DETERMINANTS OF EARNINGS FOR ASIAN IMMIGRANTS
IN THE KANSAS CITY METROPOLITAN AREA

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the determinants of earnings for Asian immigrants in the Midwest of the United States. It tests simultaneously three theoretical explanations—assimilation, human capital, and job competition—for the earnings attainment of three major Asian groups: Asian Indian, Vietnamese, and Chinese in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area. Drawing from the 2000 Census 5% sample, I first examine the attributes of the three Asian groups and non-Hispanic whites to see how the possible determinants of earnings are presented among them. I then compare average earnings across these four groups to identify any earnings disparities. To explore the earnings inequality between non-Hispanic whites and Asian immigrants, I use each of the three ethnic group memberships while controlling factors of the three theories to predict earnings. I finally take
an integrated theoretical approach to understand each Asian group's earnings. The results show different earnings patterns in each Asian group, indicating internal heterogeneity among Asian immigrants. Asian Indians have the highest earnings attainment, followed by non-Hispanic whites, then Chinese, and lastly Vietnamese. Being a Chinese or Vietnamese has significantly negative effects on earnings. The earnings of Asian Indians can be best explained by the human capital and job competition theories whereas assimilation variables are the most significant for Vietnamese immigrants. However, none of the theories shows an absolute advantage over the others in explaining the earnings levels of Chinese immigrants.
The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences have examined a thesis titled “Determinants of Earnings for Asian Immigrants in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area,” presented by Jing Liu, candidate for the Master of Arts degree, and hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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## CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................................................ iii

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS ........................................................................................................ viii

LIST OF TABLES ......................................................................................................................... ix

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .............................................................................................................. x

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................... 1

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE ................................................................................................... 6

   Theoretical Perspectives ...................................................................................................... 6

   Integrated Theoretical Framework and Group Membership ............................................. 18

   Conceptual Model .............................................................................................................. 22

   Research Questions and Hypotheses ................................................................................. 24

3. METHODOLOGY .................................................................................................................. 25

   Data ....................................................................................................................................... 25

   Concept Measurement ....................................................................................................... 27

   Statistical Analysis ............................................................................................................ 33

4. RESULTS ............................................................................................................................... 36

   Descriptive Results ............................................................................................................ 36

   Results on Earnings Variances .......................................................................................... 40

   Results on Effects of Group Membership ......................................................................... 41

   Results on Earnings Determinants ..................................................................................... 43
# ILLUSTRATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illustration</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Conceptual model: Determinants of earnings for Asian Immigrants...</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. List of Variables of Concepts</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Classification of Industries</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Descriptive Statistics: Males age 25-64 in Labor Force</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Multiple Comparisons of Earnings for Asian Indian, Vietnamese</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese and non-Hispanic White Males 25-64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area (2000)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Effects of Minority Group Membership on Earnings for Asian Indians,</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese, and Chinese Males 25-64 in the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas City Metropolitan Area (2000)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Regression Equation Predicting Earnings for Asian Indian, Vietnamese,</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And Chinese Males 25-64 in the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas City Metropolitan Area (2000)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Before the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, national-origin quotas in immigration law favored immigrants from northwestern Europe, predominantly white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants. According to the U.S. census, percentages of the foreign-born population in 1960 were from, by origin, Europe (75.0), North America (9.8), Latin America (9.4), and Asia (5.1) (Ueda, 2007). However, the situation changed dramatically after 1965. In the post-Civil Rights era, the U.S. government revised the discriminatory immigration law to abolish national-origin quotas (Zhou, 1992). Since that time, the vast majority of new arrivals in the United States have been from Latin America, Asia, the Caribbean countries and Africa (Zhou, 1992). In fact by 2000, the percentages of immigrants from each region of origin were almost reversed: Latin American (51.0), Asia (25.5), Europe (15.3), North America (2.5), and other areas (5.0) (Ueda, 2007). Asians, along with Latinos, are the two fastest growing minority groups in the United States. According to the National Research Council Report, the percentage of non-Hispanic whites will fall from 75% in 1995 to 62% in 2025 (Alba, 1999). As a result of immigration, the two populations of Asians and Latinos are increasing very rapidly, with Asians roughly doubling their population, increasing from 3% in 1965 to 6% in 2000 (Alba, 1999).

This fast growing Asian immigrant population deserves research. Their economic achievement, in particular, is an important sociological topic for several reasons. First, among racial and ethnic minorities, Asian Americans' socioeconomic attainments are not
substantially disadvantaged compared to other minority groups’, such as African Americans, and Hispanics (Sakamoto, Goyette, & Kim, 2009). It has been well documented that Asian-Americans actually enjoy a relatively high socioeconomic standing, especially educational attainment in American society, as opposed to the stereotype of low socioeconomic achievement of other minorities (Zeng & Xie, 2004). In fact, they have long been labeled a “model minority” (Sharpe & Abdel-Ghany, 2006, p.589). Because of their high socioeconomic achievement, the typical majority-minority paradigm, which assumes that racial and ethnic minorities have lower socioeconomic achievement due to minority discrimination, does not fit Asian immigrants (Sakamoto, Goyette, & Kim, 2009).

Second, although Asian immigrants have often been seen as a “model minority”, some assert that this positive portrayal of socioeconomic achievement among Asian Americans masks substantial internal heterogeneity within this group and ignores the fact that racial and ethnic discrimination continues to exist with many Asian immigrants still poor and disadvantaged (Sakamoto, Goyette, & Kim, 2009). There are two main explanations for understanding the internal heterogeneity of Asian immigrants—ethnic diversity and immigration status and background. Some scholars emphasize the ethnic diversity, arguing that only certain Asian American ethnic groups have positive socioeconomic attainment (Fong, 2008) whereas other scholars attribute this internal heterogeneity of Asian Americans to immigrant-specific factors such as birthplace, length of stay in the U.S., and personal backgrounds before they arrive (Zeng & Xie, 2004).

Third, even though there is no doubt that most sub-Asian groups in the United States have a high level of education, it is still not clear if Asians have obtained high levels of
occupational prestige and earnings levels commensurate with their high educational attainment. Two main approaches explain this variation in economic achievement: The first approach emphasizes the individualistic characteristics of the workers and treats the variation in human capital as the most important factor impacting workers’ earnings. The second approach is drawn from a structuralist perspective, stressing structural characteristics such as occupational power and industrial segmentation.

The main purpose of this thesis is to conduct an empirical study of earnings of Asians in order to have a better understanding of earnings differentials among three major Asian immigrant groups in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area and the factors that may explain any differences. There are those from India, China, and Vietnam, the largest subgroups of the Asian population in the Kansas City metro area; taken together, they comprise approximately 57% of that segment of the KC community. Studies of earnings of Asian immigrants provide a rich source for scholarly investigation because Asian immigrants have not been an especially popular topic in sociology, therefore our knowledge about their economic achievement is incomplete, piecemeal, and often confusing (Sakamoto, Goyette & Kim, 2009). I focus on the Kansas City Metropolitan Area because despite the growing presence of Asian Americans in the Midwest, there is a paucity of studies on their histories and experiences in the Midwest. The existing studies of Asian Americans focus exclusively on well-established gateway metropolitan areas such as New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, and Miami. Few researchers have attempted to study Asian immigrants in non-immigrant gateways such as Kansas City. Therefore, this analysis will fill a hole in the current literature.
During the period of 1965 to 1990, immigrants flowed overwhelmingly into five states: California, New York, Texas, Florida, and Illinois (Massey & Capoferro, 2008). Since the U.S. Census Bureau defines the Midwest as comprised of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin, Illinois is the only Midwestern state in the “big five” (Massey & Capoferro, 2008, p.34). Moreover, no Midwestern state is ranked in the second-tier of immigrant-receiving states which include New Jersey, Massachusetts, Washington, Virginia, and Maryland, even though these states lag far behind the “big five” (Massey & Capoferro, 2008). Because the Midwest is home to such a small percentage of the country’s total immigrant population, it is usually seen as racially homogeneous (Dhingra, 2009). Despite the fact that the number of immigrants in the Midwest is far behind the coasts, there has been recently a rapid increase of the Asian population, increasing by 86.5% from 1990 to 2000 (Lee, 2009). In 1990, they made up 1.3% of the Midwest population, but by 2000, this group’s presence increased to 2.2% (Dhingra, 2009). Following this demographic change, the 2008 annual conference of the Association of Asia American Studies was held in Chicago, marking the first time that the conference has been held in the Midwest (Dhingra, 2009).

