**Interview Transcript**

**Participant 15**

Allison S: So my first question is just do you mind introducing yourself and telling me a little bit about who you are and where you're from and what your education and employment background is?

Participant 15: Sure. Yeah so I’m originally from India. I graduated from a bachelor's degree in Chennai Tamil Nadu, which is a state in India at around 2012. I worked as a research specialist for a year, back home in India, and then I moved to the US for a PhD program. I completed, I graduated with a PhD in chemistry in 2019. And ever since, I have been working as a research specialist/postdoctoral scholar at school of medicine in the Emory children's Center as a, you know, as a researcher for about two and a half-ish years at this point. So, I’m also affiliated with the first program as a teaching postdoctoral, you know, fellow, so I kind of have, you know… I’m in touch with like a lot of professional organization and so on, so I’m primarily an academic and pretty much the majority of my sort of adult life has been spent in academic setting and so on. So yeah, I’m looking forward to the rest of the study.

Allison S: Great yeah. So, can you tell me a little bit more about your current role and what you do as day to day?

Participant 15: Yeah so I’m primarily working in a research lab environment um, however, because of my affiliation, but, you know, so I’m a postdoctoral fellow. Let me back up for a second, and I do kind of wander around in topics so please feel free to call me out. But yeah so. um you know so primarily my role is to just like carry out research projects come up with my own original research proposals, and it's a part of in an age grant, and I do experimental and some amount of theoretical you know work that is involved in understanding some mechanistic features of how HIV one viruses work in terms of infecting human cells. And also, simultaneously because of my affiliation with the first program, I have also been involved in some teaching at teaching capacities, and the latest assignment which and spring 2022, I was a instructor for a course BIO 200 for a bunch of freshmen and sophomore Emory undergraduate students, so that's been a fun experience. So I do about like 75% of my commitment right now is research, or I would say, like 90% of it is research, and about 10 to 15% I would say is like, you know, teaching and sort of you know sort of outreach, community outreach and so on.

Allison S: Great yeah. How do you feel about your job, do you like it, what do you like, what do you dislike and if you could rate it on a scale from one to ten, what would you give it?

Participant 15: Oh, I really like it. So, um overall, I think it's you know and something that I really appreciate doing a combination of research and teaching that's kind of what I hope to do in the future as well. However, kind of increase my priority for teaching a little bit more, as I expand and kind of grow as a carrier academic. But I really do enjoy my work a lot, so the research questions that I work on is a nice sort of applicable extension of what I did in my graduate school setting, and I find that to be very fascinating and I have a very sort of encouraging, you know, set of colleagues that I really appreciated in the recent years, way more so than my PhD experience. You know my PhD experience wasn't that great which I think some of it will come up during the course of the study. But you know, but I really love it I love the amount of autonomy that I get in terms of my, you know, work I love how respected, I feel, as you know, as part of my colleagues, and the I like the idea of the creative freedom that I have in terms of just chasing the ideas that I have. In terms of dislikes, I think it's you know overall dislikes is the amount of stress that is involved, but I think that's like very…not unique to my position but it's more so, just like an academic sort of Grad school in a research setting, the amount of pressure that is associated with like publishing and, and so one and then experiments don't work. So I don't think there's anything uniquely bad that I can point out to that is specific to my current employer.

Allison S: Sure yeah, so on a scale from one to ten, you'd give it maybe a higher number?

Participant 15: So I will probably rate, you know somewhere between eight and nine. Let's just say eight.

Allison S: That's a good number. Yeah. Cool um, can you tell me a little bit about your colleagues that you work with?

