as infrequent. More participants (the majority of advantaged students) conveyed that their parents provided academic advising: They used their experiential knowledge of higher education to help students in ways typical of an academic advisor (e.g. providing information about college and guidance with students’ major choice). As with financial support, some participants received more academic advising than others; still, advantaged students’ story was largely one of support.

As a group, the disadvantaged four and two-year participants received minimal financial support and no academic support of any form from their parents. The majority (65%) communicated that their parents did not pay for their educational nor their noneducational expenses. Nearly all of the disadvantaged students who did receive money said that it went toward their educational expenses. More four-year students received this funding. Many two-year students though, explained that they did not need their parents' help to pay for their educational expenses; grants and scholarships covered the entirety of their tuition, which is why most had opted to begin their college experience at a community college. And, these two-year students' parents often financially supported them in ways that higher education research rarely calls enough attention to (e.g., allowing the students to reside in their homes and not pay for rent or food). With academic support, disadvantaged students named several barriers that impeded their parents' ability to supply such help: their unfamiliarity with US colleges, their unfamiliarity with college more generally, and their lack of English proficiency. For this reason, it seemed that most of these students' parents had minimal involvement in and awareness of their children's academic lives. Yet, similar to most advantaged students' parents, they had high educational aspirations and expectations for their children, and many had strong preferences regarding their children's major choice (even if they only had a surface level understanding of the major). Thus, this paper affirms other research on Asian American college students (Shen, 2015; Talusan & Franke, 2019), illustrating that there is an important distinction between these parents' provision of academic support and their educational beliefs.

Analysis of the ambiguous four and two-year participants' receipt of parental support was in some ways most useful in understanding the nuances of class. Demonstrating that parents' income and education level operated independently of one another: Some ambiguous students

(i.e., those who were financially advantaged first generation college students) received more financial and less academic support. And, some ambiguous students (i.e., those who were financially disadvantaged continuing generation students) received less financial and more academic support. Already, discussions concerning first generation college students are pervasive in higher education (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2018), but they usually associate the term only with students who are financially disadvantaged (Richards, 2020; Roksa et al., 2020). This paper shows that not all first generation college students are financially disadvantaged. Nor, are all continuing generation students financially advantaged. Yet, more significant to highlight is that the ambiguous Asian American participants experienced unique adversity in both their class status and receipt of parental support.

The effect of receiving or not receiving support from parents was similarly complex. While most scholarship has favored the idea “more support is better” (Banks-Santilli, 2014; Lee & Zhou, 2014), this paper argues that the type of support is consequential. The interviews revealed that receipt of academic advising from parents benefitted students’ college experience immensely; financial support and direct academic assistance had a lesser effect. Students’ GPA data aligned with these findings.

Students who received more financial support (most advantaged and some ambiguous students) had the luxury of thinking little about their finances in college. However, students who did not receive this support (most disadvantaged and some ambiguous students) did not indicate that it inhibited their college experience. These students recognized their class disadvantage, and a higher proportion worked. Still, they (and often their parents) prioritized their college education. Many of these students—particularly four-year students—were incurring substantial loan debt in order to fund their educational expenses, but none suggested that their lack of

funding had delayed their progression through college (e.g., forced them to forgo a semester or even drop a class). Woo and Lew (2020) similarly asserted that loans may contribute to college persistence. These financially disadvantaged students may well encounter greater financial hardship when they graduate—especially if they cannot find lucrative employment; yet, while in college, their lack of monetary support did not appear to interfere with their academic success.

Academic advising mattered far more for these students in college. Those who received direct academic assistance on their schoolwork—another form of academic support—explained that they greatly appreciated their parents’ help, but they did not believe that it gave them an advantage in terms of academic performance. And, again, most said they received this support sparingly. However, the students who received academic advising from their parents (most advantaged and some ambiguous students) had a much different experience navigating college than those who did not (most disadvantaged and some ambiguous students). The former had parents who acted as “college concierge” while the latter’s parents were “outsiders” (Hamilton et al., 2018). That is, the former—based on the information their parents had provided—knew what was required to succeed in college and could, and often did, turn to their parents in times of academic indecision (e.g., if they wanted to switch their major). In contrast, the latter often felt underinformed and confused about the college process—not knowing what to do in times of uncertainty; several discussed being unhappy with academic choices they had made.

The policy implications of this research are significant. To promote greater equity between students, colleges should focus their efforts on academic advising—providing more and/or better quality advising to students. In 2015, the National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education released a report, which centered on the benefits that scholarships have for Asian American two-year students and called for more of this aid. Based

on participants' interviews, especially the two-year students', colleges seemed to be meeting the financially disadvantaged students' financial needs (which may be a byproduct of this report); instead, four and two-year participants' most pressing need related to academic advising. Greater advising support should be provided, especially for first generation college students. Several of these students—congruent with what other research has shown (Talusán & Franke, 2019; Tang et al. 2013)—communicated that the academic advising their other college-educated family members, college personnel, and race-specific institutional supports supplied was invaluable. Therefore, building upon these supports is essential.

And, improved academic advising may also benefit some continuing generation students. Two-year participants' parents had difficulty providing information important to navigating community college (e.g., the transfer process) unless they themselves had also attended a two-year institution. This paper advances that a greater societal understanding and encouragement of community colleges is needed, especially since many of the two-year students (irrespective of their class grouping) appeared to be on track to complete their Associate's degree without any loan debt. Also, many continuing generation students indicated that their immigrant parents—who attended college in another country—lacked familiarity with higher education in the US. Challenging Teranishi et al. (2015), these continuing generation college students often received some level of academic advising from their parents. Still, it seems that colleges focusing their efforts on academic advising may contribute to greater outcomes for all Asian American undergraduates.

Future research should address some of this paper's limitations. Due to factors—such as COVID, the researcher's access to various four and two-year institutions, and the selection criteria for the four-year students set by the larger project—some findings may be a result of

sampling. Scholarship should replicate this research with Asian American four and two-year students enrolled at other institutions and in other areas of the country. Also, all respondents were under the age of 27 and most were fulltime students. The NCES (2019) reported that 25% of undergraduates were older than 24 and 38% were parttime, and these percentages increase substantially at 2-year institutions; this paper excluded most of these students. Studies that intend to generalize about college students more broadly should be quantitative in nature and—unlike this paper—do statistical analyses comparing receipt of support to student outcomes (e.g., GPA and number of hours worked), as well as analyses that assess how variables like ethnicity, gender, or being a first generation immigrant to the US may influence students' experiences.

Finally, this research needs to be replicated with undergraduates from other racial groups. Receiving parental support seemed to encourage the Asian American participants' college completion, and not receiving it created struggle for participants but did not seem to be detracting from their likelihood of completing college. While this finding may be a result of the sample's participants (e.g., most were high achieving and students who had dropped out of college did not have the opportunity to be interviewed), it aligns with national statistics, which show Asian American undergraduates have the highest college completion rates at both four and two-year institutions of any racial group (Hussar et al., 2020). Thus, seeing if and how parent involvement compares (and affects college completion specifically) for other racial groups may help develop society's understanding of the factors involved in college persistence and inequality more generally.

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CHAPTER 2

“IT’S MORE US HELPING THEM INSTEAD OF THEM HELPING US”: HOW CLASS DISADVANTAGE MOTIVATES ASIAN AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS TO HELP THEIR PARENTS

While considerable attention has been given to the ways that parents contribute to undergraduates’ success, far less attention has been given to what these students do for their families, variation in students’ provision of help, or the consequences of giving. Drawing on 61 interviews with Asian American college students from diverse ethnic and class backgrounds, this paper extends conventional understanding of families and college by analyzing the financial assistance and translation support Asian American undergraduates give their parents. Using a trichotomous model of class—comparing disadvantaged, advantaged, and ambiguous students—I show that class disadvantage motivated students’ helping, advantage deterred it, while the ambiguous fell in between. Culture (i.e., filial piety) and a broad view of family (i.e., siblings’ contributions) also influenced students’ help. Finally, based on interview data combined with partial support from analysis of participants’ GPA data, I demonstrate that helping had positive and negative implications for students’ college experience.

INTRODUCTION

Family involvement in the college experience has become a popular topic of conversation. Asian American college students and their parents especially are frequently subject to stereotype. The tiger mother stereotype attributes Asian American college students' aggregate level success within higher education (e.g., their high enrollment in elite universities and math and science-related majors and high rates of college completion) to the strict childrearing East Asian mothers—employ (Chua, 2011). And this stereotype reinforces the model minority image of Asian Americans. Although there is scholarship that discredits these stereotypes (Lee & Zhou, 2015; Museus, 2013), it too looks at what parents do to affect Asian American students' college experience. Missing from family research is what these students do for their parents.

Drawing on interviews with 61 Asian American undergraduates, this paper investigates the help or support these students provide for their parents. It asks: (1) What motivates students to help their parents? (2) How do they help, and what—if any—variation is there in the help they provide? and (3) How does helping affect students' college experience? Exploring what Asian American college students do for their parents, and not simply what parents do to affect students, is imperative for obtaining a more complete understanding of familial involvement in the college experience and what this involvement looks like for Asian American undergraduates in particular.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In 2008, Fang et al. reviewed family-based journals and argued that there was a paucity of research on Asian American families. The research which investigates the help Asian American undergraduates give to their parents is even more minimal. Given this limitation, I review the literature pertaining to Asian American children helping their parents more generally.

Most of this literature examines children prior to college (Chung, 2016; Tse, 1996), young adults—who may or may not be current college students—more generally (Trickett & Jones, 2007; Trieu, 2014), and Asian Americans who are well into adulthood and have elderly parents (Ishii-Kuntz, 1997; Lanuza, 2020). This scholarship is insufficient for understanding Asian American college students' support-giving, because children's provision of help may not be uniform throughout the life course. Fuligni and Pedersen (2002) posit Asian American children help more after high school, but Tang, Kim, & Haviland, (2013) counter that Asian American parents refrain from asking their children for assistance during college, so as to not detract from their studies.

Another significant limitation of the scholarship on Asian American children helping their parents is that it is often very broad or narrow in whom it studies. Research compares Asian Americans to other racial groups (Telzer & Fuligni, 2009; Tseng, 2004), disregarding potential intragroup differences among Asian Americans. Or it combines Asian American and Latinx children (Covarrubias, Valle, Laiduc, & Azmitia, 2019; Yeung, 2011), disregarding how support-giving may be distinct for Asian Americans support-giving may be distinct. Other literature represents one or two ethnic groups (Chhuon et al., 2010; Trieu, 2014), a single gender (Maramba, 2008) or generation status—for example, first generation immigrants (Tang et al., 2013) or the children of first generation immigrants (Louie, 2004). Fang et al. (2008) identifies at least 28 Asian American ethnicities, and many of these groups are never included in research. Thus, my sample is deliberately ethnically diverse, consists of both women and men, and did not exclude undergraduates based on their generation status.

The Types of Help Children Give

In this paper, I explore the two main types of help that undergraduates say they give to their parents: financial assistance and translation support. Scholarship describes a variety of ways Asian American children may help their parents: domestic work—for example, performing household chores, cooking family meals, and babysitting for younger siblings (Sy & Brittian, 2008), emotional support—for example, supplying advice and encouragement (Ishii-Kuntz, 1997), and care of elderly parents—for example, providing practical care-giving and medical assistance (Pyke, 2017). Respondents mentioned these other forms of help but did so less frequently; financial assistance and translation support also appeared to have the greatest impact on students' college experience.