Asian immigrants in the Midwest should be treated as a distinct subgroup as it provides researchers with a different perspective of the immigrant experience from the perspective of immigrants in a state like California, and also because such differences might alter the entire study of Asian immigrants in the United States (Dhingra, 2009).

In order to further our understanding of the immigrant experience in the U.S., I will examine the economic achievement of the three Asian groups of Asian Indian, Chinese, and
Vietnamese in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area. I pose three main research questions: (1) Do non-Hispanic whites obtain a significant higher level of earnings than each of these three Asian ethnic groups? (2) Is there internal heterogeneity in earnings achievement across the three Asian ethnic groups? (3) What are the determinants of any evidence of differential earnings for the three Asian ethnic groups?
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first part provides two theoretical perspectives, from which three theories about determinants of earnings are drawn. In discussion of the theories, key variables and empirical research related to each specific theory are presented. The second part introduces the importance of an integrated theoretical framework and group membership to best explain earnings among Asian Americans. The third part describes a conceptual model for predicting earnings. Finally, I present my research questions and hypotheses.

Theoretical Perspectives

There are two main theoretical perspectives that explain determinants of earnings: individualistic and structuralist perspectives. Within the individualistic perspective, there are two theories: human capital and assimilation. Although both theories take into account individual characteristics, the human capital theory emphasizes the role of human capital in the earnings of all workers while the assimilation theory pays special attention to immigrants’ earnings. From the structuralist perspective, I will consider only job competition theory. This theory emphasizes a worker’s social position, particularly his job position, to explain his earnings.

Individualistic Perspective

An individualistic perspective uses the individual worker as the primary unit of
analysis to explain earning differentials. The main argument of this perspective is that a worker’s earnings can be increased through improving their individualistic characteristics (Sakamoto, 1988); both human capital and assimilation theories are based on this perspective.

**Human capital theory.** Human capital theory posits that an individual’s attributes such as knowledge and skills play a key role in determining performances in the labor market including earnings (Barringer, Takeuchi, & Xenos, 1990). In this theory, a worker will have better earnings achievement when he improves his human capital. In this theory, education and work experience are the two key variables to measure human capital.

Human capital theory suggests that education enhances a worker’s skills, which raises his productivity on the job, which, in turn, determines his earnings (Becker, 1975). There are two possible ways through which education helps increase individuals’ human capital. The first way is through quality education where workers gain valuable training and skills, therefore increase their productivity (Sakamoto, 1988). The second way is that workers can develop their potentials, such as the ability to grasp new knowledge and skills so that they can be easily trained while employed (Sakamoto, 1988). In this case, individuals’ potentials indirectly have a positive impact on improving their productivity. A worker’s high productivity often brings more rewards to him; therefore, high levels of formal education increase the prospects for better paying (Berg, 1969; Parsons, 1968).

Labor market experience or work experience also plays an important role in the human capital theory. This factor is usually measured by counting the number of years that a worker has been in the workforce. It assumes that the more years a worker has been in the
labor market, the more on-the-job training he has gone through. Thus, he is more familiar with all the situations he may confront in the workforce, and will be more productive than any newcomers. Because of these senior workers' high productivity, they are more likely to make decisions which will maximize their earnings (Sakamoto, 1988).

Past empirical studies have confirmed these positive effects of education and work experience on earnings achievement. The returns of earnings from education are supported by scholars across the world (Kuepie, Nordman, & Roubaud, 2009; Silles, 2007; Brunello & Comi, 2004; Chen, Tsang, Xu, & Wei, 1999). Pai (2007) used personal level data from the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) for ten countries (the USA, Mexico, Germany, Netherlands, Finland, Italy, Spain, Norway, Australia, and Taiwan) over a multi-year period to analyze the difference in wages across these countries for low, medium, and high levels of educational attainment. As expected, medium and high levels of education have positive effects on wage rates compared to low education for both males and females.

Evidence of the positive relationship between work experiences and earnings can also be found consistently in the literature (Murphy & Welch, 1990; Abbott, 1980). Jung and Magrabi (1991) collected alumni data in 1983 at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and found empirical evidence for the human capital argument that work experience raises earnings. Their results suggest that work experience does indeed have a large effect on salary, particularly for the workers with relevant experiences because it enhances human capital through on-the-job training.

Carbonaro (2006), however, demonstrated that the relationship between human capital and earnings is overstated for those workers in occupations which require fewer skills.
Carbonaro’s analysis relied on data drawn from National Adult Literacy Study (NALS) with 24,944 Americans aged 16 and older, treating educational attainment and literacy skills as independent variables, and log weekly earnings as the dependent variable. The results do provide support for human capital theory but only for the high-skilled workers with skill-intensive jobs. Similar findings can be found in Chiswick and Miller’s (2009) research on immigrants and earnings. Around 50% of the earnings of immigrants associated with formal education occur in the high-paying occupations that require high skills suggesting that the effects of human capital on immigrants’ earnings are limited to skilled workers in highly-skilled jobs. In addition, human capital theory tends to be inadequate to explain earnings of immigrants because this theory does not take into account the factors specific to the immigrant experience. Human capital theory is not concerned with, for example, whether or not the human capital immigrants earned in their home countries can be easily transferred to their newly adopted home.

**Assimilation theory.** Allowing for the inclusion of immigrant-specific factors that may affect their labor market performance, including earnings, assimilation theory measures how well an immigrant is assimilated into the host society. While this theory emphasizes immigrant attributes in explaining immigrants’ economic attainment, it is still fundamentally an individualistic approach. Assimilation theory assumes that immigrants in the United States move up from the bottom of the society as they eventually become “Americanized” and give up their own languages, traditions, and values over time (Powers & Seltzer, 1998; Zhou & Kamo, 1994). The underlying view is that social status and economic opportunity of immigrant groups will reach parity with whites after their own distinct ethnic traits disappear.
Variables commonly used in the assimilation theory include nativity (country of birth), length of stay, citizenship, and language skills. Those who were born in the U.S. tend to have higher earnings than those who were foreign born (Chiswick, 1983), and those who have stayed in America longer achieve better economic outcomes than those who have recently arrived (Lee, 1994).

Duleep and Dowhan’s research (2008) supports using assimilation theory by finding earnings are influenced by nativity and length of stay. Using the longitudinal Social Security Administration (SSA) earnings data matched with the 1994 March Current Population Survey (CPS), they compared the annual earnings of the same native-born and foreign-born immigration cohorts for multiple periods of time from 1960 to 1983. They found that earnings differences between immigrants and natives do exist though the amount of the difference varies by country of origin, and that earnings of immigrants, especially those from developing countries, start below those of U.S. natives with comparable human capital characteristics. By controlling for demographic and human capital characteristics, they also determined that immigrants often start with substantially lower earnings, but do have growth in earnings with increasing years of residence in the U.S.. In addition, they found a strong inverse relationship between initial earnings and subsequent earnings, meaning the lower initial earnings, the higher the earnings growth, and vice versa. Besides nativity and length of stay, immigrants’ earnings were also related to citizenship with naturalized citizens having advantages over non-citizens in the labor market because some of the best well-paid jobs such as government jobs require citizenship (Blackwell, 2006).
Another key aspect of the assimilation process is acquisition of language skills. Studies show that the ability to speak the host society’s language is a consistent predictor of higher earnings and brings rewards in the labor market (Chiswick & Miller, 1992, 1999; Xi, Hwang, & Gao, 2010). The 1990 census data shows that the immigrants in the U.S. who were proficient in English earned around 15 to 20% more than those who had low English proficiency (Chiswick & Miller, 1992). Another study conducted by Chiswick and Miller (1999) also confirms the positive relationship between English proficiency and earnings. Using the data of males and females from 1989 Legalized Population Survey (LPS), they found that earnings were higher by approximately 8% for men and 17% for women who had higher English proficiency in both reading and speaking compared to others. A recent study (Xi, Hwang, & Gao, 2010) on English ability and immigrants’ earnings also found that English ability is a key factor which shapes individual immigrant’s economic attainment.

While assimilation theory takes immigrant-specific factors into consideration, it ignores divergent paths of assimilation across ethnic groups. The classical assimilation theory assumes that immigrants must lose their cultural uniqueness and acquire mainstream values to be able to become culturally and socioeconomically assimilated into American society, while contemporary assimilation theory allows for an acceptance or tolerance of the diversity of adaptation trajectories for various immigrant groups (Zhou, 1992).