Participant 15: Yeah. So my colleagues are you know my current colleagues, I would say, are you know very, very diverse in terms of their sort of academic training background and also where they're from. Of course, I would like, for the diversity to be more pronounced, but you know it's probably… I would argue, my current set of colleagues a better, way better than the average, per se, so my advisor he was originally an immigrant from Armenia, and some of my more senior colleagues that I have kind of range all the way from like, you know, Eastern Europe. Some people from South Asia, East Asia, and American, so it is a decent mix, and we have students representing from like Latin America, and like you know. certain parts of the US, both in terms of just like differences in skin color, and like overall gender diversity and so on. So, I really appreciate the sort of setting or the number of colleagues that I have, and also, the sort of expertise that they bring, because some of us are biology focused. That is like more, you know, focus on the physical physiological aspects of viral infection. Some of us are a little bit more chemistry focused, and we have a nice sort of like marriage between the two fields and disciplines and we have really nice conversations from time to time. That way.

Allison S: Great yeah. Can you…would you consider them your friends your colleagues?

Participant 15: Absolutely yeah, yeah.

Allison S: Do you feel like you can be yourself at work or do you feel like you have to act a certain way?

Participant 15: Oh, mostly. Mostly, I would, I would say, like you know, of course. I will say there is a certain level of like professional boundary that has been set for the most part, and you know there's like some things that I, you know some things that were you know I tried to just maintain people at a distance, but I think that's just like a regular level of professionalism that is required for an office setting. But yeah, I can… For most for most of my time, at least in my current place, I have never found it to be, you know, like I’ve never found my identity or my self- identity to be inhibition our bottleneck at any level.

Allison S: Sure, sure. Um so tell me a little bit about your PhD program, and what was different about it from your current role?

Participant 15: Oh yeah. So do I have stories to tell you? I’m just going to preface, I know I know, nobody else is going to look at the you know this video footage or whatever, but just to preface like I do have respect for a lot of people that I work with, so and I think a lot of the sort of you know, things that came my way that I felt uncomfortable or felt very you know discouraged was not a result of like hate or malice. I think it's just like ignorance right. Um, but I think my previous big program it was overwhelmingly very domestic in terms of it's just like American and overwhelmingly white. There were only like out of a, let's say on average, at no point in time, where the above like you know 20% of the group was Asian, despite the fact that Emory's chemistry program was 50% Asian you know East Asian and South Asian your presentation, so our lab was kind of like above average in terms of quote-on-quote whiteness. I don't know if that's the right term. So that that led to a lot of sort of like uncomfortable situations, for me, and you know I’m a lot more tolerant to like sort of jokes and stuff, you know. I think that that is just like a you know friendship boundary crossing things that that happened. I’m a lot more tolerant to that, but I think in terms of like just a professional environment, I was you know I would say subjected to a lot of things that really bothered me. A couple of examples that I will give you: for the first year that I was here, this was 2013 our own fall. I felt extremely homesick because that was the first time, I had like you know stayed away from my hometown for an extended period of time. And I wanted to go back home for a vacation right, and I had asked my you know then advisor and then you know he… He didn't flat out say no, but it was just like he had to sort of like (something) like how you know I could get I could get failed of the program you know. Or, I could I could be fired because you know I didn't like you know pass my qualifying exams just because I wanted like a vacation for two weeks. And I’d asked him like you know paid like hey you know I haven't been my family in a while so like delay eventually go back and then he basically suggested like you know. You know, we meet our family every time during thanksgiving and stuff and which is impossible if you live 10,000 miles away from here, so it takes two days for you to travel there, and so on. While at the same time, people belonging to micro who were domestic students were getting days off. They were taking two weeks off and two weeks off, for you know multiple reasons, like visiting family, getting married, and honeymoon yada yada…You know, you name it right. So that was like a very obvious sign, I felt sort of discriminated against, which again I really don't think it was you know sort of racially motivated. It came, I think it was born more you know more so out of just like ignorance of not understanding or not having prior experience with you know someone who is 10,000 miles away from the US, and I think over time, I will say that the colleagues did feel a little bit more empathetic to that sort of situation, but that's just one example. I can give you many, many in that real.

Allison S: Sure, yeah so maybe they were just not particularly culturally competent, and didn't really know how to work with international students or?