Question 1: Factors that Motivate Asian American Children to Help their Parents

The first question my paper asks is: What motivates Asian American college students to help their parents? I examine if—and to what extent—three factors affect students' provision of support: culture (filial piety specifically), class, and the involvement of siblings. Literature also identifies ethnicity, gender, and generation status as possible factors (Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002; Lanuza, 2020). I assess their effect but focus on the former, as they figured most prominently in my interviews and are rarely studied in combination by other research.

Most scholarship attributes Asian American children helping their parents to culture. The Asian culture value filial piety broadly calls for children to respect their parents, but an aspect of this respect entails a sense of obligation to provide them with support (Chao & Tseng, 2002). Survey data shows that filial piety is practiced widely among Asian Americans, often referring to it as family obligation (Fuligni, et al., 1999; Sy & Brittian, 2008). These surveys, however, include few items that pertain to helping parents and do not report the results of these individual

items. And, many only ask participants if they feel that they should help their parents (Benigno, 2012; Impalli, 1999), which differs from if participants are—in fact—supplying help.

Some research suggests an alternative hypothesis: the power of class. Asian American children from more disadvantaged class backgrounds help their parents more than children from advantaged class backgrounds (Kibria, 1993; Trieu, 2014). Rather than conduct class comparisons though, this scholarship typically centers on the experiences of the disadvantaged (Covarrubias et al., 2019; Yeung, 2011) and uses parents' education level (i.e., if a student is a first generation student) to identify undergraduates who are disadvantaged (Chhuon, Hudley, Brenner, & Macias, 2010; Tang et al., 2013). Louie (2004) argues that parents' income, educational level, and occupation all potentially affect their involvement in Asian American college students' experience. To develop a greater understanding of how class may affect the support students give their parents, my research purposefully sought students from diverse class backgrounds, relied on these three indicators to assess their class status, and analyzed their help by class status.

Siblings are the final factor I consider. Literature on Asian American students—and Asian American undergraduates specifically—indicates that siblings play an integral role in students' educational experience (Lee & Zhou, 2015; Maramba, 2008). And literature which directly discusses Asian American children helping their parents, suggests older sibling bear the brunt of providing this help (Chung, 2016; Pyke, 2017) and can lessen and even eliminate the help younger siblings supply (Trieu, 2014). Thus, I investigate if and how siblings' contributions to parents may impact students' own.

Question 2: How Children Help their Parents

The second question I ask is: How do students help their parents? I examine the financial assistance and translation support students give, and what—if any—variation exists in their helping. Looking first at financial assistance, some literature indicates Asian American children give their parents monetary support. Yet, most quantitative (Lanuza, 2020; Witkow, Huynh, & Fuligni, 2015) and qualitative (Chhuon et al., 2010; Louie, 2004) research is vague in explaining what this financial assistance entails. For instance, Witkow et al. (2015) asked undergraduates a single yes or no survey item about whether they currently gave any member of their family financial support. Qualitative research identifies specific instances or cases of students giving their parents financial assistance—for example, one student who began tutoring to give his parents money (Covarrubias et al., 2019)—but it is unclear how well these examples represent students’ help more generally. Trieu (2014) categorized respondents by the financial contributions they gave their parents, but her research was not restricted to college students and only included second generation Chinese and Vietnamese participants. In this paper, I analyze what undergraduates say about their monetary contributions and how these contributions vary among the students.

Turning to translation support—or what some refer to as “language brokering”—considerable scholarship suggests that Asian American children translate for their parents. Given that nearly three-fourths of Asian American adults were born outside of the country (US Census, 2019), most Asian American children are immigrants or have immigrant parents. These children often enroll in the US education system and become more familiar with the English language than their parents, and—as a result—perform various translation tasks to assist them. Literature identifies many ways students translate: They may speak with individuals (e.g., service providers or credit card companies) on their parents’ behalf, read their mail, or submit their bill payments

(Chung, 2016; Guan & Shen, 2015). Covarrubias et al. (2019) uses the term financial brokering to describe the ways children translate to help with their parents' financial matters. Although the literature concerning translation support is extensive, the only piece I have found that focuses on Asian American college students (i.e., that does not compare or combine these students with another racial group) and studies more than one Asian American ethnic group is a Master's Thesis now more than 25 years old (Chew, 1994).

Question 3: Effect of Helping on Students' College Experience

Finally, this study explores the impact helping has on students' college experience. The scholarship discussing the effects of support-giving is divided. Some of it asserts that helping parents is very stressful for children and negatively affects their educational experience (Chhuon et al., 2010; Yeung, 2011). Yet, other research—which focuses on Asian American college students—argues helping parents is inconsequential for undergraduates' well-being (Benigno, 2012; Impalli, 1999). In fact, there is literature concerning translation support, which suggests Asian American children enjoy helping their parents in this way (Chew, 1994; Tse, 1996) and academically benefit from it (Md-Yunus, 2011). I assess how students understand the effects (both negative and positive) of helping their parents and compare these evaluations with its effects on their academic performance (i.e., GPA data).

METHODS

This study draws on intensive, semi-structured in-person interviews I conducted with 61 Asian American college students attending a large, pre-dominantly white, public research university in the Northeast. At the time of the study, Asian Americans—international students from Asia excluded—comprised 8% of the school's population; Asian Americans also comprised 8% of the college student population nationwide (US Census, 2018). The interviews

are part of a larger project exploring how race, class, and gender shape family involvement in the college experience. Fitting with the larger project's selection criteria, respondents were (1) non-international students, (2) under the age of 25, (3) fulltime students, (4) in their sophomore year or above, and (5) did not live with their parents during the school year.

The university provided a list of all fulltime students in their sophomore year or above. It included students' self-reported race, financial aid data (i.e., whether they received a Pell Grant, received financial aid but not Pell, applied for but received no financial aid, or had not applied for financial aid), gender, year in college, resident status, current grade point average, and school email address. I recruited most students ($n = 50$, 29 women and 21 men) through email. I recruited the other six women and five men through respondent-driven sampling and various college courses. In my analyses, however, I found no differences between students based on method of recruitment.

To assess respondents' class, I analyzed three indicators of class status: parents' income, education level, and occupation—each of which students identified during their interviews. In this study, I define parent as any parent or stepparent that students described having had at least some interaction with since being in college. Assessing parents' income was challenging, because the university-provided financial aid data did not always reflect students' self-reports of their parents' income (e.g., some students with divorced parents received Pell because only one parent's income had been reported). Therefore, if a participant indicated their financial aid data was incorrect, I relied on their self-report to assess their parents' income. Using the criteria described in the table below, I then identified each student as being “more advantaged” or “more disadvantaged” on each class indicator. During the time of the interviews, the median household

income in the Northeast was slightly above \$50,000 (US Census, 2020), making it a useful cut-off for income status.

Table 2. Designation of Students as More Disadvantaged or Advantaged by Class Indicator

	More Disadvantaged	More Advantaged
Income	Parents' income below 50,000	Parents' income at least 50,000
Education Level	No parent with a Bachelor's degree	At least one parent with at least a Bachelor's degree
Occupation	No parent with a professional or managerial occupation	At least one parent with a professional or managerial occupation

I expected that two groups would emerge from this classification: the disadvantaged and advantaged. Other scholarship that conducts class comparisons (Lareau 2015; Louie, 2004) employs this dichotomous model. Yet, I found that respondents fell into three distinct class categories. Most (n = 26, 43%) were “more disadvantaged” on all indicators. One third (n = 20, 33%) were “more advantaged” on all indicators. The remaining students (n = 15, 24%) fell into both groups: the majority (n = 10, 67%) had parents who were “more advantaged” with regard to income but “more disadvantaged” with regard to education level and occupation. Thus, based on these indicators, I assigned students to three different class groupings: disadvantaged, advantaged, and ambiguous, respectively.

The three class categories were similar in terms of gender composition, age, and year in school. Most respondents were in-state students, but the advantaged category had the highest percentage of out-of-state students (n=6, 30%), which is not surprising given the higher cost of out-of-state tuition. Though not a part of sample selection, all students—except one advantaged respondent—had at least one parent who was born outside of the US. The majority of students were born and/or raised in the US, but a portion (n = 16, 26%) had immigrated to the country in either childhood or adolescence. In terms of ethnic make-up, respondents represented a total of 14 different ethnicities (i.e., Chinese, Thai, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Sri Lankan, Filipino,

Korean, Asian Indian, Indonesian, Pakistani, Hmong, Singaporean, Taiwanese, and Tibetan). Some were multi-ethnic. One student was multiracial, Chinese and white, but identified as Asian American. I compared students by ethnic region: East Asian, Southeast Asian, South Asian, and other (i.e., multiethnic or multiracial); gender; and generation status (i.e., first generation vs. latter generation immigrants) to assess whether these factors were associated with or had an effect on students' class category or provision of support—but found no association.

The initial interview schedule—which was developed to be used across racial groups—asked students to identify and explain the help they gave their parents, probing them to discuss why they believed they were or were not providing support (i.e., the factor or factors that motivated them to help), the amount and frequency of their help, their attitudes toward providing it, and if and how they felt it was affecting their college experience. It explicitly asked respondents not only about their current but also about their plans for the future provision of financial assistance. Early during the interview process, I also noted that a subset of the Asian American students indicated that they translated for their parents and added questions about this type of help to the interview schedule.

Interviews lasted between 40 minutes and three hours, averaging one hour. Each interview was audio recorded, transcribed, and then coded using NVivo11. The research team for the larger project jointly created the interview protocol and coding scheme. The coding process entailed inductive and deductive methods. First, broad codes were developed based on the initial open-coding of the interviews and existing theory and research. After interviewing more students and discussing emergent themes, the scheme was then narrowed to include more precise codes. Queries and analyses were performed using the codes most germane to this study.

First, I explored how students spoke about helping their parents, noting what—if any—reference students made to filial piety, class, and/or their siblings. Then, I assessed each class grouping’s provision of financial assistance and translation support (or lack thereof). Next, I examined how students helped (e.g., looking for potential similarities and differences in their amount and frequency of types of support). Finally, looking at only students who gave support, I analyzed how they described its impact on their college experience—either positively or negatively. And using the university- provided GPA, I conducted independent sample t-tests comparing the GPAs of the providers and non-providers of support and explored the extent to which these quantitative findings supported findings from the interview data.

RESULTS

This study’s first aim was to assess what motivated Asian American undergraduates to help their parents—provide financial assistance and translation support for them. I investigated the extent to which culture (i.e., filial piety), class, and siblings motivated college students’ help. As I will show, most students expressed a deep attachment to filial piety. But I found that class—rather than this attachment to a set of cultural beliefs—had a greater effect on students’ provision of support. And, siblings’ contributions were significant but did not override the effect of class.

Feeling Obligated to Help but Not Always Helping

Across class, respondents said they felt a strong obligation to provide support for their parents. Demonstrating this, Mina—a disadvantaged student whose mother was a housekeeper at a hotel and whose father worked part-time as a granite fabricator—stated, “I always have to take care of my parents.” Wang Wei, an advantaged student whose mother and father each held a PhD, used almost identical wording. He said, “I’ve always had the sense of responsibility to take care of my family.” Jasmine, an ambiguous student whose parents were factory workers—but

who estimated their combined yearly income was \$130,000 as a result of their working six days a week and 12 hours a day— indicated, “My strongest value is definitely family...mostly helping out my family.” Though these two latter students spoke of their families more generally, most students discussed this sense of obligation directly in relation to their parents. In fact, many equated “helping out,” or “giving back” to their parents with being a good family member. Vihaan, an ambiguous student, said, “I think for me [being a good family member] is just being there for my parents definitely. My parents are always on top so whatever they need comes first and then everything else later.” This strong sense of obligation was pervasive among the respondents in each class group.