According to Porte and Zhou (1993), there are three possible patterns of adaptation: one is the integration into the white middle-class, which can be described as the classical assimilation theory outcome; the second leads in the opposite direction, sinking to permanent poverty in the lower social class; and the third is associated with the rapid economic
advancement but preserving an immigrant community’s values and tight solidarity. Therefore, being assimilated into the mainstream society to fare well is only one of the adaptation trajectories. The second trajectory shows assimilation of immigrants into the underclass but without significant economic advancement. The third path is economic assimilation without social and cultural assimilation. These divergent paths are conceptualized as “segmented assimilation” (Zhou, 1997, p.975). Segmented assimilation theories argue that immigrants are absorbed into different segments of American society, ranging from affluent middle-class suburbs to impoverished inner city ghettos. Therefore, becoming Americanized may not always be an advantage for immigrants or their children (Zhou, 1997).

The different adaption trajectories are associated with immigrant-group-specific histories and experiences. Factors external to the specific ethnic group, such as racial stratification, economic opportunities, and spatial segregation, and factors intrinsic to the group, such as financial and human capital upon arrival, family structure, and community structure both affect the contingent assimilation paths (Zhou, 1997).

**Structuralist Perspective**

Rather than focusing only on a worker’s individualistic characteristics, the structuralist perspective asserts that the earnings of a worker are attached to his position in society (Sakamoto, 1988). Therefore, it is the institutional structure of the labor market that is the driving force behind earnings differentials. Even though the structuralist perspective does not totally ignore the contribution of individual attributes, it argues that individual attributes can only affect earnings through the job position, which is measured by the
variables of job competition theory (Sakamoto, 1988). Thus, the variables of job competition theory have a direct impact on earnings.

**Job competition theory.** Job competition theory believes that earnings are the outcomes of matching processes between two sides: the worker’s choices and the employer’s choices (Granovetter, 1981). In order to understand how these processes affect earnings, we need to look into the mechanisms, moving from the individual level to the aggregate level. At the individual level, a worker’s high educational attainment would help him being selected for entrance into a good sector of industry. The subsequent work experience helps him to be promoted to a higher position with more occupational power within the sector (Sakamoto, 1988). At the aggregate level, industrial segmentation and occupational power are the two key variables that determine how the job position affecting earnings (Sakamoto, 1988).

Industrial segmentation assumes that the job competition exists in the context of varying institutional resources that are available to different industries. The dual economy is one of the well-known concepts that measure the industrial segmentation (Beck, Horan, & Tolbert, 1978). It has been used by researchers who study the impact of organizational constraints on earnings (Hodson & Kaufman, 1982). The definition of economic dualism is rooted in Averitt’s (1968) distinction between the core and periphery economies. The core firms are monopolies or oligopolies, while the periphery firms are the competitors (Hodson & Kaufman, 1982). Jobs in the core industry are good with high wages and benefits, whereas the jobs in the periphery industry are bad with low rewards (Bibb & Form, 1977; Beck, Horan, & Tolbert, 1978). Some researchers even attribute the persistence of poverty to the
blockage of mobility between the core and periphery sectors (Bluestone, 1970; Gordon, 1972).

The most crucial distinction between these two sectors is whether they have control over the industrial resources and competitive market relations. The core sector is characterized by high capital intensity, innovative technological change, high profits, large financial size and scale of employment, long-term planning capabilities, and the relationship with the government (Hodson & Kaufman, 1982; Sakamoto, 1988). These characteristics determine their strong influences on the society. The periphery sector, on the other hand, lacks control over the industrial resources and competitive market relations.

Waldinger’s study (1989) emphasizes immigration as one part of a fundamental process that restructures a country’s economy into a dual economy. Such “economic restructuring” (Waldinger, 1989, p. 220) takes place in the post-industrial centers such as New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, etc., and breeds demand for both high- and low-skilled labors while excluding workers with middle-level qualifications. Immigrants fill these two areas of need as many immigrants with high educational attainment come to seek better opportunities in the U.S., while the low-skilled workers are compelled to look overseas to escape poverty. The polarization of socioeconomic backgrounds of immigrants suits the two labor markets’ demand well, which explains why the post-industrial centers are the principal settlements of new immigrant populations.

Besides its direct relationship with worker earnings, the dual economy also builds a relationship between education and earnings. There may be higher returns to education in the core sector because education is more valuable in this labor market which is characterized by
advanced technologies and high returns (Stolzenberg, 1978). This viewpoint supports the mechanism of structuralist perspective at both individual and aggregate levels.

Sakamoto and Chen (1991) analyzed data from the matched March-May, 1979 Current Population Survey (restricting their analysis to men 25 to 27 years old) to test a model of wage determination for a cohort of young men in the dual labor market. The found that earnings from the primary labor market (core industry) are greater than earnings from the secondary labor market (periphery industry). More recently, Fichtenbaum (2006) estimated earnings for both male and female workers using the dual labor market model, and further divided the primary labor market into independent and subordinate primary market. Using data from the March Current Population Survey (CPS) for the years of 1992-2002, he found that the returns to education and work experience were lowest in the secondary labor market, and were highest in the independent primary labor market.

Industrial segmentation alone, however, is not able to fully explain the job position because it only indicates the industrial resources that are available to employers in different industries, but ignores the personal resources that are available to employees within the same industry. In other words, variation in occupational power measured by the amount of employees’ resources in one sector of industry also determines the job position. The structuralist perspective allows for occupational power to serve as another variable in the determination of earnings.

Conventionally, occupational power has been measured according to three categories of occupations (Form & Huber, 1976). The first category of occupations requires certification in the forms of licenses and degrees such as physicians and attorneys, which
erects barriers to workers without these qualifications to enter into these occupations (Sakamoto, 1988). Thus, the workers with these qualifications have more power in the competitive labor market. The second category contains the managerial occupations. Though managers are themselves employees and have no authority as employers, they do have more power than other workers because they can join employers to exploit the employees under their supervision, and are also protected from the threat of unemployment in return for their loyalty to their employers (Sakamoto, 1988). The last category of occupations requires specific and scarce skills such as scientists and engineers. In these occupations, highly-skilled workers have greater power than low-skilled workers to obtain rewards from employers because the possession of firm-specific work skills by workers often create a potential employer dependency on those high-skilled workers (Kalleberg, Wallace, & Althauser, 1981).

Empirical evidence of occupational power on earnings can be found in a study by Terrell (1992). Her results show that women earn significantly less than men and are overrepresented in low-paying occupations. She made an argument that an important determinant of the gender gap in earnings is the concentration of women in low-paying occupations that require fewer skills and certifications. Thus, it is occupations held by women rather than gender discrimination that account for the earnings differentials between men and women in her study.

Another study of occupations and earnings focusing on immigrants was conducted by Chiswick and Miller (2009). To find out if occupations play a role in determining earnings, the authors used 2000 U.S. Census data on foreign-born males aged 25 to 64 to examine the
channels through which earnings gains are achieved for immigrants in the United States. The authors found that the effects of individualistic characteristics on earnings are stronger after statistically controlling for occupations. They concluded that occupations can be viewed as a link between immigrants' individualistic attributes and their earnings, supporting the mechanisms of the structuralist perspective on earnings determination.

However, the job competition theory fails to fully explain how immigrant earnings processes are different or similar to earnings disparity in general. In other words, what has not been well addressed in the job competition theory literature is whether or not immigrants are overrepresented in certain industrial segments or whether they structurally lack occupational power due to their status in the racial and ethnic stratification in the U.S.

Although Waldinger’s study (1989) showed the relationship between the dual economy and immigrants, the presumption that immigrant labor can be adequately explained with the division of two sectors of industry may still fall into an ideal simplicity. Today’s extraordinary ethnic diversity of immigrants is matched by the variety of their occupational and class backgrounds (Foner, 2000).

It is noted that certain ethnic groups are over-representative in particular industries or occupations. How the over-representativeness of certain industries or occupations influences the earnings patterns of immigrants is still unknown. For example, Chinese immigrants may be hired by co-ethnic employers whose business is in the food industry. Earnings patterns in ethnic business and employment can be different from the general earnings pattern of food industry because they might be either advantageous or disadvantageous compared to other workers in the general food industry. It is possible that they earn more than their counterparts
for the reason of the entire advantage of food industry for Chinese immigrants. It is also possible that they are extremely exploited by their Chinese employers if they lack the ability to survive in the larger society without the support of their own ethnic group. Therefore, the effects of over-representativeness of certain industries and occupations among immigrants weaken the explanatory power of the job competition theory.