Participant 15: Precisely

Allison S: Interesting. Um what are some of the other stories that you would tell?

Participant 15: Yeah um. Let me see. I mean, I think there are, like other stories as well. There, there are these sorts of like very he didn't like you know sort of stereotypes that is associated with like Asian students in general right. Like you know so like we are quote-on-quote work horses. Like we don't really mind coming in on the weekends, and it's like you're almost expected to work a little bit more than your peers if they happened to be domestic, and so on. You know, and so several cases I’ve heard stuff like you know. Well, for instance, right like you know I got put on a project that you know I didn't really have any supervisors for. And I you know I would come in during the weekend, and then you know, I would like try to read something and then I will try to email my advisor, and then I’ll tell them hey like I’m finding it difficult, can you like book me with a supervisor or a mentor of sorts. And then he would say something along the lines of like you know oh I’m confident that you can come up with this on your own, and so on. It's like it's almost like he's holding me up on a pedestal which I didn't want to be held up on a pedestal. Or it might just be like flat out, you know discrimination because he didn't want to help me out. So, it's somewhere in between that and on the spectrums. However, you know pretty much every single domestic students that we had had like a proper dedicated graduate student mentor. Now you know, in fact, like you know, in the second you know pretty much every domestic student in their second or third years had like a co-author paper because you know they were working on the same product that they're you know supervisors are like are their mentors were working on. So, I’ve kind of they get rolled into like existing projects that was already like you know, like publishable that was already working in a way. Whereas all of the international students, all of the Asian students specifically were put in a brand-new project which has like a higher degree and risk of failing.

So I think that was one obvious thing that I felt was like a clear pattern of you know that emerged from just like observing a lot of lot of students over my time and the other major story that I will say is like you know…And this is like more so, like a program dependent and I think this is why I had emailed you about my citizenship status, and I think I don't know how much of it is me being a non-citizen Asian versus Asian Americans, but it could be, there could be some overlaps. For instance, you know as a non-citizen, I’m usually not eligible to apply to a lot of government fellowships, NIH fellowships in SF. You know I think the only thing that I’m eligible for is SHMI and so on. Um and I had you know sort of you know, pretty much all of the domestic students you know, received sort of like additional support, and you know in fact my advisor you know kind of went to my co-workmate practically told her to apply for this particular fellowship program because he had connections with it. And she eventually got the fellowship you know that that fellowship you know and despite not having any sort of like evidence for additional productivity than he if he was able to effectively get paid, and you know, and so on and so forth. Like and so. She had an objective superior support structure and objectively better sort of like you know incentive to work, you know, as a part of the group and have additional mentorship and you know be allowed more vacation than I was, and you know and it kind of like cascaded and so on.

So again, just to be clear, I don't I’m not accusing anybody of bias, but it could just be like a structural you know sort of thing where because I’m not eligible, he did not have any opportunity for me and that kind of made me feel at least a little bit salty I know it's a little bit better, but I was pretty salty about it, you know. And you know, like adding salt, to the injury was the program kind of in my second-year program mandated is sit through that raining that I know that is exclusive to domestic students or unfinished that is exclusive to domestic students, without any emphasis on international students, despite being like you know 40 to 50% of the cohort. And that was very, very frustrating and I had wasted and it took them a very, very long time to actually reverse it. Toward my sixth year of my graduate school is when they actually reverse that policy yeah. So those are a couple of very sort of blatant stories that I can tell you.

Allison S: So how many people were in your cohort and, like the overall program?

Participant 15: Yeah so entering the class, it was about 32 students, I believe.

Allison S: Oh wow.

Participant 15: Yeah, several people dropped out, but I think entering class was about 32. Chemistry is huge by the way, and you know and that year, specifically, I know, we had a 50% international cohort that was kind of like you know that was unprecedented but usually the chemistry program in general is about like anywhere between 30 to 40% international.