Students themselves often associated children helping their parents with Asian culture. Andy, an ambiguous student was succinct as he said, “Chinese culture: Children take of their parents.” Elaborating on this, Cindy—an advantaged student—commented, “[My parents have] taken care of me all of my life, so it’s kind of that Asian heritage that I have that you should always take care of someone that took care of you.” Many students, like Cindy, perceived helping their parents as a form of repayment or reciprocity. Achara, an ambiguous student, suggested this mindset of helping one’s parents and reciprocity was in direct contrast with American culture values:

There are certain values that you learn in college that conflict with maybe Asian ideals of the family. Like here in America, it’s like oh you’ve got to be independent...That’s the expectation...Whereas in my family, it’s like...you have to take care of your parents.

In fact, several respondents commented that their non-Asian American peers did not share a similar sense of obligation to help their parents. Awareness of this cultural difference, however, did not minimize students’ strong attachment to such views.

Thus, respondents widely expressed a commitment to filial piety. But this norm was disconnected from the support they actually gave their parents. That is, many students who indicated feeling obligated to help their parents provided neither financial assistance nor translation support. This suggests that filial piety, though significant to students, is not the driving factor in whether or not Asian American undergraduates actually help their parents.

Class as a Motivator for Helping Parents

Students from more disadvantaged class backgrounds gave their parents substantially more help than students from more advantaged class backgrounds. This dichotomous model, however, is insufficient for explaining the effect of class. Rather, comparing disadvantaged, advantaged, and ambiguous students' provision of financial assistance and translation support, I found that each form of support was associated with a different class indicator: Parents' income (and occupation for some ambiguous students) motivated students' provision of financial assistance, while parents' education level motivated students' provision of translation support.

Parents' income (and sometimes occupation) and providing financial assistance. Very few students, across class, said they gave their parents monetary support while they were in college. Analyzing how students spoke about this lack of assistance though, clear class differences emerged. Many disadvantaged students indicated they would like to give their parents money but knew their parents would not accept the help in spite of their financial need. When I asked Grace if she financially helped out her parents in any way, she explained with a common refrain: "No...[My parents] don't even want me to work. They just want me to focus on my grades." Disadvantaged parents' unwillingness to accept financial assistance seemed to originate from the strong value they placed on education. These students told me that their parents wanted them to prioritize their academics and not be distracted by any competing work obligations. Frank, the

one disadvantaged student who gave his parents consistent—though minimal—financial assistance for groceries during the school year, explained how in getting a job to provide this money he had directly went against his mother’s wishes: “She was like, ‘Why do you need a job? You don’t need a job’ ...But, me being stubborn, I just got it myself...And now it’s just a thing.” Advantaged students responded to questions about their provision of financial assistance much differently. Most were brief in their answers. They said they did not give their parents any money and gave no further explanation. Ambiguous students’ responses were divided: Those whose parents were financially disadvantaged talked in ways similar to disadvantaged students and those who parents were financially advantaged typically talked in ways similar to advantaged students. Thus, parents’ income created variation in students’ desire to provide financial assistance but not their actual provision of it.

Asking students about their future intentions to provide money for their parents exposed more of a class divide. Most disadvantaged students said as soon as they graduated and found work, they would begin giving their parents money in regular intervals. Jenny indicated, “Once I’ve stabled then I would give [my parents] money every month from my paycheck.” Many disadvantaged students described large financial contributions they intended to make. Albert estimated he would be giving half of his salary every year to his parents. Li Na estimated an exact number amount she planned to give: “like \$10,000 a year.” She explained that her parents needed this support: “[My parents] have really [a] low-income right now. When I graduate...I can probably get a job getting at least like \$60,000 or \$70,000, something like that. That’s minimum...[So] I think I can have some money to give them.” James spoke similarly. When I asked why he intended to give his mom—who was a single parent—money, he said: “She

doesn't make that much, and I'll be making like twice as much as she is making right now straight out of college."

Turning to advantaged students', about half of these students did not indicate having any plans of financially assisting their parents. The other advantaged students said they wanted to help, but the amount they intended to give was inconsequential compared to what disadvantaged students reported. Several advantaged students discussed items they would like to purchase for their parents in the distant future after establishing themselves in their careers. Jane explained, "I definitely do want to eventually have enough money to give my mom nice gifts and stuff." Another, Darna, stated, "I always want to give back to my parents...Maybe save up for a cruise for them. I don't know. Something like that." In describing his plans to assist his parents in the future, Richard—who estimated that his parents earned \$200,000 a year—acknowledged his parents' financial advantage. He said, "I'm sure [my parents] have their own savings, but...I'd love to buy them a house like when I'm 50 or something." He concluded his formulation with a tentative: "We'll see." It seemed that their parents' secure financial standing allowed advantaged students to conceive of financially helping their parents in terms of luxuries (e.g., gifts and vacations) rather than the necessities many disadvantaged students spoke of (e.g., bill payments and rent) and also why advantaged students spoke about these plans with greater uncertainty.

Ambiguous students' whose parents were financially disadvantaged were similar to disadvantaged students in that most planned to begin giving their parents money once they graduated. Vihaan expressed it was important he find a job after college to "start helping [his] parents pay the bills and make sure that they [could] sustain everything." Like disadvantaged students, he referenced his parents' financial need. The other ambiguous students—whose parents were financially advantaged—were divided. Some resembled advantaged students: Their

future intentions of providing money were nonexistent or minimal. Michelle described, “I’d definitely help [my parents] if they needed any financial help.” Unlike Vihaan, Michelle did not indicate her parents struggled financially. The rest of these students, however, intended to make large monetary contributions to their parents, despite their parents’ financial advantage. These students explained that seeing parents struggle to achieve economic success (i.e., working long hours in non-professional jobs) motivated their desire to help. Tashi conveyed, “My ultimate goal is to take care of [my parents] in the future. Like [for them to have] no job, no worries. Just completely take care of them.” She equated this financial assistance to be her version of “repayment” to her father for his working two jobs her entire life. Thus, class—specifically parents’ income (and their occupation for some ambiguous students)—influenced students’ future expectations of giving help.

Parents’ education level and providing translation support. Class also played an integral part in determining who translated for their parents: Most disadvantaged and many ambiguous students supplied this support while no advantaged student reported doing so. But here I found that parents’ education level was most important. Parents’ education level and English proficiency appeared closely aligned, and no respondent who had at least one parent with a Bachelor’s degree from either a US or non-US institution (i.e., all advantaged students and a small portion of the ambiguous students) reported translating for their parents. A few of these students said they had one parent who was not proficient in English but explained that their college-educated parent—who did speak English—took care of the translation duties. Conversely, most disadvantaged and ambiguous students whose parents did not hold a Bachelor’s degree indicated their parents were not fluent in English and described supplying a considerable amount of translation support for their parents as a result.

Respondents translated in two primary ways: (1) using their knowledge of the English language to complete tasks for their parents and (2) by translating information into their parents' native language so their parents could understand it. I discuss each separately, but most students who translated reported doing so in both ways. Describing task completion, Bohai—a disadvantaged student—related: “Since my parents don’t know that much English if they need to do something that is outside their language area, they’ll just ask me to do it [for them].” Most of the tasks students helped their parents with revolved financial brokering. For instance, Dustin—also a disadvantaged student—explained, “My conversations with my parents always involve money: paying bills and taxes. And every time they call, they just need me to call the insurance guy or [cellphone company] or some type of thing to get it all solved.” Like Dustin, many disadvantaged and ambiguous students played a crucial role in overseeing, and sometimes fixing, their parents’ financial matters.

Much of the translating information students did also entailed financial brokering. For instance, when I asked Ally—a disadvantaged student—how she helped her parents, she said, “translating documents: making sure my parents understand their health insurance or their bills.” Some students noted additional ways they translated information, like helping their parents understand emails or medical terms following hospital visits. One disadvantaged student, Li Na, explained she had to physically accompany her parents to their appointments to act as their translator: “Every time [my parents] go to the hospital, I have to go with them to be an interpreter... Otherwise they cannot understand what the doctor said.” Li Na’s example was uncommon, but it demonstrates the link I observed between parents’ education level (i.e., English proficiency) and students’ provision of translation support; her parents had immigrated

from China less than 2 years prior, and neither held beyond a middle school education nor spoke any English.

Several disadvantaged and ambiguous students reported helping their parents in their places of work, both through translation tasks and translating information. Hubert—an ambiguous student—explained, “Sometimes [my mom] has stuff at work that she needs me to grammar check. Because English isn’t her first language, some of it is kind of choppy and she wants me to fix it up for her.” Charaya, a disadvantaged student, said her parents regularly asked that she do translation tasks for their small café:

Usually my mom and dad like me to draft signs for their business...Last night after I got [back to school] my mom was like, “ok, you really need to type that mandatory dress code, because I see girls coming in spaghetti straps at work. And that’s ridiculous.” So I actually just drafted that last night and emailed it to her. Yea, it’s a pretty common thing.

Angela, an ambiguous student, also discussed how she helped her mother with her job, but her assistance came in the way of translating information:

I would say I talk to [my mom] at least two times a day, because she’ll call me in the afternoon and then she’ll call me at night to ask me questions about English, the language...She works at the post office, so sometimes she needs to figure some stuff out.

Students’ helping their parents in their places of employment is a significant contribution, but research rarely discusses it. So though these students did not give their parents tangible monetary support, it is likely this assistance—in addition to students’ substantial financial brokering—had an indirect financial benefit for parents.

Most disadvantaged and ambiguous students, as the previous examples illustrate, said that—despite their not living with their parents during the school year—they translated for them on a regular basis. Dustin and Angela said that every conversation they had with their parents involved translation, and these conversations transpired daily. Charaya discussed drafting signs for her parents as being a “pretty common thing.” A few respondents said that they stopped

providing translation support after high school, but they were the minority. In fact, a few students suggested their provision of translation support had actually increased since entering college. Jasmine, an ambiguous student, explained: “[Entering college] made it harder, because now they know that I’m more educated...It makes it’s harder because before my work for my family was just a little bit, but now it’s just ballooning to a bigger workload.” Jasmine’s parents expected her to be an “expert” on all matters, even though her major was political science.

As this analysis demonstrates, parents’ prioritization of education deterred them from requesting financial assistance from their children in college, but it did not deter them requesting translation support. Though I did not explicitly ask students about their future intentions of translating, a few students indicated—even after graduation—they would need to remain geographically close to their parents in order to continue translating for them. This suggests that providing translation support will persist, to at least some extent, for many disadvantaged and ambiguous students in the future.

The Effect Siblings’ Contributions have on Students’ Helping

After observing that class had an effect on students’ help, I then investigated how—if at all—siblings’ contributions interacted with this effect. Many disadvantaged and ambiguous students whose siblings were already helping their parents suggested that it, to some extent, reduced their own assistance or intentions of assistance. With both financial assistance and translation support, a few students said their siblings’ contributions made their own unnecessary. For instance, Aarav, a disadvantaged student, remarked, “When I’m done with college, my oldest brother will probably be doing a lot of the [financially] taking care of [my parents]. Just because he’s like seven years older, and he’s more settled.” However, it was more common for respondents to discuss providing support as a shared task among siblings. Eunice—a

disadvantaged student—relayed, “Both my sisters and I always help [my parents] translate any papers they have or documents they need to fill out.” And, disconfirming existing research (Trieu, 2014), I found eldest children were not always the primary support-givers. Eunice was the middle child; some students said their older sibling(s) did not supply any help. Jenny—a disadvantaged student with three older sisters—described that her sisters in no way alleviated her intentions of financially providing for her parents:

I feel that once I graduate college I need to find a job and I need to help pay for everything. Because no offense, but I don't really rely on my other sisters...One is still in school, in grad school...so she is in debt...My second sister, she is in debt because of her personal issues. And my third sister, she hasn't found a job yet.