Summing up the contribution from the three theories in both individualistic and structuralist perspectives, human capital theory looks at the individualistic characteristics in the general situation, while assimilation theory focuses on individualistic attributes of the immigrant-specific experience. Job competition theory is drawn from the structuralist, but seems to ignore the structuralist factors that are specific to immigrants.

**Integrated Theoretical Framework and Group Membership**

The review of the literature points to the idea that each of the human capital, assimilation, and job competition theories can explain only certain aspects of earnings differentials. Therefore, in order to establish what the determinants of earnings are for Asian immigrants for this study, I propose integrating all the theories. This integrated theoretical framework will provide an explanation for earnings determination which is better than each of the three theories alone.

While an integrated theory approach takes all the variables of the three theories into consideration, it still pays little attention to variances across ethnic groups that affect earnings. Group variances are frequently associated with group-specific history, identity, and experiences, which cannot be simply reduced to any variable of the three theories. Indeed,
past research shows earnings disparity across different racial and ethnic groups, even after controlling for all the predictors of earnings. Such disparity was pronounced not only between whites and minorities, but also across sub-minority ethnic groups (Sakamoto, Goyette, & Kim, 2009).

The earnings disparity between non-Hispanic whites and Asian Americans has been discussed with the majority-minority paradigm. This paradigm assumes that racial and ethnic minorities have lower socioeconomic characteristics than whites due to minority discrimination (Sakamoto, Goyette, & Kim, 2009). Indeed, past research found that the earnings return to education for Asian immigrants are lacking compared to that of whites while their socioeconomic status, especially educational attainment, is not substantially lower than whites (Sakamoto, Goyette, & Kim, 2009; Sharpe & Abdel-Ghany, 2006; Zeng & Xie, 2004; Zhou & Kamo, 1994). Other studies of earnings of Asian immigrants also support the majority-minority paradigm. Barringer, Takeuchi, and Xenos’s (1990) research on educational attainment, occupational achievement, and earning levels found that Asian American men’s high level of education achievement does lead to high occupational attainment, but does not necessarily lead to earning equality with whites. The results also suggest that even native-born Asian Americans have not attained income equality with whites with comparable attributes. Other scholars (Zhou & Kamo, 1994) have observed earnings disparity between Asian groups and their equally qualified white counterparts, and claimed that such disparity is left unexplained even when accounting for human capital and assimilation factors. They suggested this was an effect of racial discrimination.

These results lead us to question the “Model Minority Myth” (MMM) (Sakamoto,
Goyett, & Kim, 2009, p.260) which tries to lend credibility to the majority-minority paradigm. Sakamoto (2009) argues that this portrayal of high socioeconomic achievement among Asian Americans is misleading and exaggerated because minority discrimination persists and many Asian immigrants are still disadvantaged. Asian immigrants may appear to have high earnings in the labor market but it is possible these numbers exist because they are over-educated, working for more hours, and/or concentrated in states, such as California and New York where earnings levels are generally higher than other states (Takaki, 1989).

In addition to discrediting the MMM, upon further investigation it becomes clear that besides the earnings disparity between whites and Asian immigrants, there are also earnings disparities among different Asian ethnic groups. Such disparities in earnings are attributable to the internal heterogeneity across Asian ethnic groups (Sakamoto, Goyette, & Kim, 2009). Three dimensions help explain much of the internal heterogeneity of Asian Americans. The first dimension is the country of origin. Some ethnic groups from the southeast such as Cambodians, Hmong, Laotians, and Vietnamese are known as the most disadvantaged groups (Zeng & Xie, 2004); whereas Asian Indians and ethnic groups from eastern Asia fare much better (Barringer, Takeuchi, & Xenos, 1990). The second dimension is immigration status. Whether or not they were born in the U.S., the number of years they stay in the U.S., and whether or not they obtain U.S. citizenships all influence earnings disparities between groups (Chiswick, 1983; Lee, 1994). The third dimension is their socioeconomic backgrounds upon arriving. Immigrants with higher educational background obtained in their home countries seek better opportunities in the U.S. obviously attain higher earning achievement than those immigrants who arrive in the U.S. with little education (Sakamoto,
One study (Zeng & Xie, 2004) explored another factor of heterogeneity within Asian subgroups. Zeng and Xie argue that whether or not immigrants complete their education in the United States plays a crucial role in earnings differentials. The study was based on two data sets: the 1990 Census Public Use Micro-sample (PUMS) data and the 1993 National Survey of College Graduates (NSCG) with which the researchers were able to measure the key variable—place of education. The sample was restricted to Asian and non-Hispanic whites who were full-time male workers aged from 25 to 64 and they divided their sample into four groups for comparison of their earnings: U.S.-born white, U.S.-born Asian American, U.S.-educated Asian immigrants, and foreign-educated Asian immigrant. The results show that there are no earnings differences across U.S.-born white, U.S.-born Asian American, and U.S.-educated Asian immigrants, but foreign-educated Asians earn 16% less than all the other three groups. Therefore, the place of education becomes another important factor of internal heterogeneity among Asian immigrants which may predict earnings. Another study (Bratberg & Ragan, 2002) also proves the positive impact of host-country schooling on earnings for immigrants.

The similar situation may apply to work experience. Findings from Chiswick and Miller’s study (2009) show that pre-immigration labor market experience has little impact on immigrants’ post-arrival earnings, whereas post-arrival work experience is associated with higher increases in earnings.

Based on the literature review about the earnings disparities across ethnic groups, I pose two research questions. Is there earnings inequality between non-Hispanic whites and
Asian Americans in the Kansas City metro area? I will compare earnings between whites and each of the three Asian ethnic groups of interests in the Kansas City, and also see how the three group memberships affect earnings after controlling for the earnings predictors of the three theories. Secondly, is there internal heterogeneity across Asian ethnic groups? To answer this question, I compare earnings across the three major Asian ethnic groups, and also look at the factors influencing earnings differences.

**Conceptual Model**

While each of the three theories explains certain aspects of the earnings process, none of the theories provides the whole picture. Therefore, in order to achieve greater explanatory and predictive power to explain earnings levels, I will take an integrated theoretical approach by combining components from each of the three theories to answer my third research question: what are the determinants of earnings for Asian ethnic groups?

In this model, I include the earnings predictors from both individualistic and structuralist perspectives. Human capital, assimilation, and job competition theories are all included. Figure 1 shows the conceptual model for the analysis of determinants of earnings for Asian immigrants.
Human capital and assimilation theories are both under the individualistic perspective, so they are included in my conceptual model. The difference is that the human capital theory emphasizes the effects of human capital, particularly educational attainment and work experiences in predicting the earnings of Asian immigrants, while assimilation theory takes immigrant-specific characteristics, such as nativity, years in the U.S., citizenship, and English proficiency into consideration. Including both theories can, on the one hand, increase predictive power in explanation of earnings, and on the other hand, makes a comparison between the two theoretical explanations to see which one provides a better understanding of earnings for the different Asian ethnic groups.

The job competition theory has two key variables: industrial segmentation and occupational power, which at the aggregate level directly impact the earnings of Asian
immigrants. Including structuralist variables in this model, the earnings of Asian immigrants can be seen from both perspectives.

**Research Questions and Hypotheses**

1. Do non-Hispanic whites obtain a higher level of earnings than each of the three Asian ethnic groups?
2. Is there internal heterogeneity in earnings achievement across the three Asian ethnic groups?
3. What are the determinants of earnings for the three Asian ethnic groups?

To answer my three primary research questions, three main hypotheses are made accordingly. The specific hypotheses tested in the thesis are shown below.

**Hypothesis 1:** Non-Hispanic whites obtain a significantly higher level of earnings than each of the three Asian ethnic groups.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is internal heterogeneity in earnings achievement across the three Asian ethnic groups.

**Hypothesis 3a:** For each of the three Asian ethnic groups, the earnings will be significantly related to their human capital factors.

**Hypothesis 3b:** For each of the three Asian ethnic groups, the earnings will be significantly related to their assimilation factors.

**Hypothesis 3c:** For each of the three Asian ethnic groups, the earnings will be significantly related to job competition factors.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The first part of this chapter introduces my data set. The second part provides detailed description of measures of the concepts. In the last part, statistical analysis schemes are presented.