Allison S: Sure, um did you have any… So here's a question about the people in your cohort, but it could also be people in the program generally, were there any nonwhite domestic students and were there any like white international students and did you feel like that mattered at all, or were there any distinction that you saw with them?

Participant 15: Good question, so there were only a couple of African American. One it's been could be like Latino but I’m not 100% certain. You know our Latin next excuse me, but you know I’m not 100% certain but in terms of just the dynamics, I will say... it's a very good question I had not thought about it. I will say that you know the African American students did have a significant difficulty in finding a group, and so on. It's difficult to say, because only two people right, so one of them, I think he was very comfortable he's actually very successful, but the other one had a lot of difficulty finding a proper like mentor and so on. And, incidentally, he also you know wanted to join the group that I ended up joining as well, and I I’ve been told that he had some difficulties as well. You know, but it could just be like the individual, I know, like people had like different experiences about him. There were no sort of Asian Americans, to my knowledge. There were Asian American students in the chemistry program before my cohort and I had been I have been told that there were some sort of like you know, like racially motivated and racial stereotypes that they had endured, you know, while it was talking to them um, but in my cohort, I can't think of anything, maybe it did exist, but I can't think of anything right now.

Allison S: So maybe in some of the conversations that you were having though with the people in previous cohorts you could distinguish between… so it made it seem like it was a racial difference, not an international versus domestic difference, or a little bit of both?

Participant 15: I think it's a little bit of both, I think you know. It's common a gorilla effect, I think, but yeah from what I’ve been talking to I’ve been told that. In fact, you know interesting tidbit I don't know how relevant it is there's actually like a what I call like a Chinese group that is like you know that was accused. Again, this is a legend so I’m not like even making this out to be a factor, whatever. That was accused of like bias against you know other Asian, you know, students. So, for example, I had a South Asian who joined there, he was from Bangladesh, who had a very bad time there, and there was a Korean student that have joined that group that also had a very, very bad time, and so on. So that that group does exist, but it did seem like it was not like a generalized problem across the department, but it was like a very like that group specific and there was famously you know, a couple of people. Like there was one faculty that was like that I’ve been told this was sort of overtly racist. He made like weird comments about like you know the Asian food habits and yada, yada. Typical nine yards like you know, in terms of what you would expect. And then there was this famously this the staff who was in charge of like ordering you know chemicals, and you know was processing, you know, data that was for the students. She everybody knew this that she was like you know, particularly prejudiced against you know you know East Asians, to be specific, and you know not I mean non-South Asians and East Asian woman, be very specific. So, and you know she I’ve seen all these things like firsthand. Her name was (name). She's gone now, thank God. You know, and I have seen her just like beret a lot of you know, the more quiet and the more like sort of you know not super confident you know Asian students that also happened to be female. So yeah there, there are there are instances that are, I think you know… There's like an overlap, but I think it's not just a citizenship thing I think there's definitely a racial component to it.

Allison S: Yeah that's very interesting wow. So in this study I’m particularly interested in how people feel and express their emotions and this could be during your program or it could be at work now. So, first of all, what kind of person, are you emotionally, are you like a very emotional person, do you wear your emotions on your sleeve, or are you more reserved and private about what you're feeling?