A disadvantaged student, Madison, who was the youngest in her family indicated she was her mother's sole provider of translation support:

I'm the only one in my family that really speaks English. [My mom] lives at home with my [older] sister, but my sister isn't well-educated. She isn't college-educated, so a lot of family responsibility has to be taken care of [by me].

Madison illustrates the link between education level and English proficiency, but she also demonstrates how siblings' contributions (their contributions of both financial assistance and translation support and irrelevant of their birth order)—though potentially impactful—did not eliminate the effect class had on students' provision of support.

The Effect of Helping on Students' College Experience

The final question I address is how does helping parents affect students' college experience. I analyze the effects of providing financial assistance and translation support separately, given that some students (particularly ambiguous students) gave one form of help and not the other. After discussing the interview findings, I compare them with the university-provided GPA data. I focus on disadvantaged and ambiguous students, because—as was shown—they provided the most help to their parents.

The effect of providing financial assistance. Many disadvantaged and ambiguous students who planned to begin financially supporting their parents after they graduated explained that these future intentions motivated them to both complete and do well academically in college. Doing well in college would increase the likelihood that they would secure high-paying employment after and be able to financially provide for their parents (i.e., their ultimate goal).

Communicating this, Tim—a disadvantaged student—said, “Education is important to get a better job, to get a high salary, to support your [parents].” Frank, the disadvantaged student who already gave his parents money, reasoned this was his sole purpose for attending college:

My parents have definitely played a huge role in why I’m here [at college]... They would be the entire reason. I only go here just so I can [financially] provide more...I guess a decent standard of living and good pay would be nice, but—at the end—it’s like I’m going to give it back anyway...Yea so going to school here, it’s really just all for them...I keep going because of them. I mean school is hard work...If I wanted to be comfortable with my life, I’d be like okay I’ll take the full-time job and sit home and do nothing.

Though Frank spoke about these future monetary intentions as being motivating, he—and several other students—explained that they could also produce significant anxiety.

These students described feeling that they no choice but to be successful, as their parents needed their financial support. Illustrating this, Tien—a disadvantaged student—explained how this motivation to help her parents had changed to stress:

At first it was really motivating, but now it’s kind of really stressful...And it really goes down to me and my sister if we can be successful enough to be able to take care of [my parents]. They never want to put that burden on us, but I can see they’re getting old.

Dustin, said in the same vein:

[My parents’ expectations] are killing me. When it comes to the future and all these [financial] responsibilities I’m supposed to uphold, it’s not easy. It’s very, very frustrating. And I don’t know if most Asians have to go through this, but this is what I have to do, and I’m just going to live it.

So, while this expectation of financially contributing after college could inspire students' academic success, it simultaneously put immense pressure on them.

The effect of providing translation support. Turning to translation support, many disadvantaged and ambiguous students indicated that translating for their parents came with a negative consequence. Translating created a time strain for them: They found it challenging to help their parents and also fulfill their academic demands. Illustrating this time strain, Charaya, the disadvantaged student who drafted signs for her parents' business, said, "Sometimes it's exam week or finals week, and [my parents are] like, 'Hey, I need you to draft this.' I'm like, 'I'm busy mom. I need to study for sociology. Exam is in like three hours!'" Adding to this, another disadvantaged student—Madison—said, "There is a lot of time and commitment and responsibility dedicated to family that I feel could be spent on my education or doing other things that I want to do." Madison believed translating was taking time away from her academics and overall college experience.

Some students delayed their translation duties in order to complete their schoolwork. For instance, some did the majority of it during home visits. Albert described, "The paperwork. [My parents] don't want to deal with it. So they save it all for me [when I go home]." Yet, no student—even those were frequently called upon to provide translation support during college—suggested they had ever altogether refused to help their parents. Mai, a disadvantaged student, explained, "Sometimes it's annoying when I have finals or exams during the time that [my mom] calls me. So I get a little bit annoyed, but I still do it." Thus, with both translation support and future financial assistance, it appeared that some disadvantaged and ambiguous students felt resigned to help their parents in this way, possibly due in part to their parents' class disadvantage (i.e., need for this support) and in part to students' strong attachment to filial piety.

Students' hesitation to describe providing support unfavorably. During their interviews, I noticed that many respondents seemed hesitant (and somewhat reluctant) to discuss helping their parents unfavorably. This hesitation occurred with financial assistance. Vivian, a disadvantaged student who was confident she would begin paying her parents bills after she graduated, explained, "I think it will probably annoy me a little, but it won't be that big of a deal." It also occurred with translating. Tien—also a disadvantaged student—said, "I hate to admit that [translating] is so annoying. It's not annoying....Okay, it is. I'll be really honest. It's so annoying to me." Jasmine, an ambiguous student, indicated that translating created an enormous time strain for her but then downplayed the seriousness of this time strain:

The pipe in my house broke. So now I'm calling the insurance, but I'm here [on campus], and I'm trying to juggle everything. And I'm like, "I can't do this. You guys have to ask somebody else. I have too much on my plate." But it's okay. I love my parents, so I don't really care really.

In vocalizing their hesitation, students often alluded to their sense of obligation to help their parents (i.e., filial piety). It is possible that students found it difficult to speak negatively about something they felt that they should be doing. Thus, their accounts may not reveal the true severity of the challenges imposed by this support.

The effect of providing on students' grades. I assessed how helping parents affected students' grades (using the students' grade point averages that the university provided). I conducted a separate independent samples t-test for future financial assistance and translation support and found that neither was significant. That is, the grades of students who intended to begin financially supporting their parents immediately after they had completed their education—whether it be a Bachelor's or more advanced degree ($x = 3.39$, $SD = .37$)—were not significantly different from students who did not report having these intentions ($x = 3.17$, $SD = .48$); $t(59) = 1.92$, $p = .06$. Nor were the grades of students who translated during college ($x = 3.38$, $SD = .37$)

significantly different from students who did not translate ($x = 3.19$, $SD = .48$); $t(59) = .154$, $p = .13$.

Given the size of my sample, I argue that this study's qualitative findings take precedence. The grade point average data, however, do provide some support of my qualitative findings: Though not significant, with both future financial assistance and translation, the students categorized as "providers" had a higher mean grade point average than the "non-providers" (and the former test was nearly significant). These quantitative results align with the qualitative finding that wanting to provide parents future financial assistance may motivate students to do well in college. Yet, with translation support, I assumed—since many students who translated reported experiencing a time strain—the "providers" would have worse grades than the "non-providers"; this was not the case. Future research, with a larger sample size, should assess these relationships.

CONCLUSION

Drawing on interviews with 61 Asian American undergraduates, this paper investigated the help students gave to their parents. As one student said, referring to the support he and his sister provided for their parents, "It's more us helping them, instead of them helping us." Family research needs to consider the ways that college students provide support for their parents, recognizing, however, that helping parents is not uniform among undergraduates. Most respondents exhibited a strong sense of obligation to help their parents, upholding the culture value filial piety. And, siblings' contributions (both older and younger) could reduce students' provision of support. But class—particularly class disadvantage—is the main factor that motivated students' help.

Based on their parents' income, education level, and occupation, respondents fell into three class categories: disadvantaged, advantaged, and ambiguous. This trichotomous division was necessary, because ambiguous students' parents were advantaged with regard to at least one indicator (e.g., income) and disadvantaged with regard to at least one indicator (e.g., education level). I found that disadvantaged students gave the most support, advantaged students gave the least, and ambiguous students were somewhere in-between. This trichotomous design further revealed that different class indicators motivated students' provision of financial assistance and translation support.

Across class, few students gave their parents money during college, but parents' income (and occupation for some ambiguous students) affected how students spoke about their current lack of assistance as well as their plans for providing after college. Most students whose parents were financially disadvantaged (i.e., disadvantaged students and some ambiguous students) and a portion of the students whose parents were financially advantaged but did not have professional jobs (i.e., some ambiguous students) planned to begin making sizable monetary contributions to their parents as soon as they finished school and found fulltime work. Conversely, parents' English proficiency, which—for the respondents in my sample was closely tied to parents' education level—influenced students' translation support: Most students whose parents did not hold a Bachelor's degree and thereby were also not fluent in English (i.e., disadvantaged students and some ambiguous students) translated for their parents while in college. Interestingly, college did not prevent students' giving translation support as it did with financial assistance. Rather, respondents reported a myriad of ways they translated for their parents, and many of these tasks may financially benefit students' parents if only indirectly—for example, students translating to help their parents in their places of employment.

I also assessed how helping parents affected disadvantaged and ambiguous college students' experience and found it could have both positive and negative implications. Some of these students believed helping their parents—or needing to in the future—motivated their success in college. Students' grade point average data supported their narratives. However, for some, providing support also had substantial adverse consequences. Several said this “motivation,” actually created tremendous anxiety and stress for them; they felt they had no choice but to succeed because their parents depended on it. Translating similarly created anxiety and stress. Many students described experiencing a time strain, as they tried to simultaneously manage their translation tasks and school work. And students may be minimizing the severity of the challenges they endure. Covarrubias et al. (2019) argue that this may be because college students have become so accustomed to giving this support that they no longer perceive providing it as difficult. I assert two other reasons, specific to Asian American undergraduates. First, my interview data suggest that students may hesitate to speak negatively about helping their parents due to their attachment to filial piety (i.e., they believe that it is something they should do). Second, students may be disinclined to vocalize any problems they encounter, because they feel pressure to uphold the model minority image.

My findings call into question the pervasive model minority stereotype; they also challenge traditional notions of how class affects family involvement in the college experience. Extensive literature associates first generation college students with disadvantage and continuing generation students with advantage (Banks-Santilli, 2014; Lee & Mueller, 2014; Nichols & Islas, 2015), but a portion of my respondents did not adhere to this traditional model (i.e., the ambiguous). Most of the ambiguous respondents were first generation college students, and many had no intentions of giving their parents financial assistance in the future; those who did,

said their parents did not need this help. Ambiguous continuing generation students often spoke in the opposite manner: They intended to provide financial assistance for their parents. These students said their parents' college degrees were undervalued (i.e., had not translated into high-paying employment), because they were earned outside of the US. Thus, I argue that the terms first generation and continuing generation college student do not adequately capture the complexity of class nor its impact on family involvement for Asian American families.

More studies need to be done to corroborate and expand upon these findings. Future research should utilize larger sample sizes, examine students from multiple and different types of institutions (e.g., private colleges and community colleges), and explore institutions in different regions of the US. Further, I intentionally recruited a diverse sample. Students identified with 14 ethnic groups; I included women and men, most of whom were either first or second generation immigrants. I did not find that ethnicity, gender, nor generation status affected the study's findings. It is important scholarship on Asian Americans—regardless of its focus—assess these factors' potential effect, but it is also imperative it utilize more diverse samples so as to extend society's understanding of Asian Americans and their heterogeneity but also what commonalities the racial group shares. I hypothesize that research focused on Asian American children who are third generation immigrants or later may yield different results.

It may also be important for research to consider if these complexities of class affect Asian American students—college students and students more generally—in ways beyond their helping their parents (e.g., students' receipt of help from their parents). Additionally, I argue research should continue to assess filial piety and siblings' contributions when investigating Asian American college students. Though these factors played a lesser role than class with regard to motivating help, they still mattered and deserve exploration.

This research fills several gaps in family literature. It extends current understandings of family involvement in the college experience. It adds to the research on Asian American families. And, it adds to the limited scholarship that explores Asian American college students' help to their parents. Universities can use these findings to better support Asian American undergraduates' diverse and complex needs, recognizing how class can shape family involvement and students' resulting college experience.