Data

My sample for this thesis is drawn from the Public Use Micro-sample (PUMS) data (5%), which contain the files with micro-data on demographic, socioeconomic, and housing characteristics of each household unit or each person within the household, allowing me to conduct all necessary statistical analyses.

My sample is restricted to male workers, between the age of 25 to 64 where the subjects were in the labor force and had earned incomes in 1999. I only include male workers in this sample because the nature of female employment and the patterns of their earnings might be different from those of male workers. Gender disparity among immigrants in labor market is a topic worthy of further investigation, not only because gender inequality still exists in the U.S. labor market, but also because migration shapes men and women's lives differently (Tong, 2010). Tong (2010) found all women and even highly educated women immigrants still have disadvantages compared to men no matter what their immigration status or backgrounds are; therefore my analysis only includes male workers, assuming that there would be a significant variance between males and females.
Asian Indians, Vietnamese, and Chinese are selected for this analysis because they are the three largest ethnic groups in the Asian only category in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area, with approximately 23% of Asian Indians, 20% of Vietnamese, and 19% of Chinese, comprising approximately 57% of the Asian population. Vietnamese are considered the oldest Asian immigrants in this area, mostly residing in the downtown Kansas City. Asian Indians and Chinese began to largely immigrate to the Kansas City metro area from the foundation of one of the world’s largest telecommunication companies—Sprint Nextel Corporation—situated in Overland Park, KS, located within the Kansas City Metropolitan Area. This company has hired a large number of Asian Indian and Chinese professionals with knowledge and skills in computer sciences or information technology.

In addition, these three groups are representative of the three types of immigrants. A basic classification of contemporary immigrants according to their diversified historical backgrounds is introduced by Portes and Rumbant (1996). According to Portes and Rumbant, there are three types of immigrants. The first type of immigrants is professional immigrants. They arrive in the U.S. with exceptional ability. Most of them are professionals and technicians. The main contributors of this type of immigrants include mainland China, Philippines, India, Great Britain, and Taiwan. It is especially noted that Asian Indian immigrants are known being heavily skewed toward university-educated professionals and technical personnel especially in information technology sectors.

The second type of immigrants is entrepreneurial immigrants, who open ethnic restaurants and grocery shops. The areas concentrated by ethnic entrepreneurship are known as ethnic enclaves, which are often unavailable to other ethnic groups. For example, Chinese
may only hire and promote Chinese for Chinese restaurants or grocery stores in New York City’s and Los Angeles’s Chinatowns. Chinese and Koreans often considered as ones of the most successful business-oriented Asian groups.

The third type of immigrants is refugees and asylum seekers. Most of them escape from communist-controlled or war-torn countries with fear of persecution or physical harm and therefore are granted by the U.S. government to enter into America. Some Asian groups, especially those from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos makes 30 percent of the total political refugees in the U.S.. They are often employed in low-paid menial work because of their low levels of education and work skills.

The three Asian ethnic groups included in my sample represent these different types of immigrants. Asian Indians approximate the professional immigrant type who are over-representative in high paying-jobs in science, medicine, computer science, engineering, math, and so on (Arora, 1994). The Vietnamese who came to the U.S. in large quantities after 1975 at the end of Vietnam War are known mostly as political refugees. A disproportionate number of Chinese immigrants have been admitted under the name of family-unification (Zhou & Kamo, 1994). They are socioeconomically divergent ranging from those with high human capital and financial resources to those with strong kinship bonds in America (Waldinger & Tseng, 1992).

**Concept Measurement**

As discussed in Chapter 2, there are key variables or concepts for each theory. This part describes the process of selecting variables in the PUMS and using them to as indicators
of the concepts for each of the three theories. Table 1 shows the detailed operationalization of the variables for the measurement of the concepts.

The dependent variable for this study is earnings. I will use the “Total personal earned income” in the PUMS and converted it into “Log earnings” for the regression statistics. Because there is substantial skew in earnings, such data transformation makes the earnings fit the linear regression better and improves the interpretability since the log linear form measures the average rate of earnings produced by a unit change in each predictor better and has an advantage of normalizing the distribution of residuals (Shin & Alba, 2009).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concepts</th>
<th>Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependent variable</td>
<td>Earnings Total personal earned income Log earnings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assimilation</td>
<td>Nativity Birthplace Citizenship status Citizenship(dummy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration status</td>
<td>Citizenship status Years in the U.S. Years in the U.S.(numeric)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation</td>
<td>Speaks English Speaks English well(dummy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human capital</td>
<td>Educational attainment Years of schooling(numeric)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job competition</td>
<td>Work experience Age Age(numeric)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>Industry, 1990 basis Core industry(dummy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Occupation Managerial(dummy) Professional(dummy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control variable</td>
<td>Working hours Usual hours worked per week Usual hours worked per week(numeric)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Assimilation Theory**

There are four key variables to measure how Asian immigrants assimilated in the American society. They include nativity, length of stay in the U.S., citizenship status, and language skills.

Nativity in the assimilation theory indicates whether or not an immigrant was born in the U.S. In the PUMS, the variable that can be used to measure the concept of nativity is “Birthplace”. I recoded this variable into a dummy variable called “Native born” (coded 1 for the person who was born in the U.S.). The length of stay in the U.S. is measured by the variable, “Years in the U.S.” in the PUMS. As for the citizenship status, there is a
“Citizenship status” variable in the PUMS. I recoded “Citizenship status” as a dummy variable “Citizenship” (coded 1 for a person holding citizenship). I used the variable “Speaks English” in the PUMS to measure the language skills. I recoded the multiply categories of this variable into a dummy variable (coded 1 for the person who speaks English well, very well, and speaks English only).

**Human Capital Theory**

Educational attainment and work experience are the two key variables of the human capital theory. Since the variable of “Educational attainment” in the PUMS is an ordinal variable, I recoded it into a ratio variable “Years of schooling” for the statistical analysis. For example, the category of high school graduate is converted into value 12 as it usually requires 12 years of schooling to graduate from a high school. Using the same method, I coded 16 for a person with a bachelor’s degree and 18 for a person with a master’s degree or professional degree, 21 for a person with a doctoral degree. Although there is no variable in the PUMS can be directly used to measure work experience, “Age” will be used as a proxy for work experience.

**Job Competition Theory**

Industrial segmentation and occupational power are the two key variables in the job competition theory. The variable of “Industry, 1990 basis” in the PUMS provides us a detailed classification of industrial sectors. As the dual economy discussed previously classifies industry into core and periphery sectors, I recoded the industry variable into a dummy variable, “Core industry” is coded 1 with the periphery industry coded 0. Following Beck, Horan, & Tolbert’s work (1978), Table 2 shows the classification of many of the
industrial sectors into dual economy.

I follow the general classification of occupations provided by the U.S. census and recoded them into two dummy variables, “Management” with all other occupations coded 0 (coded 1 for a person in the managerial occupations) and “Professional” (coded 1 for the person in the professional occupations). Using these two dummy variables allows the model to show whether or not holding managerial or professional occupations has any effect on earnings. Lastly, I will also include working hours as a control variable for the analysis of earnings. It is expected that the longer hours a worker works, the more earnings he has. In the PUMS, “Usual hours worked per week” measures the working hours.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Industry</th>
<th>Periphery Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>Durable manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lumber and wood products, except furniture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durable manufacturing</td>
<td>Furniture and fixtures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone, clay and glass products</td>
<td>Miscellaneous durable manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal industries</td>
<td>Non-durable manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinery, except electrical</td>
<td>Food and kindred products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical machinery, equipment, and supplies</td>
<td>Tobacco manufactures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation equipment</td>
<td>Textile mill products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and photographic</td>
<td>Apparel and other fabricated textile products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>equipment, and watches</td>
<td>Leather and leather products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordnance</td>
<td>Not specified nondurable manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-durable manufacturing</td>
<td>Retail trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper and allied products</td>
<td>Business and repair services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing, publishing, and allied industries</td>
<td>Personal services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemicals and allied products</td>
<td>Entertainment and recreation services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubber and miscellaneous products</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities and sanitary services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, insurance, and real estate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and related services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active duty military</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistical Analysis

My statistical analysis is divided into four steps: descriptive statistics, one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) of earnings, the Ordinal Least Squares (OLS) equations on effects of group membership, and on predicting earnings for the three Asian ethnic groups.