Participant 15: Um yeah so I’m what I would categorize as dead inside. That’s not true (laughs) and I like to think of myself as a very stoic so in the sense that I mean, of course, I feel emotions, but I typically not display it that's part of my upbringing, you know you can have a conversation about like masculinity there but that's like detracting. You know and I’m not going to claim that it's healthy, but you know, usually if I do feel you know something about like you know something really bad happened with like a lot of the examples that I gave you in grad school. I typically don't express it to people at these around me, but I do like express it to other people. Typically, you know that I know for factors our allies, and so on, and my good friends and whatnot, and part of the reason why I did that was actually like you know, during the first couple of years, I had a couple of friends or colleagues, not friends colleagues. That I had experienced this I found the sort of like the pattern that I found which is like you know clearly my advisor wasn't you know, creating international students, the same way. And I had brought this up to a couple of people, and whenever I talked to an international student, they would understand it or even the person of color that doesn't have to be international if the person of color. They would understand it, they would you know they would acknowledge it, and they would think that it's real. However, if I brought it up to like a white student, they would oftentimes they would simply say “Oh, you know I don't think it's like racially motivated. It's like you know it's probably just a you know, it just happens to be like that,” and then he had he just happens to like this particular individual, and you know it almost every time I have bring it up it's you know, they would refuse to believe that this is a systemic issue, but rather it's just a you know, like individual like a bad apple like you know the that's usually the argument that I get. And so the first couple of years I kind of believe that. Then after a while I saw that this was you know, just nonsense and you know the numbers were piling on, and I am a scientist, so I understand like statistics at this point. Like even if it's anecdotes if it happens to like 10 people. Yeah like you know it's not no longer an anecdote right. Um so um yeah like you know I’m mostly stoic mostly not expressive blood. You know, when I did express it to my friends or people that I thought as friends, they were obviously not very supportive, and you know they were trying to diminish it and so on. So it did for me. My current cohort honestly, you know, I have no complaints, because I think, presumably because of the diversity and so on. You know, of course, there's like some conflicts here and there, like just day-to-day stuff that I don't think it's super relevant, but um you know overwhelmingly whenever I had issues they were very receptive to it and I don't have any complaints.

Allison S: Sure, um can you think of any times when you felt particularly emotional at work or in your program?

Participant 15: Sure, couple of instances like well first thing I think, though, I believe the story about my homesickness. I felt very, very discouraged like you know I didn't and I, at that time it was also like particularly difficult time for us as a family, like you know financially, you know terribly. You know, we were doing very terribly and then you know I also have to support my family at the time, and you know, the only thing that I wanted to do is just go home. Like you know it's as simple as that and to be told effectively no was like very, very traumatic and in a way.

And then second one, I will say. I mean there are, like other stories about valuations, but I think there was one time where my research project was effectively scooped. Like you know someone else published on the exact same project that I was working on and it's a project that I worked on for two years. And then you know I felt extremely dejected it was very down, and it was me and Helen who happened to be another. Like international student that was working on that project, and you know, so we kind of supported each other, and I was like mostly trying to be stoic at that time. I had like express this to my advisory I’d like send them send them an email and said, you know hey like this happen. And then he, like did not even respond, he did not even acknowledge it and then why they brought it up in a meeting like to his face is like yeah you know these kinds of things happen just move on right. And then, of course, like you know if this had happened in a vacuum, I wouldn't have thought about it, I wouldn't have like you know process this as much. But sure enough, and it happened to some of the other domestic students who would like sit down with them and, like you know talk to them for 15 minutes, saying that “oh, you know this is totally fine it just means that you know you were working on an exciting area blah blah blah,” and you know so he was capable of being graded wiser just not to the international students for some odd reason right. Yeah, so I will say that's like one instance that pops to my mind, that was like particularly like I felt terrible for a while, after that happened.

Allison S: Sure. Did you feel like it was not allowed that you were like you were not allowed to express your you know negative emotions at the time or did you just call it out of kind of a good personal tendency?

Participant 15: I don't think it was not allowed. I will give my advisor credit and that he was open to criticism. He wasn't receptive to it, but it was opened up. And I didn't bring it off with him, I mean I didn't directly confront him in column like you know insensitive and whatnot, but I did kind of like you know hint at this to like other students and so on, and there's been like other conflicts. You know, and I, of course, had made some mistakes myself and so on and so forth, so I think I was never… I didn't feel like restricted from expressing myself. But it kind of like something that you do on your own because you know you don't have a whole lot of support system. You don't you kind of like guests like yourself into thinking that you're in default when you're the minority, and I didn't want to make a huge fuss about it, and I’m not a sort of dramatic person in general. So I think it's more of a I felt I had to be restricted myself because of that, but I did express this sort of like you know this pattern to like multiple students, you know within my own lab and so on different levels, yes.