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CHAPTER 3

THE SIBLING ADVANTAGE: ASIAN AMERICAN FIRST GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS AND THE ACADEMIC SUPPORT THEY RECEIVE FROM SIBLINGS

First generation (first gen) college students—and the struggles they experience due to a lack of parental support—receive significant attention. However, the support these students may receive from siblings and its contribution to their academic success is all but invisible in the existing literature. This paper assessed this possible “sibling advantage” with Asian American first gen students. Drawing on 140 interviews, it explored the academic support Asian American first gen students (n=55) received from their siblings and compared their receipt of support to that of Black and white first gen students (n=39) and Asian American continuing gen students (n=46). It also examined if institution type (i.e., attending a four versus a two-year institution) had any effect on Asian American college students’ receipt of support. Developing a typology of siblings’ academic support, this paper found that Asian American first gen four and two-year students did have a sibling advantage: They received an abundance of academic advising from their siblings, which they asserted helped them successfully navigate college. Many Black and white first gen four-year students received a different form of academic support—direct academic assistance (specifically siblings’ proofreading papers). Asian American first gen students received less of this help, but academic advising (e.g., siblings suggesting how many courses to take each semester to be on track to graduate or helping with students’ major choice) seemed more prominent in creating a sibling advantage. Few Asian American continuing gen four and two-year students received any sibling support. Nearly all of the Asian American participants had immigrant parents; some were immigrants themselves. Thus, these findings suggest that race (associated with immigration) and class interact to shape students’ receipt of sibling support.

INTRODUCTION

The term first generation college student (first gen student hereafter) frequently comes up in discussions about higher education. Nguyen and Nguyen (2018) reviewed the literature on first gen students—typically defined as students who do not have a parent who completed at least a Bachelor’s degree—and found that between 1986 and 2017 they were referenced in 450 different scholarly works. With reason, first gen students have substantially lower college completion rates than their continuing generation (continuing gen hereafter) counterparts: After three years in college, 48% of first gen compared to 66% of continuing gen students are on track to graduate (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018). And, these inequities in college completion translate into inequities in earnings (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018).

While existing scholarship already devotes significant attention to better understanding and supporting first gen students, it largely focuses on students and their parents. This paper considers the involvement of an often overlooked family member: siblings. Census data (2020) indicate that more children (80%) live with at least one sibling in the household than with a father (79%). Yet, sibling relationships remain understudied. Irish (1964) reviewed the literature on families and concluded that more scholarship should examine sibling interactions. Nearly 50 years later, in 2012, McHale et al. reviewed the literature and asserted the same. This study then has two broad aims; it seeks to revise conversations about inequity in familial involvement in higher education to include siblings and to help develop the limited literature on siblings more generally.

Specifically, this paper centers on the academic support Asian American first gen students receive from their siblings, and compares their receipt of support to that of other populations. Most Asian American college students (93%) are immigrants to the US and/or have

at least one parent who is an immigrant (NCES, 2012). Literature suggests that—due to the collectivistic nature of immigrant cultures—sibling relationships, and particularly the transmission of academic support from older to younger siblings, are prominent in immigrant families (e.g. see Hafford, 2010). Further, Asian American undergraduates have the highest college completion rate of all other racial groups (NCES, 2017). Challenging the model minority stereotype, the discrepancy in college completion between continuing gen and first gen students is consistent across Asian American, Black, Latinx, and white undergraduates: For each racial group, approximately twice as many continuing gen students earn their Bachelor’s degree within six years. Still, Asian American first gen students have the highest college completion of all first gen students (US Department of Education, 2016). Exploring if and how siblings contribute to Asian American first generation college students’ success—and if these contributions are unique to this group—this paper provides evidence that higher education policy should use its findings to better address the needs of all first gen students.

Drawing on interviews with 140 undergraduates, this research asks: 1) What—if any—academic support do Asian American first gen students receive from their older, college-educated siblings?, 2) How do first gen students from other racial groups (Black and white students) compare in their receipt of sibling support?, 3) How do Asian American continuing gen students compare to first gen students in their receipt of sibling support?, and 4) What—if any—effect does institution type (i.e. attending a four or two-year institution) have on Asian American first gen and continuing gen students’ receipt of sibling support? This final comparison is imperative, as first gen students are disproportionately enrolled in two-year schools: 64% of community college students are first gen, compared to only 47% of four-year students attending public institutions and 43% of four-year students attending private institutions (RTI

International, 2019). Additionally, Asian American community college students further challenge the model minority image. Thus, analyzing how students' experiences are similar or dissimilar by institution type will also help in informing policy recommendations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Being a first gen student is a marker of class disadvantage. And, social reproduction theory (Bourdieu, 1984, Lareau, 2002) affirms that parents from disadvantaged class backgrounds—due to their lack of resources though not desire—do not provide their children the capital (i.e., support) required to thrive in academic institutions. Hence, these students have low college completion rates. Growing literature illustrates these inequities in college students' receipt of parental support during college (e.g., see Banks-Santilli, 2014; Covarrubias, Jones, & Johnson, 2020; Nichols & Islas, 2015; Palbusa & Gauvin, 2017), and several pieces focus on Asian American students (Chhuon et al., 2010; Louie, 2008; Tang, Kim, & Haviland, 2013). These students' parents often have the added difficulty of not being familiar with the US education system and not being proficient in English. That is, their ability to supply support is further thwarted. Therefore, this paper assesses if older, college-educated siblings may be able to provide a “sibling advantage”, supplying some first gen students the support they do not receive from their parents.

Its focus on academic support is also intentional. Research often describes first gen students' hardships in relation to both their lack of cultural capital (which academic support is a part of) and financial capital (Hamilton, 2016; Mullen, 2010; Stuber, 2011), implying that these are the two most prominent types of support first gen students do not receive from their parents. While many first gen students have financially disadvantaged parents, approximately half do not (Banks-Santilli, 2015). Some (e.g., see Nguyen & Nguyen, 2016; Young, 2016) have argued that

conflating the two groups—as research often does (Dennis, Phinney, & Chuateco, 2005; McCarron & Inkelas, 2006)—is inappropriate. Few studies have compared these students to test this assertion, but statistics released by the Pell Institute (2011) indicated that “first gen, not low income students” were almost 2.5 times more likely to graduate within six years compared to “low-income, first gen students”. And, a recent investigation—which analyzed these groups separately and centered on Asian American undergraduates—found that neither received any academic support from their parents, but the former students received far more in the way of financial support (Harrington, 2022a). Arguably then, academic support is the most predominant form of help first gen students do not receive from their parents.

This paper does, however, consider multiple forms of academic support; recognizing that it is a multifaceted term. Literature identifies a host of different academic support-giving activities continuing gen parents may partake in. For example, parents often provide academic information or advice about test-taking and interacting with professors (Nichols & Islas, 2015). They help students make academic decisions about things such as their classes and major choice (Covarrubias et al., 2020). They help students with their coursework—e.g., proofreading students’ papers or explaining to them a certain citation method (Banks-Santilli, 2015). And, they also may communicate with college personnel (e.g. faculty and administration) on the students’ behalf to resolve academic concerns (Daniel et al., 2001). This paper considers these forms of academic support; it also looks to see if students, in their interviews, discuss any additional forms of academic support their siblings provide.

Siblings’ Academic Involvement in College

As mentioned, not enough research examines sibling relationships, and even less focuses on college students’ interactions with their siblings. In addition to being sparse, the literature

specific to Asian American college students and college students more broadly share other limitations. Significant scholarship has analyzed how the presence or absence of siblings affects students' college outcomes. Much of this research concurs that individuals with college-educated older siblings tend to have higher college attendance, GPAs, and levels of academic and social adjustment to college (Hurtado-Ortiz & Gauvain, 2007; Kim, Choi, & Park, 2002; Loury, 2004; Smith 2020). Yet, the causal model here is unclear, as none of these studies assessed sibling interactions (i.e., what—if any—support siblings provided to affect these outcomes). The studies that do analyze sibling interactions seldom look at academic support. Instead, they assess the relationship quality, feelings of companionship or conflict, college students experience with their siblings (Lindell, Campione-Barr, & Greer, 2014; Pyke, 2005; Volkrom, Machiz, & Reich, 2011; Wu et al., 2018).

The scholarship that addresses academic support also is incomplete. Some of it describes the help students receive from their siblings precollege—as they are applying for college (Ceja 2006; Doublestein, 2017; Luedke, 2006) or selecting an institution to attend (Kim & Gasman, 2011; Perez & McDonough 2008)—but not while students are in college. And, studies tend to prioritize the academic support current undergraduates provide for their younger siblings who are not yet in college (Delgado, 2020; Patron, 2020; Luedke, 2020) over the support these students receive after entering college. To be fair, myriad scholarly pieces mention that college students may benefit from the academic support their college-educated siblings' provide—either in their conclusion or by including a few examples or brief section on this help (see Conger & Little, 2010; Lee & Zhou, 2015; Louie, 2008; McCarron & Islas, 2006; Palmer & Maramba, 2008; Peng & Wright, 1994; Sanchez, Reyes, & Singh, 2006). But almost no literature studies or explicates this academic support. Thus, we know little about college students' receipt of

academic support from their siblings during college, leaving serious gaps in our understanding of family processes in social reproduction, which this paper aims to fill.

Race and Siblings' Academic Involvement in College

Further, existing research on siblings gives little indication as to how race, class, and institution type may affect siblings' involvement in the college experience; this paper analyzes each of these factors. Most scholarship does not have the ability to compare potential racial differences in academic support from siblings, as it focuses on a single racial group—often Latinx college students (Ceja, 2006; Jabbar, 2019; Luedke, 2020; Sanchez, 2006; Patron, 2020). Asian American college students' receipt of sibling support may be similar to these students. Immigration is less prominent for Latinx undergraduates; still 66% are immigrants to the US and/or have at least one parent who is an immigrant (NCES, 2012). By focusing on Asian American college students (nearly all of whom had immigrant parents) and comparing their receipt of sibling support with Black and white undergraduates (almost none of whom had immigrant parents), this paper adds to the research that examines potential racial variation in sibling support. It also extends current understandings of the role immigration may play in college students' receipt of such assistance.

Based on the minimal literature that references Asian American college students, it is unclear how their receipt of academic support from siblings may compare to other racial groups. Most scholarship seems to suggest that Asian American undergraduates receive academic support from their siblings (Lee & Zhou, 2015; Louie, 2008; Peng & Wright, 1994). Louie (2008) interviewed one student who identified her brother as her “biggest source of academic information and direction in [her] adolescent years (p.53).” She, however, did not explain if this support also continued into and throughout college. Tang (2002), one of the few studies to

compare racial groups—Asian American and white undergraduates—posited that the former group relied on their siblings’ help to a greater extent when selecting a major; her research though largely focused on parents’ help. Another study, Wu et al. (2018), maintained the both Asian American and white undergraduates received academic support from their siblings while in college but did not explain what this academic support entailed. This paper investigates these racial differences.

Class and Siblings’ Academic Involvement in College

Another important facet of this paper’s research design is that it compares first gen and continuing gen students. Most of the literature which references—albeit briefly—siblings’ provision of academic support centers on first gen students (Doublestein, 2017; McCarron & Inkelas, 2006; Palmer & Maramba, 2015). Highlighting the importance of academic support for first gen students, Doublestein (2017)—who interviewed eight Asian American first gen students—noted, “It may be tricky to determine whether or not a student is a first-generation college student if the student has a sibling or a close adult relative who has attended college (p.77).” The sibling advantage, therefore, may be particular to these students.