I will first analyze descriptive statistics to see what patterns the possible earnings predictors can show for the three Asian groups and non-Hispanic white to answer my second research question about the internal heterogeneity of earnings achievement of Asian ethnic groups. The number of total populations, Asian population, and percent of Asian population to total population are the basic information that should be included. Mean earnings in 1999 is calculated and compared. Variables included in the conceptual model, such as nativity, citizenship, mean years in the U.S., English proficiency, educational attainment, occupation, percents of core industry, and mean hours worked per week are shown. Some other descriptive statistics, such as the percents of citizenship of foreign born, of recent immigrants (those who immigrated to the U.S. after 1989), and of self-employment, though not related to the conceptual model, are presented. These statistics are valuable because they inform us about which ethnic groups are new arrivals with more likelihood to be naturalized and which ethnic groups have larger percents of entrepreneurs.

In the second step, I will perform one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to assess whether or not the average earnings of four groups differ significantly from one another. This ANOVA analysis will allow me to answer my first and second research questions about the earnings variance across ethnic groups. Since we wish to compare more than two groups across one dependent variable, means of earnings, ANOVA allows us to test these four
groups including three Asian groups and white at one time. However, the limitation of ANOVA is that we may know there are significant differences among the four groups; it does not tell us where the differences lie. Thus, I further need to conduct pair-wise comparisons to see where the ANOVA significant differences stem from by employing the analysis of Post Hoc Testing.

The third step will further explore the earnings differentials between whites and Asians; I will include all the variables of the three theories in the regression model. As I argued in Chapter 2, while we expect to find strong effects of human capital, assimilation, and job completion variables for all members of Asian groups, there remains an unavoidable need to look for the effect of ethnic group memberships. In order to achieve this goal, I include all the members of the four ethnic groups, non-Hispanic white, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, and Chinese, and make the three Asian ethnicities as three dummy variables. For example, in the variable of Chinese, I recoded 1 for members who are Chinese, and the same for the variables of Asian Indian and of Vietnamese. Non-Hispanic white is treated as a reference group. The MLR model treats the log earnings as a dependent variable, and all the other variables including ethnic membership as independent variables.

In the last step, I will again use linear regression to test the models predicting earnings for each of these three Asian ethnic groups. This step can in further divided into two steps. Before testing the full model that integrates all the three theories, the initial step is to test each of the three theories separately. Based on this analysis, we may tell whether or not each theory can explain the earnings for each of the Asian ethnic groups. Further, the adjusted R square of the model of each theory tells us how much variance in earnings can be
explained by each theory. In addition, even though the model of each theory is statistically significant, not all the coefficients of the variables in the model are significant.

The final step combines all the variables of the three theories. The conceptual model of the thesis is based on my argument that none of these three theories alone is adequate to explain the earnings of Asian immigrants and the combination of all the three theories has the strongest explanatory power. This integrated model also treats the three Asian ethnic groups separately. Besides the significant level and the adjusted R square, special attention should be paid to the changes of the significant level of each variable. It is possible that a variable is significant in the model of one theory, but becomes insignificant, or vice versa in the integrated model.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Results are reported according to the four steps of statistical analysis: descriptive results, results on earnings variances, the effects of group membership, and determinants of earnings.

Descriptive Results

Table 3 presents descriptive statistics for all the four groups. The number of total male workers aged between 24 and 64 is 401,420, of which approximately 84 percent are non-Hispanic whites. The Asian population consists of 1.9 percent of the total population. Asian Indian workers is the largest group (1,971), followed by Vietnamese (1,421), and Chinese (1,316).

There is an earnings disparity between Asians and non-Hispanic whites. As a whole group, Asians’ average earnings in 1999 were $42,000, while non-Hispanic whites earned $51,000. Differences in the average earnings are also evident across the four groups. Asian Indians enjoy the highest level of earnings. On average, they earned $61,000 annually, followed by whites ($51,000), Chinese ($40,000), and Vietnamese ($30,000). In addition, Asian Indians and whites’ earnings were both above the average earnings of total population ($48,000) in the Kansas City. Chinese and Vietnamese’s earnings were both below the mean earnings of the Asian population ($40,000).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Asian Indian</th>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Asian NH</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean earnings ($1,000)</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in 1999</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1,971</td>
<td>1,421</td>
<td>1,316</td>
<td>7,434</td>
<td>336,93</td>
<td>401,424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent to total</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td>.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>83.9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent to Asian</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native born (%)</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>96.5</td>
<td>92.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship (%)</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>98.3</td>
<td>96.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship of Foreign</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>born (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean years in U.S.</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent immigrants (%)</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak English (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well/very well</td>
<td>96.5</td>
<td>75.3</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>99.1</td>
<td>98.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not well</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not speak</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor degree</td>
<td>83.9</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>34.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>85.8</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>65.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>95.4</td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>92.1</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td>93.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Age</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation (%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>63.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core Industry (%)</td>
<td>66.5</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>73.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employment (%)</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean hours worked per</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Taiwanese were excluded. Speak English very well = “Speak English only” plus “Speak English very well”; Recent immigrants (%) = those who immigrated to the U.S. after 1989/ total immigrants (foreign born). From IPUMS 2000 Census 5% Sample.
As for the immigration status, Vietnamese has the highest percent of citizens (55.0%) with the longest mean years (13) in the U.S. The percent of naturalized citizens (52%) is also high. This finding explains why Vietnamese have the smallest percent of recent immigrants (51%), compared to the Asian Indians (58%) and the Chinese (56%). Although Asian Indians have lower percentage of citizenship (37% vs. 49%) and naturalized citizens (35% vs. 41%) compared to the Chinese, they have longer mean years in the U.S. (11.2 vs. 8.8). This can be partly explained by the fact that 13% of Chinese are U.S. born while only approximately 3% Asian Indians and 4% of Vietnamese were born in the U.S.

Asian Indians have the highest level of English proficiency. There are 97% of Asian Indians who can speak English well. Vietnamese have the lowest level of English speaking ability with 75% of Vietnamese who can speak English well.

Considerable proportions of Asian Indian (52%) and of Chinese (42%) have graduate degrees. These two groups, on average, have a higher proportion of members with graduate degree compared to the total Asian population (30%), as well as total population (12%) in the Kansas City area. The group of Vietnamese has the percentage of people with graduate degrees (3%).

Proportions of graduate degrees are directly associated with proportions of group members holding professional occupations. More than half of Asian Indians (59%) and Chinese (51%) work in professional occupations. Although non-Hispanic whites have a slightly more proportion of professionals than the total population (19% vs. 18%), they are still less likely than Asians to hold professional positions (19% vs. 39%). The Vietnamese again has the lowest percent of members (13%) in professional jobs. Turning to managerial
positions, I find that Asian Indians and non-Hispanic whites are the two groups most likely
to hold these positions. There are larger percents of Asian Indians (20%) and non-Hispanic
whites (20%) in managerial occupations than those of Asians (12%) and of total population
(18%). Only 8% of Vietnamese and Chinese are in managerial occupations.

Because Asian Indians have a high percentage of workers in professional and
managerial positions, it is not surprising to find only 20% of them hold jobs in the service
sectors. On the other hand, because such a small proportion of Vietnamese hold managerial
and professional jobs, it makes sense that the majority (79%) holds service occupations. For
Chinese, a smaller proportion of the workers are employed in the service occupations than
that of Asians (41% vs. 49%). Overall, the percentage of Asians employed in service
occupations is still much lower than that of non-Hispanic whites (49% vs. 62%).

Most workers of each ethnic group seem to work in the core industry. Whites (73%)
have the largest proportion of members in the core industry, followed by Asian Indians
(67%), then Chinese (54%), and finally Vietnamese (51%). The percents of Chinese and
Vietnamese working in the core industry are below that of the total Asian population (60%).

Vietnamese have the highest proportion of self-employed workers (16%), followed
by whites (14%), Chinese (9.3%), and Asian Indians (9.0%). The proportions of
self-employed Asians are similar to the total population (10% vs. 11%). Non-Hispanic
whites work 45 hours per week on average, which is longer than the total population and any
other three Asian ethnic groups. Chinese work the least hours per week (41).