Allison S: What about with other people that you were you know friends with in your cohort, or in your program? Did they express their emotions pretty freely or ever seem really emotional during the program, or did they like bent to you about different things that had happened?

Participant 15: Yeah, for sure for sure. Yeah yeah about like general grad school, you know issues in general, but you know it was like kind of behind the behind the scenes like without like you know the faculty knowing and whatnot. But you know we used to like meet evening Friday evening so just like you know much about our advisors pardon my French, and you know so yeah so we were pretty open about it and so long. And you know just a tangent to that like you know, to their credit, like the department did open up like a little bit of their… They did open up a bit of an extra bit of like communication, so we had like this sort of the generations racing social justice. Like ball and surveys, where you know, like students basically expressed how they felt and the program and the leadership and so on, and I will say that they have been a little bit more receptive overall after they just kept complaining about it, you know but yeah yeah like I think within the within the cohort, within the sort of you know, within my colleagues, I think you know we did have a lot of conversations like this.

Allison S: Sure. Tell me a little bit about teaching. How has that experience been for you with the BIO 200 course, and have you taught that multiple times at this point or?

Participant 15: No yeah this was my first semester teaching it. it was it was a great experience um you know I had a co-instructor, and you know she was she was very helpful of these for the role that you play, and this class was relatively small, it will only had like eight students and you know I’m behind a TA, and it was very diverse like behind that are you know, a couple of African American, you know, students. We had a Latinx student. They also had you know I think you know Asian students for the most part, like the left of them. I had a very, very good experience, you know, in terms of like you know I pursued a lot of creative you know sort of techniques of teaching like some pedagogical skills that I had learned over time. I will like… I didn't fully succeed and incorporating some of the big things that I had in mind, but I did you know, managed to you know get a lot of like sort of the history and significance of like you know a lot of the biological concepts that they learn, and I think that the students did pretty well.

Allison S: What were some of the other DEI initiatives that you were you were hoping to bring in?

Participant 15: Yeah, I mean, one of the things that I really wanted to do, which I failed at and it's like completely on me is you know the sort of like you know, for example, right like you know the there's a cell type that was kind of like you know that came into existence I don't know if you're familiar with the GILA cells, we can handle Henrietta Lab you must have heard the story. And these are the kind of stuff that you know I wanted to give like historical context to the people that had suffered so that research and science can live on like you know Tuskegee experiments and some of the things.

I did incorporate sort of like racial sort of the difference with racial differences in terms of like stress and like you know coronavirus you know, sensitivity malaria, sickle cell anemia, and everything that kind of disproportionately affects African American population than the others, and so on. So I didn't have like thwartsides of that, but it was not as overt or, as you know. How do you play like as important it didn't play a significant enough part, not for the lack of trying. It's just you know it just ended up that way because you know, I was I had very little time you know balancing research and you know teaching, and unfortunately, you know there were some stuff that was cut and this happened to be one of them.

Allison S: Sure. Yeah, do you feel like your class would have been different if the students had been less diverse?

Participant 15: I don't think so. I would like to not think so, so I don't know if I have to be um. Yeah I personally don't think so. I will…This might not be answering your question so sorry if I’m going on a tangent, but I will say I had a you know really good experience, where like you know, like I think the diversity really helped a little bit of our class engagement, where you know when I brought up like you know, malaria and how you know. Like the difference between sickle cell anemia where well you know African American population tends to be more sort of acceptable to it. The engagement primarily came from the two African American students in the class, and they had like emailed me. They had like asked me what the genetic origin of, that is, with our pockets, that you know stress related or it's thinking of something that has happened to over thousands of years and the evolution of the genes and so on. So there are aspects of it which kind of improve engagement in class, however, in terms of what I would have thought I would like to think that the answer would be no I don't think I made it a different.

Allison S: Cool yeah. Um has anything changed or been different with your work setup because of the pandemic?