Yet, scholarship offers at least three alternative arguments. Swartz (2008) surmised that one possibility was first gen students received greater amounts of sibling support than continuing gen students due to their class disadvantage. She, however, asserted another possibility was these latter students—because they had more resources available to them—supplied their siblings with more support than first gen students’ siblings. A second argument is that first gen students are not unique in their receipt of academic support from siblings. Jones (2015) surveyed first gen and continuing gen students using a 24-item questionnaire and found both received “moderate to high levels of academic support” from siblings, but the questionnaire did not ask about help with

any specific college tasks. Example items included: “My sibling encourages me to learn new skills” and “My sibling helps me probe deeply into questions I have.” Roksa, Deutschlander, and Whitley (2020) conducted the most thorough examination of college students’ receipt of academic support from sibling—though they only analyzed first gen students—and arrived at a very different conclusion. Defining academic support as academic information and advice received from siblings, they maintained that students only received this help if their siblings had attended the same college. Rincon, Fernandez, and Hinojosa (2020) emphasized that first gen students who shared a similar major as their sibling heavily relied on them for academic advising. Neither of these latter two studies included any Asian American participants.

Institution Type and Siblings’ Academic Involvement in College

A final contribution of this paper is that it examines if attendance at a four or two-year institutions affects Asian American college students’ receipt of sibling support. Existing scholarship overwhelmingly centers on four-year institutions (Rincon et al., 2020; Roksa et al., 2020; Sanchez et al., 2006; Tang, 2002). Yet, research on siblings’ academic involvement is not alone in their prioritization of these schools; most literature concerning parent involvement in college and college students more generally studies undergraduates who attend four-year institutions (Aries, 2008; Armstrong & Hamilton, 2013; Museus, 2013). Scholarship, therefore, is not asserting that four-year students—or first gen four-year students in particular—are more likely to receive academic support from their siblings as compared to two-year students. It simply overlooks this latter—sizable—group of students. Two studies, which did focus on two-year students of color (but did not include any Asian American participants) indicated that these students received academic support from their siblings (Jabbar; Sandoval-Lucero, Maes, &

Kingsmith, 2014). By comparing four-year and community college students, this paper examines a structural question: Is institutional location associated with these family processes?

Analyzing sibling support among Asian American two-year students also has particular relevance. Over 40% of Asian American college students attend community college (Park & Assalone, 2019). The number of Asian American first gen two-year students is similarly estimated to be significant (Teranishi, Alcantar, & Nguyen, 2015). Further, though research does not document these students' receipt of sibling support, there is debate concerning who might benefit most from a sibling advantage. Teranishi et al. (2015), who analyzed 366 Asian American two-year students nationwide, posited that first gen and continuing gen students both lacked parental support (i.e., might benefit from sibling support). However, other studies (Harrington 2022a; Lew, Chang, & Wang, 2005) have affirmed social reproduction literature, arguing that Asian American community college students from different class backgrounds had highly distinct and unequal college experiences. Therefore, this paper—with its assessment of Asian American community college students—appears to be novel in several ways: by exploring the academic support Asian American two-year students receive from their siblings, by comparing Asian American first gen and continuing gen two-year students to one another, and by comparing their intersections (first gen four and two-year students and continuing gen four and two-year students).

METHODS

This paper draws on 140 intensive interviews with undergraduates, which are part of a larger project funded by the Spencer Foundation that examines how class, race, and gender shape family involvement in the college experience (Gerstel, 2014; Ide et al., 2010; Harrington, 2022b). Most participants (n=101, 72%) racially self-identified as Asian American, and the

majority of these students (n=55, 54%) were first gen students. Students were considered first generation if they did not have a parent who possessed a Bachelor's degree. To allow comparisons, the remaining participants (n=39, 28%) were Black (n=24) and white (n=15) first gen four-year students. Asian American participants attended both four and two-year students, 60% and 40% respectively. However, the majority of Asian American first gen students attended four-year institutions (n=38, 69%). That is, the sample included a similar number of Asian American and non-Asian American first gen four-year students. Exactly half of the Asian American continuing gen students (n=23, 50%) were four-year students and half were two-year students. All respondents were non-international students under the age of 26 (i.e., traditional age college students). About half were women (53%) and half were men (47%).

Recruitment took place in two stages. The first stage focused on the four-year participants (n=100). A large public research university in the Northeast supplied a list containing the race and contact information for every fulltime student in their sophomore year or above. The research team used this list and respondent-driven sampling to recruit Asian American, Black, and white four-year students. The second stage only included Asian American two-year students (n=40)—which is why no analyses with two-year students from other racial groups were conducted. Two-year student recruitment also began at a single institution in the Northeast. The community college did not provide a list of its students, but college personnel referred students. Also, respondent-driven and opportunity sampling were used. This latter strategy, however, became ineffective when the coronavirus shutdown took place (i.e., after the eighth interview). Given the difficulty of finding two-year participants at this time, the research design was expanded to include multiple sites (i.e., any community college in either the Northeast or Mid-Atlantic region of the country). In addition to referrals by college personnel and respondent-

driven sampling, the paper's author used the LinkedIn platform to recruit many of the two-year participants (i.e., 55%). In total, the Asian American two-year students attended 10 different institutions located in six different states. Given the paucity of research on two-year students though, Lew et al. (2005) asserts that including community college students who are institutionally and geographically diverse is advantageous. Like the four-year students, nearly all of the two-year students (94%) were fulltime students and all had completed at least one semester of college.

Comparable to national statistics, almost all of the Asian American participants (n=99, 98%) had an immigrant parent and/or were an immigrant themselves; only two Black students and no white students indicated the same. The majority of Asian American participants, however, (71%) were born in the US or had immigrated as an infant. They were also ethnically diverse, identifying with 17 different Asian ethnic groups. Across participants, 51% had an older sibling, 37% were the eldest sibling in their family, and 12% were only children. This paper focuses predominantly on the participants who had older, college-educated siblings, but makes reference to these other participants, as they also informed the paper's findings. The results section discusses what portion of each subgroup (e.g., white first gen four-year students and Asian American continuing gen two-year students) had siblings who were college-educated.

The interview schedule was broad, containing questions that pertained to multiple forms of support (e.g., financial, practical and emotional support) and participants' receipt as well as provision of this help. Relevant for this paper, it included multiple questions that gauged their receipt of academic support: if and how any of their family members provided academic advice, helped them with their academic work, or influenced their major choice and how students felt about the support they did or did not receive. Questions asked if and how participants believed

their family was involved in their college experience more generally and if and how they believed their family members' familiarity with college affected their college experience. Additionally, questions asked participants to describe the interactions they had with their family members and if family members supported them in any additional ways not included in the interview schedule.

The author of this paper interviewed all of the Asian American participants; two other research team members interviewed the white and Black students. Each research team member racially identified with the group they interviewed. This strategy improves interview quality, as it gives interviewers an insider advantage—especially important when speaking to marginalized groups (Zinn, 1979). All of the four-year interviews were conducted in-person, but given both COVID and geographic dispersion, the majority of two-year student interviews (82%) were conducted via Zoom. Students seemed equally forthcoming in both types of interviews; they averaged an hour in length irrespective if they were done in-person or virtually. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and assigned a pseudonym to protect students' confidentiality.

The research team used Nvivo12 to code the transcribed interviews. The coding scheme was developed using both inductive and deductive methods. After transcribing several interviews, the research team used open coding to create broad codes (e.g., siblings, support given, academic aspects, and frequency) based on the key themes that were observed (Strauss and Corbin 1990). Then, these broad codes were modified based on existing theory and research to develop a finalized list of codes (e.g., assignments, major, grades, and immigration), which was then used for all of the interviews (Auerbach and Silverstein 2003). Each research team member coded the interviews they conducted. A test of intercoder reliability across the four-year students revealed that it was 97%. The two-year students were not included in this test, as their

interviews were conducted at a later date and their coding scheme included added community-college specific codes (e.g., community college stigma and transfer process).

The analysis, similar to participant recruitment, was done in multiple stages. First, the academic support received by siblings was assessed by subgroup: 1) Asian American first gen four-year students, 2) Asian American first gen two-year students, 3) Black first gen four-year students, 4) white first gen four-year students, 5) Asian American continuing gen four-year students, and 6) Asian American continuing gen two-year students. For each, the academic support the subgroup received or did not received was examined—looking for the types of academic support participants described and their frequency. Also, the analysis investigated what—if any—social and demographic factors (e.g., gender of the participant or their sibling, ethnicity, participants' year in college, and their similarity in institution attended or major choice as siblings) might affect or explain these trends, considering both what students said in their interviews and what was observed in the interview data. Finally, the research compared different subgroups' receipt of support: comparing the Asian American first gen students to the Black and white first gen students, Asian American four and two-year students, and Asian American students by class across institution type.

RESULTS

Sibling support in college mattered, but it mattered more for some students than others. Most Asian, Black, and white first gen participants indicated that their older, college-educated siblings provided academic support. This paper groups the academic support students described into two categories: academic advising (i.e., siblings providing the kinds of help an academic advisor may provide) and direct academic assistance (e.g. siblings helping with assignments). The four-and two-year Asian American first gen students varied minimally in their receipt of

academic support, but they were very different from the Black and white students. Continuing gen Asian American students—again regardless of institution type—seldom received any help from their siblings. This paper reviews each group’s receipt of academic support (or lack thereof) in turn. First, it focuses on the Asian American first gen four and two-year students. Then, it discusses the Black and white first gen four-year students. Finally, it looks to the Asian American continuing gen four and two-year students.

Asian American First Gen Students: Sibling Support in the Form of Academic Advising

As a group, the Asian American first gen four and two-year students communicated that they received substantial amounts of academic advising and minimal—if any—direct academic assistance from their siblings. They believed this academic advising benefitted their academic success and professional development in college immensely. The four and two-year students diverged in a few ways, which will be highlighted. Still, they were far more alike than different.

Speaking first to their receipt of academic advising, the Asian American first gen students explained that their siblings frequently imparted academic information or advice. Dipak—a four-year student— relayed, “Academic advice? [My brother] talks my ear off all the time. What I have to do in my life. Long term goals beyond undergrad and what you have to do while you’re an undergraduate to achieve those goals.” Dipak suggested that some of his brother’s advice was post-college, but students also expressed that they received a significant amount of academic information specific to navigating college (e.g., the various majors, classes, and extra curriculars offered; strategies for doing well in their classes; and strategies for speaking to their instructors). For instance, a two-year student, Kat, identified that her brother—as an academic advisor would—had recommended a timeline she should follow in order to earn her Associate’s within two years:

He would he tell me, “Try to take as many classes as you can. Maybe five classes [per semester], so that you can finish in two years.” And he was just telling me like what's the best thing I should do. And that's exactly what I did.

Kat acknowledged that she followed this timeline as well as most other academic advice that her brother supplied. Students also offered that, just as often, they were the ones to initiate or seek out this help from their siblings. Kathy—a four-year student—commented, “My oldest brother, I usually go to him for like advice for picking classes.” Describing what a typical conversation between him and his sister might entail, Ryan—a two-year student—said, “I think for the most part it just is me asking for advice on college things, and then she just gives like feedback or like experience.” Thus, older siblings providing their experiential knowledge of college was a common occurrence for most of these students.

Asian American first gen students often proclaimed that their siblings' academic advising contributed greatly to their academic and professional success in college. Many said that their siblings had helped them figure out what to major in. Ky—a two-year student—expressed, “I think they definitely helped guide me into the right direction of where to go, and what I should take, like what I should major in and stuff.” Lana, a four-year student, conveyed that her sister was highly involved in her major selection and that she was extremely grateful for this involvement:

She was the only person who made me become a nursing major. And if she didn't do that, honestly, I don't know what I'd be doing in terms of successfulness. Because maybe I would have done business, but I don't think that would have been more fulfilling than nursing.