In sum, the descriptive statistics reveal important differences across the three Asian
ethnic groups. Asian Indians earn the most, and have the advantage in education attainment,
with most members working in professional and managerial jobs that require high levels of education and skills. Vietnamese, on the contrary, earn the least and have the lowest amount of education, with most members working in the service sectors. Vietnamese are relatively long-time immigrants in the United States with a large proportion of the population obtaining citizenship. Chinese fall somewhere in between Asian Indians and Vietnamese on many variables. They earn less than Asian Indians but more than Vietnamese. And though Chinese have a much higher percent of people getting graduate degrees than Vietnamese, this percent is not as high as that of Asian Indians. Like Asian Indians, most Chinese are professionals, but they do not have many people in managerial occupations.

**Results on Earnings Variances**

A NOVA rendered a significance level of .000, which is smaller than .05. As such, we can conclude that the earnings variances across these four ethnic groups vary significantly. It is appropriate to conduct post hoc tests to determine which group differs significantly from one another. Table 4 shows multiple comparisons of earnings conducted by Post Hoc Testing for Asian Indian, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Non-Hispanic white workers.
Table 4

Multiple Comparisons of Earnings for Asian Indian, Vietnamese, Chinese and non-Hispanic White Males 25-64 in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area (2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(I) Ethnicity</th>
<th>(J) Ethnicity</th>
<th>Mean difference(I-J)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NH White</td>
<td>Asian Indian</td>
<td>-9,507.766*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>20,871.920*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>11,420.047*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Indian</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>30,379.686*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>20,909.814*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>-9,469.873*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05

Table 4 finds that the earnings difference between each ethnic group pairing is statistically significant at the p < .05 level. Asian Indians earn $9,507 more than Non-Hispanic whites, while Non-Hispanic whites earn $11,420 more than Chinese, and Chinese earn $9,469 more than Vietnamese. From these Post Hoc Testing comparisons, we observe the largest difference exists between Asian Indians and Vietnamese ($30,380), while the earnings disparity between Asian Indians and Non-Hispanic whites and between Chinese and Vietnamese are both around $9,500.

In sum, Asian Indians have a clear earnings advantage. There is a significant earnings difference between each of the two ethnic groups.

Results on Effects of Group Membership

Table 5 provides the results of the OLS regression model in which ethnic group
memberships are designated as dummy variables identifying Asian Indians, Vietnamese, and Chinese with non-Hispanic whites as the reference group.

Table 5
Effects of Minority Group Membership on Earnings for Asian Indian, Vietnamese, and Chinese Males 25-64 in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area (2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficients</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minority group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Indian</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>-.013*</td>
<td>.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>-.006*</td>
<td>.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assimilation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native born</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>.022*</td>
<td>.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in U.S.</td>
<td>.009*</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak English well</td>
<td>.021*</td>
<td>.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of schooling</td>
<td>.188*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.073*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job competition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>.161*</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>.097*</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core industry</td>
<td>.124*</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usual hours worked per week</td>
<td>.286*</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>7.432*</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adjusted R² .229*
Number of cases 341,636

Note. NH White variable was omitted as a reference category. Taiwanese were excluded. Speaking English well= “Speak English only” plus “Speak English very well” plus “Speak English well”. From U.S. Census of Population and Housing: 2000 PUMS published by IPUMS (2004).

*P < .05
The results show that after controlling for all variables of the three theories Vietnamese and Chinese tend to earn less than whites. Being a Vietnamese has more negative effects on earnings than being a Chinese. The results find that being an Asian Indians has no relationship on earnings.

**Results on Earnings Determinants**

These next regression models test the determinants of earnings for each Asian ethnic group separately. Table 6 presents the models of the three theories individually with a full model integrating all three.

Overall, the results shown in Table 6 confirm that all the models of the theories are statistically significant explanations for earnings levels of Asian immigrants. According to the results of the assimilation model (Model 1), for Vietnamese, the adjusted R square is .318, which is larger than those for Asian Indians (.228) and Chinese (.264), suggesting the assimilation factors explain the variance in earnings for Vietnamese better than for Asian Indians and Chinese. However, speaking English well has a strong negative effect on earnings for Vietnamese, although it has a significantly positive impact on earnings for Asian Indians and Chinese. Being born in the U.S. positively affects earnings of Vietnamese, but has no effect on earnings of Asian Indians and even has a slightly negative effect on earnings for Chinese. Citizenship status considerably benefits Vietnamese and Chinese, but it does harm to the earnings attainment of Asian Indians.

The human capital only model (Model 2) explains the earnings of Asian Indians quite well, but has very little explanatory power for Vietnamese (.366 vs. 045). The variable of
years of schooling shows a particularly strong positive effect on earnings for Asian Indians and also has a positive impact on Chinese; but it negatively affects earnings of Vietnamese. Age, as an indicator of work experiences, also affects earnings of Vietnamese negatively. The negative effect of age variable also holds for Chinese. Only Asian Indians get earnings benefits as they get older. In conclusion, the variables of human capital model works quite well for Asian Indians, explain partially the earnings of Chinese, but do not explain a large amount of the variance of Vietnamese earnings.

The job competition model (Model 3) explains earnings best for Asian Indians, followed by Chinese and then Vietnamese. For all the three Asian groups, holding managerial occupations is positively associated with their earnings, especially for Asian Indians. In addition, the adjusted R square of Vietnamese is larger than that of Chinese (.295 vs. .191), which means this model explains better the earnings for Vietnamese than for Chinese. As for the occupations, having a professional occupation has a strongly positive influence on earnings for Asian Indians with a smaller effect on earnings for Chinese. Vietnamese get the least benefit from holding professional jobs. Working in the core industry matters and has positive effects on earnings for both Asian Indians and Vietnamese, but it has no significant effect on the earnings of Chinese.
Table 6
Regression Equation Predicting Earnings for Asian Indian, Vietnamese, and Chinese Males 25-64 in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area (2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Asian Indian</th>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1  2  3  4  1  2  3  4</td>
<td>1  2  3  4</td>
<td>1  2  3  4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native born</td>
<td>-.008</td>
<td>.043*</td>
<td>.062*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>-.265*</td>
<td>-.216*</td>
<td>.406*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in U.S.</td>
<td>.395*</td>
<td>.317*</td>
<td>.274*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak English well</td>
<td>.453*</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>-.334*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of schooling</td>
<td>.600*</td>
<td>.390*</td>
<td>-.122*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.178*</td>
<td>.088*</td>
<td>-.135*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>.428*</td>
<td>.236*</td>
<td>.295*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>.577*</td>
<td>.406*</td>
<td>.162*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core industry</td>
<td>.277*</td>
<td>.162*</td>
<td>.119*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>7.345*</td>
<td>6.742*</td>
<td>7.166*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R^2</td>
<td>.228*</td>
<td>.366*</td>
<td>.373*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of case | 1,971 | 1,421 | 1,316 |

Note. Taiwanese were excluded. Model 1=Assimilation Model; Model 2=Human Capital Model; Model 3=Job Competition Model; Model 4=Integrated Model; Speaking English well= “Speak English only” plus “Speak English very well” plus “Speak English well”. From U.S. Census of Population and Housing: 2000 PUMS published by IPUMS (2004).

*P < .05
The integrated model (Model 4) has the strongest explanatory power for each of the three Asian groups but the effects of individual variables change across different models.

For Asian Indians, while nativity is an insignificant and even slightly negative variable in the assimilation model, in the integrated model it becomes a significantly positive determinant of their earnings. English proficiency is a strong positive variable in the assimilation model, but becomes insignificant in the integrated model. Major changes also occur in the case of Vietnamese when comparing the individual model with the integrated model. Age has a negative impact on earnings of Vietnamese in the human capital model, but becomes insignificant in the integrated model. Working in the core industry brings benefits to them in the job competition model, but actually changes the direction and negatively impacts earnings in the integrated model. For Chinese, nativity loses its significance on earnings from the assimilation model to the integrated model. Years in the U.S. do not matter for Chinese in the assimilation model, but it has and has a significant and positive influence on earnings in the integrated model.

In sum, the integrated model works best for Asian Indians, followed by Vietnamese and then Chinese.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part reports significant findings and their corresponding theoretical implications. The second part provides the limitations of the research. The third part gives some suggestion for future research.

Some significant findings are worth noting in answering my three research questions. The results show there are earnings differentials between non-Hispanic whites and Asian immigrants, but it is not always true that non-Hispanic whites obtain a significant higher level of earnings: Examination of the data finds that Asian Indians earn more than whites, thus, Hypothesis 1 is rejected. For the second research question on internal heterogeneity in earnings attainment across three Asian ethnic groups, Hypothesis 2 is accepted; there are significant differences in the average earnings of each of the three Asian ethnic groups. For the third research question on determinants of earnings, the human capital, assimilation, and job competition theories are all related to the earnings of three Asian ethnic groups, but different theories have different explanatory power for the three Asian ethnic groups; thus, Hypothesis 3 is supported.