Participant 15: Yeah for sure. Um no I mean this is probably going to be a boring answer because I’m really an experiment list so we've never had like a proper shut down so we were like essential faculty we are working on viruses and you know do it do it anyway. But I think in terms of like an overall sort of good news, in my opinion, is I’m not a morning person and I’d always wanted to work in the afternoons. And you know the go with pandemic kind of helped or it can have I give me a good excuse to become an afternoon person, where we had to do the sort of like scheduled work shifts and I just elected for working in the evenings and you know that was very helpful in a in a very positive light. However, in terms of just like the negative lights, I think the idea of like not really communicating with my colleagues about just like. Random research ideas that will probably never get done and just like chatting with people about like you know how their life is over their experiments are and just like troubleshooting.

Those are the kind of stuff that I really like as I borrow from academia, you know academic setting but I didn't really miss that like negatively impacted. Our situation and, like, of course, meetings you know, obviously we were doing this over zoom so zoom meetings. Keeping people engaged either presenting or like asking questions to people presenting is always a big challenge over zoom so yeah so that would be a negative effect, I would say.

Allison S: It's where it's where I’m in the last couple of years kind of in tandem with covet there has been an increase in violence against Asian American. Or the API community, at least in the news it's been more highlighted is that something that you've been aware of and has it affected you at all.

Participant 15: For sure. I mean I don't want to relate to the sort of East Asian or discrimination that is more specific to East Asian purely because of like you know covid and the origin, so one. I do have (something). My girlfriend is Chinese, so I do hear, you know it affected her a lot more personally than like you know anything like that, so a couple of the SPA shootings she you know she kind of software solve being at one of the spas, just like you know, and so on. And also like I had experienced some racial discrimination in the past, at this one story about like I was working in like I mean I mean all worked through racial discrimination where I could like gone to Tennessee like for a research project and I’ve done the experiment and we had like gone to I had gone to a barbecue restaurant, where I was the only person of color and, like the overall vicinity there's this random dude that comes by yells a slur at me, you know pretty obviously racially motivated I don't want to spell out the word slurry use but you know, he did so I do, I have a lot of sympathy and a lot of like you know. I don't want to you know steal that sort of like spotlight away from like the people that actually face active discrimination as a result of the pandemic, but I can empathize with the people that feel unsafe in this sort of situation because I had experienced it myself.

Allison S: Sure, has anything been different around that topic in your workplace that you've noticed or not at all?

Participant 15: Good question I’m not with my direct colleagues, I will say, because I think you know overwhelming. I don't want to say overwhelming but, like the majority plurality of my group is Chinese and a station in origin right. So I think they kind of talk about like you know this sort of rhetoric that was thrown out there, initially during. You know the trump you know era before he was ousted and whatnot so that that was like a mostly like supportive some conversations that you've had in terms of how an acceptable, that is. However, there are a couple of instances and weirdly enough, this is like so this, I have a not a colleague, but like he works in the same floor, so we do like see him see this person in the common break room area and nearly enough if this is a Vietnamese American who happens to be very prejudiced against Chinese Americans and Chinese people in general, so which. it's not that we're thinking about it, but you know it, you would think that someone with the same these overall racial identity would have a little bit more empathy. In this context, but it clearly isn't the case and I’ve heard several hateful things, and you know what people kind of excuse us jokes I think are a lot more problematic it's just not just like you know locker room talk. Quote unquote I think it was like very harmful rhetoric, given that what people are going through, and you know it's like one of those situations where I didn't want to escalate it, not because I was restricted or anything but at the same time, it was you know not my place to escalate and I just tried to check this person I tried to explain to this person why what he says wrong, and you know, and my rest of my colleagues as well and. To what extent did work, I am not familiar.

Allison S: What sorts of things was this colleague saying?