Expanding on this, Amy—a four-year student—described multiple ways in which her sister had positively shaped her college experience:

I think she has probably played the biggest influence on my college experience... I came in as an undeclared student. So I wasn't sure what I wanted to major in. I had no idea...And she's just like, “just go for the business school, because [the university] has a

very good business program. So I applied, and I got in. And then she would always be like, “get involved in clubs. You need to do this. You need to do that.” The two jobs that I have on campus were mostly her influence.

Both Amy and Lana noted that their sisters’ support had been integral in helping them overcome a time of academic indecision. Conversely, Nina, a two-year student who was an only child also spoke about siblings’ ability to reduce academic confusion. She said, “The most difficult thing about being a first generation student is the lack of support sometimes, especially if you're an only child. I'm learning a lot of things along the way.” Many of the Asian American first gen students—even those without older siblings—advanced that siblings’ academic advising was invaluable for navigating the college environment.

With little exception, the Asian American first gen students who did not receive academic advising from siblings, like Nina, did not have college-educated siblings who could supply such support. Tim, a four-year student who had two younger siblings, said, “My little sisters, they’re learning, but they’re not where I’m at. I’m always a step ahead of them. So they really don’t really, they can’t help me.” Vannak, a four-year student who had three younger siblings, explained that he turned to his roommate for this reason:

My siblings are all younger than me. They wouldn’t be able to help with those kind of things... For those kind of things, I ask my roommate. He’s a year above me. He’s been through it. So he’s the only one who can help me in these cases.

William, a two-year student, did have an older brother; he, however stopped one semester short of earning his Associate’s. Asking William if his brother provided any academic advice, he responded, “No, not as far as advice goes. No, I give him more advice now, because he hasn’t finished his two-year.” Thus, a sibling(s) having more education than the participant was the predominant factor that determined whether or not a student received academic advising from them. Other factors—similarity in age between sibling and participant, their having a similar

major, or attending/having attended the same institution as the student—mattered far less; participants who did not align on these factors were consistent in saying that their siblings a tremendous amount of academic advising.

Based on the tremendous amount of academic advising these students received, it might be expected that their receipt of direct academic assistance would be similar; it was not. Few reported their siblings helped them directly with their coursework (e.g., explaining the directions of an assignment or proofreading their papers). Amy, the four-year student who felt her sister had the biggest influence on her college experience, went on to say that no one in her family provided academic help (i.e., direct academic assistance); she explained why this was the case:

My parents can't help me, because they never experienced college. [And] I don't like asking my sister for academic help even though I know it is an option. When I was younger, it just wasn't a good experience; so it kind of just held over to now.

Amy suggested that she disliked her sister's "helping style". Others mentioned that they did not ask for this support, because they did not believe their siblings would be able to provide it.

Jackie—a two-year student—communicated, "I think in certain classes [my brother] could have helped, but because I was in such a different major than what he had to take, it was just like I didn't bother to ask." Some purported their siblings' help was unnecessary. Jason, a four-year student—unlike most of his peers—did indicate that each of his older sisters supplied direct academic assistance. He stated, "Since I'm in an accounting class and my sister is an accountant, I can ask her questions to prep for exams...[And for help with papers] that would be my other sister who majored in journalism." Detailing how often he received such help though, he said, "When I ask for it. Every once in a while. Not even...Because I understand most of the things I'm learning." Still there were other participants who claimed that they did not want to disturb their busy siblings (even though they frequently called on them for academic advising). Looking

past the multiple reasons participants identified, it seemed that they placed substantially less value on their siblings' provision of direct academic assistance, as they rarely sought out this help.

While the Asian American first gen four and two-year participants were similar in most ways, there were some notable differences between them. Focusing on students who had an older sibling(s), exactly 50% of two-year students reported having a sibling who was more educated than themselves compared to 77% percent of four-year students; two-year students, therefore, had less of an opportunity to receive academic support. For these two-year students, it also seemed that siblings having an Associate's degree was the prerequisite for their being able to provide academic support, because these siblings still had more schooling than the participants. Kat—the two-year student who explained that her brother helped her devise a timeline for completing her Associate's—communicated that he did not continue onto his Bachelor's; nonetheless, she viewed his academic advising as critical for her own academic and professional success:

I value my goals and wanting to get a job and all this stuff and that's where he's at, and he's done that before. And so that's where he's come in and given me advice about things I should do and I shouldn't do.

Several two-year students alluded to the fact that their siblings' community college-specific cultural capital was more relevant from their college experience. Expanding on the academic guidance his sisters provided—Ky asserted, “Because they went to college as well. And they also went to community college. So they definitely guided me in the right direction.” And Ryan—whose sister was currently in law school—reasoned that his sister was only able to help him with certain aspects of college because she had never had community college experience.

The four-year participants were distinct in a different way. A few suggested their siblings' academic advising was more extreme; often, it entailed requiring students to provide regular updates. Jason disclosed, "My sister has access to my school email, because that's one of the clauses. One of the requirements that she kind of wants...It was emphasized and kind of forced." Lana said the same but referred to how her sister was adamant she be involved in her class selection: "[My sister] wants me to update her on what classes I take, and then she'd be like, 'Oh, is that what you want to take? Oh, are you sure you don't want to take this or that?'" This extreme advising may be institution-specific. That is, Asian American first gen students who are two-year students—at least while they are in community college—do not experience it. Or this finding may be attributed to the smaller number of two-year students with college-educated siblings who were sampled.

Black and White First Gen Students: Sibling Support in the Form of Direct Academic Assistance

Compared to the Asian American four-year first gen participants, the Black and white first gen participants (all of whom were four-year students) also had less of an opportunity to receive academic support. Looking only at the students who had an older sibling(s), 45% of Black participants and 57% of white participants identified having an older sibling who had more schooling than themselves. These participants—like the Asian American first gen four and two-year students—received academic support, but they had the inverse experience: As a group, the Black and white first gen students received much more direct academic assistance than academic advising from their siblings. And while this paper looked for variation between the Black and white students, for the participants in this study, their receipt of academic support appeared to be quite similar.

Most Black and white first gen participants relayed that they received very little—if any—academic advising from their siblings in college. Jordan—a Black student—commented, “My sister, she’ll tell me about her experiences in the classes she took, so she might help me a little...My mom and my dad don’t know what’s going on here, so they don’t really even try.” He advanced that his sister supplied more of this help than his parents, but this was because his parents had no familiarity with college. Julie, a white student, relayed that her sister had given her academic information, but it was most beneficial during her transition into college:

She actually wrote me this long letter and gave it to me...my move-in day. And it was just a bunch of advice on like, “If you’re running late to class, don’t skip it. Like run. I know it’s embarrassing, but do it” [laughs]. Little stuff like that. So yeah, she helped a lot in my earlier days of college.

To be fair, several students said that their siblings had tried to provide academic advising—particularly with their academic major—but they had been the one to decline this guidance.

Jaylen, a Black student, said the about his brother:

He thinks that I should major in something that's a hard science and Black Studies is soft. He says stuff like that to me all the time...but I've pretty much decided I want to be a Black Studies major, and I don't think anything he says to discourage it is going to change my mind.

Nick—a white student—similarly ignored his sisters’ input regarding his major:

They would recommend certain majors for me and then I would realize, oh I can't...If I can't get through the classes, then there's no point in me majoring in it. So, I just said I'll do what I like, because I can do it. And I can do it for the rest of my life.

Thus, whether their siblings withheld academic advising or participants rejected it, the end result was that most Black and white participants received limited amounts of this form of academic support.

Attachment to individualism—rather than the collective sense of family priority—seemed to be a theme in these participants’ interviews, at least when they discussed their

academic decisions. As the previous examples illustrate, the Black and white participants identified that they had selected majors based entirely on their own assessment (i.e., without any guidance from their sibling or any other individuals for that matter). Further demonstrating this, Xavier—a Black student—whose sister completed the same major at the same university did not report that his sister had any influence on his decision to switch into the major. He maintained, “I chose sociology, because it was closer to my interest. That's why I chose sociology.” Meg, a white student, received more academic advising from her siblings than any other Black or white participant. Still, she felt her decision to double major had been an individual one. Describing the conversation she had with her siblings about this decision—she posited, “It was more just like, ‘This is what I'm doing, what do you think of it?’ It was never really, ‘You should do this,’ and then I decide to do it.” Some participants explained that their siblings also endorsed such individualism. Sam—a white student—recounted some of the academic advice his sisters provided: “Everything is up to you, you can do it, you're capable of whatever the problem is...Here's what you have. You'll make the right decision.” Thus, even when Black and white participants received academic advising from their siblings, it was framed differently as compared to the Asian American first gen participants.

Individualism, however, only went so far. In contrast to their discussion of academic advising, when discussing the receipt of direct academic assistance, the majority of Black participants and the majority of white participants whose siblings could supply this support reported that their siblings had helped them in this way in college. Nick, an aforementioned white student, explained that his sisters' direct academic assistance usually entailed their providing suggestions as how to best “approach certain homework”. Expanding on this response—Nick said, “I would ask my sister like, ‘I have an essay for this class, and how should

I do it because it has this requirement?” More of these participants though relayed that their siblings proofread their papers. Mariya—a Black student—commented about her brother, “He helped me with writing. Like revisions, editing of papers, because it’s something he’s very good at.” Other remarks made by participants were: “I’ve sent papers to my sister” and “As far as editing papers, they’ll read it, they’ll skim it”. Several students described their siblings’ proofreading as being relatively infrequent and/or not overly time-consuming, and few discussed its implications for college success. Still, there was some indication that it benefitted students’ academic success. Hannah, a Black student, vocalized as much:

I think it's awesome that [my sister] would help me, because she would make my papers ten times better, and I don't think I would have done so well in my English class...if it wasn't for her when it came to papers.

Contrary to the Asian American participants, however, Hannah discussed how her sibling’s help was beneficial within the confines of a single class and not the larger context of college. Thus, overall, first gen students across race received academic support; yet, the variety received by Asian American first gen participants and participants of other racial groups was markedly different.

Asian American Continuing Gen Students: A Lack of Sibling Support

Most of the Asian American continuing gen four and two-year participants did not report receiving academic support—in any form—from their siblings. The majority of four-year (78%) and two-year (75%) students had the opportunity to receive such support (i.e., had at least one sibling with more schooling than themselves), but both rarely did they did report receiving either academic advising or direct academic assistance from their siblings. After discussing each form of academic support in turn, the paper will look at the few exceptions.

The four and two-year students seldom received academic advising, and many had very little interaction with their siblings in general. Describing how often her and brother (who had graduated college and now lived in a different state) talked, Serena—a two-year student—issued, “Like once a month. Just like a text”; her refrain was typical. Azeeza—also a two-year student—explained that her brother visited their parents’ home, where she also lived, twice a week. Still, she advanced, “My brother doesn’t know anything about my academic life.” Both students’ brothers had earned their Associate’s from the same community college the participant attended. Hoang and Susy, four-year students, lived in the same dormitory as their siblings. Yet about his brother, Hoang commented, “We barely have conversations.” He also was not completely sure of his major. About her sister, Susy similarly conveyed, “I actually don’t really talk to her much...Maybe we see each other once a week but not really.” Susy was a mechanical engineer and her sister a chemical engineer—and had even taken some of the courses the student was currently enrolled in. Therefore, most continuing gen participants did not receive academic advising from their siblings, as most spoke to them minimally—regardless of their geographic proximity, their attending the same institution, or their having a similar major. Lateral family ties or interdependence, or that with siblings, appeared less important for this group.