These findings have theoretical implications. Hypothesis 1, that non-Hispanic whites should obtain a significantly higher level of earnings than each of the three Asian ethnic groups, was based the existing literature on the majority-minority paradigm. Indeed, taken as one group, Asian Americans do earn, on average, less than whites, even after controlling for individual characteristics; however, this majority-minority paradigm is undermined because
Asian Indians earn, on average, more than their white counterparts, and after controlling for all the factors predicting earnings, being Asian Indian still has no significantly negative effects on earnings.

In answer to the second research question, statistically significant internal heterogeneity in earnings attainment does exist across the three Asian ethnic groups with Asian Indians earning the most, Vietnamese earnings the least, and Chinese falling in between.

With the highest percentage of Asian Indians holding professional and managerial jobs, the results supports the Porte and Rumbant’s (1996) classification of immigrants that considers Asian Indians to be the professional type of immigrant.

Chinese immigrants do not have as good earnings performances as Asian Indians, but still show a large number of members with college degrees or higher, holding professional jobs. According to the classification of immigrants in Chapter 3, Chinese are well-known as entrepreneurs, running ethnic restaurants and grocery shops in New York City’s and Los Angeles’s Chinatowns, but the percent of self-employment of Chinese population in the Kansas City is lower than that of non-Hispanic whites or of the total population. Thus, it is not appropriate to consider Chinese as entrepreneurial type of immigrants in this area. It is especially noted that though Chinese’s shortest length of stay in the U.S. indicates that they are relatively new arrivals in this area, they have much higher percent of population who were native born than that of Asian Indians and Vietnamese. The Chinese who were native born are usually the ones with strong kinship and family bonds in America. Such finding again matches Porte and Rumbant’s (1996) classification that sees Chinese immigrants
socioeconomically divergent with a disproportionate number of them have been admitted under family-unification immigration policies.

Vietnamese show the lowest average earnings and educational attainment with the highest percentage of members in the services sector. But Vietnamese have the highest percentage of members obtaining citizenship and stay longest in America on average. It is known that they began to come to the U.S. in large quantities as political refugees after Vietnam War during 1970s, which may provide explanation for their low human and financial capital. Their higher percentage of citizenship and longer length of stay in the U.S. seem to indicate that they are a relatively older immigrant group than Asian Indians and Chinese in this area.

In Hypothesis 3, I posit that human capital, assimilation, and job competition theories are all related to earnings of the three Asian ethnic groups. It is noted that not all the theories have the same explanatory ability to predict earnings of the three Asian groups. We could not find any of the theories having an absolute advantage over the other two theories in explaining earnings levels. To determine how well any individual theory explains earnings of Asian immigrants will largely depend on which ethnic group we are looking at. According to the results, human capital and job competition theories have more explanatory power for Asian Indians than for Vietnamese and Chinese. Assimilation theory is the most appropriate to predict the earnings of Vietnamese, but has weak predictive ability for Asian Indians and Chinese.

The results support a need to take an integrated theoretical approach to study the earnings of Asian immigrants because taking all the variables in the human capital,
assimilation and job competition theories into consideration provides a more comprehensive understanding of the economic achievement of Asian Americans. My statistics support this proposition because for each of the three groups, the integrated model explains a larger amount of earnings than any of the individual models.

Some significant changes also take place in terms of the effects of the assimilation variables for the Chinese population. Every variable of assimilation theory changes after controlling for the other variables in the integrated model. Besides that, some variables, such as age of Vietnamese, nativity and English proficiency of Asian Indians also change. These changes suggest that assimilation variables may be the least robust to explain earnings because most changes happen in its variables after controlling for the variables of the other two theories. As I mentioned in the literature review, the assimilation theory fails to notice the divergent trajectories of adaptation process for various immigrant groups. Since these three Asian ethnic groups show different characteristics, it is expected that the classical path of assimilation might not be adequate to explain all the three groups. Because Chinese immigrants are representative for the various types of immigrants, the weak explanatory power of assimilation theory for them further proves the limitation of the theory.

My research is not devoid of limitations. The first limitation is that it excludes female workers. It is known that female workers generally earn less than male workers, and this is especially true for female Asian immigrants because they are mostly from male-dominated societies. It is possible that in order to accompany their spouses in the U.S., they had to give up well-paid jobs in their home countries and start at the bottom of the society or even become housewives after immigration. In order to see the whole picture of earnings
attainment of Asian immigrants, female workers need to be included.

The second limitation is the lack of distinguishing different generations of immigrants. Since immigrant success evolves across generations, it is the presumption that the second generation does better and shows different assimilation paths than its predecessors (Clark, 2003). In this research, much higher percent of Chinese who were native born indicates a larger number of second-or even later-generation immigrants among Chinese population. Without taking into the generational differences into consideration, it weakens the assimilation effects of earnings across different ethnic groups.

The third limitation is that the research is static rather than dynamic for the earnings process explanation. Immigrants’ earnings improve over time, so the earnings process is dynamic. This research only analyzes the earnings for one year and does not study the growth of earnings over time. The speed of growth is also important for the understanding of earnings achievement of immigrants.

These limitations call for a future research agenda. In order to overcome the shortcomings of this research, the gender disparity in earnings should be taken into consideration because gender is an important social category that influences the processes of economic attainments. Studies that distinguish different generations of immigrants can be conducted to elaborate on the assimilation process that affects their economic outcomes. Longitudinal research for the same groups of immigrants over time can provide a dynamic explanation for earnings improvement.

Furthermore, future research on earnings of Asian immigrants can be improved in other ways. First, comparative studies on earnings for Asian immigrants should be conducted
in other metropolitan areas. There is a surprising finding that Asian Indians earn significantly more than non-Hispanic whites, but whether or not this situation can be applied to other areas of America is unclear. In order to have a quick glimpse of their earnings advantage at the national level, I collected aggregated U.S. Census data (2000 Summary File 4) on earnings for non-Hispanic whites and Asian Indians. Even at the national level, I find the median earnings of Asian Indian males are indeed higher than their white counterparts ($40,189 vs. $31,368). Without controlling for other factors, this further indicates that Asian Indians have outstanding earnings achievement. Thus, the comparative studies controlling the other factors will help us to tell whether or not earnings patterns among Asians in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area are consistent with the patterns in other regions and locales.

Secondly, qualitative research data such as reports from fieldwork will supplement quantitative research. Well-documented local histories of immigration would enhance our understanding of immigrant earnings processes by improving the interpretation of the quantitative findings. For instance, the high proportion of professional jobs of Asian Indians can be explained partly by an increasing economic globalization of firms (e.g. Sprint Headquarters in Overland Park) who demand recruitment of foreign professionals. A wide range of ethnic entrepreneurs, workers, journalists, public officials, planners, and other informants can provide value descriptive information as discussion of trends to understand the underlying historical processes of immigrant economic adaptation.

In conclusion, this thesis adds to our growing understanding of Asian immigrants' earnings in the Midwest, thus expanding the areas in the U.S. that are appropriate for us to investigate the economic achievement of Asian immigrants. Because of the internal
heterogeneity of Asian ethnic groups, their earnings are strongly related the group-specific characteristics. For the ethnic groups such as Asian Indians coming to the U.S. with good educational backgrounds and high skills, they are over-representative in the well-paid professional and managerial occupations. For the ethnic groups such as Vietnamese arriving with low educational attainment and fewer skills, they are usually holding services jobs with low earnings, and their earnings can only be improved by increasing the years in the U.S. and/or obtaining U.S. citizenship. For some other ethnic groups such as Chinese with a variety of backgrounds, none of the individual theoretical models explain well their earnings. However, for all the three types of Asian ethnic groups, the integrated theoretical approach shows the best explanation for the earnings. Looking into the complexity of determinants of Asian immigrants' earnings, the integrated theoretical approach largely increases the predictability of the theoretical explanation for earnings.
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VITA

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Jing Liu began a master’s program in sociology at the University of Missouri-Kansas City in August, 2008. During her graduate studies, she was offered a Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) in the Department of Sociology for the 2009-2010 academic year, and a Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA) for the Fall 2010 semester. She was awarded the Master of Arts degree in Sociology in December, 2010.