When asked, participants enumerated many reasons why their siblings did not supply academic advising. Some students suggested that they had never requested this help from their siblings. Victor, a two-year student, said about her older siblings, “I think they would help me if I asked. Yea, my sister is a really, really hard worker and achiever. I think she would have a lot to say.” Several attributed it to their personality and/or their siblings’. Jessica—a two-year student whose brother was currently attending the same school—explained, “He’s not very talkative, and he’s more to himself, so he doesn’t really talk to anybody. He just...I don’t know.”

Others identified multiple reasons. Rhy—a four-year student whose brother had graduated from the same university—said, “Um...we don’t really have that type of relationship... Also, he is not very academically driven, so he wouldn’t be able to give me advice in that sense I feel. And our studies are different, so yea.” Yet, since continuing gen students with “academically driven” siblings in related fields (e.g., Susy’s sister) also failed to receive this support, it seemed that something else—which students may not be cognizant of—was driving this trend. Most continuing gen participants received academic advising from their parents; and, factors such as their parents being in an unrelated field, having more outdated knowledge of college than siblings, and even their living in a different country did not deter this help. Thus, it appeared that continuing gen students associated academic advising with their parents (i.e., being a responsibility of parents) and not siblings.

This mindset, however, did not translate to direct academic assistance; many continuing gen participants—similar to the Asian American first gen students—advanced they did their college coursework without help from anyone in their family (parents and siblings included). To the question, “Does anyone in your family help you with your academic work?”, Lela, a four-year student, replied “From my brother no. From my dad no. Growing up [prior to college]...I would ask [my mom] for help.” Also like the Asian American first gen students, continuing gen participants offered different explanations as to why their family members did not provide direct academic assistance. Cara—a two-year student—succinctly stated, “I haven’t really asked them for help.” Raj—a four-year student—asserted, “Schoolwork should be independently ours. It isn’t their responsibility.” And, Jin—a two-year student—posited yet another reason:

I just felt more comfortable asking some people in my class or my teacher [for help], because they knew exactly what I would be working on...So it was just easier to ask someone who was working on the same things as me.

Overall then, receiving minimal direct academic assistance from siblings as well as other family members was a theme among all the Asian American participants in this study.

A small number of continuing gen students more closely resembled the Asian American first gen students in that they received substantial academic advising from their siblings, but they were the exceptions. Cary, a four-year student, explained that her sisters were highly involved in her academic decision making:

My sisters help me select classes a lot, especially when I switched majors and was freaking out about what to take...They kind of did all the research for me, because I was like, "Oh, I kind of want to do business school." And they looked and were like, "Ok. These are the classes you need for the business school."

Maira, a two-year student, similarly communicated that her brother was very hands-on in helping her develop her class schedule each semester:

He really tried to make sure that I was doing everything perfectly, how I was supposed to be doing it in order to get my degree...There's a lot of people who transfer, and they only transfer in like half their credits. And they have to retake classes. And it's a very stressful process...And he really didn't want me to have to pay all that money again, or even go through the stress of retaking classes...So he was very adamant about that.

Explaining why Cary, Maira, and a few other continuing gen participants received academic advising from their siblings, factors like their siblings having attended the same college or completed the same major were potentially important. As was noted though, many continuing gen students possessed these same characteristics and did not receive such support. This small group of continuing gen participants also differed from first gen participants in a significant way: They explained both their siblings and parents supplied academic advising. Thus, in sum, parents' education level greatly affected the Asian American participants' receipt of sibling support.

CONCLUSION

While first gen students—and the struggles they experience due to a lack of parental support—receive substantial attention, the receipt of such support from siblings is rarely investigated. Some scholarship (see Doublestein, 2017, McCarron & Inkelas, 2006; Swartz, 2008) has speculated that older, college-educated siblings may be able to override first gen students' class disadvantage (and thereby academic disadvantage) by providing these students with the parental support they lack. Focusing on Asian American first gen students, this paper tested this notion of a “sibling advantage” in college and, in doing so, simultaneously added to the literature on sibling interactions.

To better understand what—if any—sibling advantage these students experienced, this paper analyzed 140 interviews with college students. It assessed the academic support Asian American first gen students received from their siblings, compared their receipt of support to that of Black and white first gen students and Asian American continuing gen students, and examined if institution type (i.e., attending a four versus a two-year institution) had any effect on Asian American college students' receipt of support. It found that nearly all of the Asian American first gen four and two-year students reported receiving academic support from their older, college-educated siblings. Most Black and white first gen four-year students (who had college-educated siblings) also received academic support but a different form of it. Asian American continuing gen four and two-year students received minimal academic support from siblings.

Developing a typology of academic support, participants described two primary categories of academic support their siblings did or did not provide: 1) academic advising and 2) direct academic assistance. Asian American first gen four and two-year students received substantial amounts of this first type of support. The majority indicated that their older, college-educated siblings supplied a large amount academic information or advice about navigating

college—and they provided this advice often. Students also indicated that their siblings helped them with their academic-decision making (e.g., figuring out how many classes they should take in a given semester or assisting them with choosing a major). Siblings' experiential knowledge of college enabled them to supply such academic advising—knowledge which their parents, younger siblings, and older siblings who had not attended college did not possess. In fact, it seemed that Asian American first gen two-year students who had a sibling(s) who completed community college—regardless of if they continued onto a four-year school—had the ability to provide the most relevant experiential knowledge (i.e., community college-specific cultural capital). And, most participants suggested that the academic advising they received from their siblings benefitted them immensely, enabling them to successfully navigate college .

Turning to their receipt of the direct academic assistance, however, the Asian American first gen four and two-year participants explained that they seldom requested or received this support. That is, they largely did their coursework without any help from their siblings. Students attributed their lack of academic support to various factors, but the consensus among them was that did lack of assistance did not impede their academic success in college.

The Black and white first gen four-year students spoke very differently. Their receipt of support was similar, but it was very different from the Asian American first gen students: In college, they received very little academic advising from their siblings. Instead, the majority posited that they navigated college independently—and it seemed that they favored this model of independent academic decision-making. For instance, no participant relayed that their sibling had helped them select a major, which was common among the Asian American first gen participants. Yet, many of these students received direct academic assistance from their siblings—or at least a particular form of it; they often requested that their siblings proofread their

papers. Students spoke minimally about the implications of this support. Given that they were the ones to seek out this direct academic assistance, it appeared that they found it helpful in college. Still, comparing Black and white first gen students to Asian American first gen students, the latter were far more likely to assert that their siblings' academic support was "pulling" them through college, the language Nichols and Islas (2015) used to describe continuing gen students receipt of academic advice from parents.

Thus, the Asian American first gen four and two-year students in this study had a sibling advantage; the Black and white first gen participants—though they received some academic support—did not appear to share this same experience. These findings both affirm and challenge the limited scholarship that analyzes siblings' academic involvement in college. Several studies on Latinx college students have discussed siblings as important providers of support, as their immigrant background encourages this exchange (Ceja, 2006; Delgado, 2020; Luedke, 2020). All of the Asian American first gen students had at least one parent who was an immigrant to the US and/or were an immigrant themselves, which supports this idea that immigration also promotes the receipt of sibling support in college—academic advising in particular—for Asian American first gen students. Roksa et al. (2020) advanced that most first gen students did not receive academic advice from their siblings, but they did not include any Asian American participants in their research. This paper, therefore, extends their argument—advancing that Black and white first gen students may not receive academic advising from their siblings—as they may experience a kind of "Americanization" not characteristic of immigrant families.

And, for the Asian American first gen four-year participants specifically, they appeared to have a potential sibling advantage in another way as well. More than three-quarters of these students (77%) reported that their older sibling had completed more schooling than themselves,

compared to 50% of Asian American first gen two-year students, 57% of white students, and 45% of Black students. Many of these latter groups said their sibling(s) had started college but never finished. Thus, a higher number of Asian American first gen four-year students had the opportunity to receive academic support. This finding may be unique to the participants in this study, but quantitative research should explore if these discrepancies in siblings' education level exist among first gen students nationally. Asian American first gen four-year students have the highest college completion rate of these four groups (US Department of Education 2016). If a large proportion of these students have college-educated siblings—and they receive academic advising from their siblings—there may be some link between this and their high college completion rate. That is, the sibling advantage for Asian American first gen four-year students may be magnified.

This paper also compared the academic support Asian American continuing gen students received from their siblings to see if parents' education level—a marker of class status—had an impact on sibling support; it did. The Asian American continuing gen four and two-year students were very much alike, but—contrary to Jones (2015)—their receipt of academic support from siblings was almost nonexistent. Like the Asian American first gen four-year students, many of these continuing gen students (78% and 75% respectively) had an older sibling who was college-educated. Still, few explained that they received either academic advising or direct academic assistance from their sibling(s). In fact, many had minimal interaction with them in general even if they attended college and lived in the same dormitory. Instead, these students explained that their parents were the ones who supplied an abundance of academic advising, but—similar to the Asian American first gen students—many Asian American continuing gen students did not receive direct academic assistance; nor did they suggest that lack of support had much of an

effect on them. As a group, Asian American participants were in less writing-intensive majors than Black and white participants, which might explain why they did not value or seek writing support from their siblings.

These findings have several broader implications. They imply that academic advising may be more significant than direct academic assistance for college success. They also suggest that immigrant values contribute to the sibling advantage while individualism (which many Black and white first gen students demonstrated) and increased socioeconomic status (parents' possessing a college degree in particular) may work against it. Cicirelli (1994) advanced that industrialized countries like the US tend to favor a model of family where children's parents rather than their siblings are perceived to be primarily responsible for educating them. This paper affirms this argument but only for the continuing gen students. Finally, this research highlights that class affects sibling support more than institution type, the exception being that fewer first gen two-year respondents had a sibling who had more schooling than themselves.

Higher education policy can use this research on the sibling advantage for Asian American first gen students to better support all first gen students. More initiatives should work to get a larger number of first gen students from other racial groups (and possibly also Asian American first gen two-year students) into college and to persist through college so that in the future these groups will have the ability to make greater use of this sibling advantage. However, since Black and white undergraduates preferred to make their academic choices independently—which Lareau (2015) posits is typical for working class students—colleges need to think about how to make these first gen students who do not share similar immigrant values more receptive to academic advising from siblings and academic advisors. Some research has shown that beyond traditional academic advising, first gen students may receive some of this support from

their involvement in student organizations (Palmer & Maramba, 2015) and organizations and support services developed specifically for students of color—e.g., Asian American student groups (Tang et al., 2013). Institutions should support and promote these various initiatives, recognizing that the sibling advantage is also very much dependent upon birth order and family structure: Many first gen participants of all racial groups are only or eldest children, so they do not have an older sibling. Finally, this paper revealed much about Asian American community college students' experiences. Future research should explore how these students are similar to and/or different from four-year students in other respects.

Additionally, future research should use this typology of sibling support to assess undergraduates' receipt of academic advising and direct academic assistance from their siblings (comparing students by race, class, and institution type), drawing on larger sample sizes to see if these trends among and within the various undergraduate groups persist. Also, this research might include more groups (e.g., Black community college students and continuing gen students). Since nearly all Asian American respondents had at least one immigrant parent, future research should include more Asian American students who only have native-born parents—first gen students in particular—to see if they are more similar to Black and white students in their receipt of sibling support. Comparing Asian American and Latinx first gen students who have immigrant backgrounds would be particularly useful to see if the groups are similar (i.e., the latter also experience the sibling advantage). While sample size may limit the reach and generalizability of these findings, they contribute to multiple different literatures: that on first gen students, Asian American college students in different structural locations (both four and two-year), intersectionality of race and family process, sibling involvement in the college experience, and the familial processes that help promote social reproduction.

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