Participant 15: Well, I mean at first kind of started the, you know as joke like you know we, I have a Taiwanese colleague who, just like sneeze because he had allergies and so on. You know, and he will call out to say Oh, you know he's like importing code from China typical stuff. And then it got a little bit more like you know, so there were like sort of heated political conversations about you know oh it's like you know you know he thought at some point that you know. It was like a concerted effort by the government to kind of like you know so on so difficult conspiracy theory cases and so on, and you know we would kind of have this sort of like serious discussion and serious arguments about the origins of this. And because we were scientists, we would you know kind of talk about the science itself but usually it'll kind of just devolve into like Oh, you know you can keep your own beliefs, I believe that this is what happened and it would just like you know not resolve itself so stuff like that it's I find it to be very, very problematic the rhetoric to be very problematic.

Allison S: And, have you ever ended up feeling like emotionally exhausted or experienced burnout emotional burnout etc like at your job?

Participant 15: Yes, um. I don't know if it's like has anything to do with me being Asian or like it if it's related to study itself but that's. Okay yeah overall and emotional burnout. Sure, I mean, I would say, like this print semester was pretty rough because you know, so we had a paper to wrap up, and I also have just like landed from India, because my parents were sick. So I had to let go go home to just make sure that they're doing Okay, and so on, so you know I had this sort of multiple lines piling up like I had to grade my students, I had to like do this. And, and so on, so yeah it was just like very overwhelming the spring semester, and so yeah, I have experienced burnout and you know, then definitely.

Allison S: Have you done anything like coping strategies wise to sort of manage that that burnout or stress?

Participant 15: Apart from video games, no. aliens work yeah they work um I mean, I have a good decent enough like support system like you know my girlfriend but you know we've been together for a while and you know. She does a pretty good we do a pretty good job of the pain of keeping each other, saying she's also in a PhD program, so I think she kind of you know empathizes with a lot. And you know we, I do have a decent amount of friends and family, friends around the city of that I’ve made over the years, so. In terms of that yes, I think I you know I have been able to cope, I used to do a lot of therapy that I don't do anymore, not for now they feel inhibited it's just that I’ve been lazy but the by, I am aware that the option exists yeah.

Allison S: Sure yeah yeah um well, those are most of the questions that I have is there anything else about work or your jobs or your program experiences that we haven't discussed that you would want to discuss?

Participant 15: Nothing that I can think of. they'll do one thing that I would add, and I think you know kind of goes back into our email conversation is like you know. I wish there was a little bit more harmony between like the Asian and the Asian American Community. Because you know oftentimes I have been to like several the sort of like you know Indian community and Indian American. run organizations and looking up, so there was this particular workshop slash conference that I went to. And where you know, I was told I was promised in the flyer that we will talk about like your shoes facing Indians in America, and then you go there and then the entire conversation was like issues facing Indian Americans, to be specific, it almost feels like you know the head around be like I don't know how to make it sound without sounding disparaging to a particular community but it's more so that it's it feels like the louder of the people the louder minority had like a bigger saying what was being said. You know, on stage and the issues that were covered than the rest of them. And I don't blame them at all, I think, obviously you tend to talk about the stuff that bothers you, and if the leadership is entirely of people that belong to the Indian American Community of course it's going to it's going to bias that way, so I understand where they're coming from, but I just wish there was more harmony in that regard. You know I have you know and part of the reason why I asked you, if I was eligible this because I had been to circle focus groups where I would like you know talk to some people, and there will be like oh you don't technically qualified, because we are really talking about you know Asian Americans here are citizens here, and so on. I just wish you know, there was a little bit more harmony and like a little bit more representation of both sides, you know sides in this discussion, because we have a lot of overlapping issues and yeah I mean that's that's kind of all day share. I can think of anything else I’m sorry if I, like you know just went on a tangent I’m.

Allison S: No, the tangent is great and this is what we're here for. What are some of the examples of issues that maybe the Indian American Community would be talking about that didn't necessarily apply to like the Indian community.

Participant 15: Right, I mean Okay, just to clarify I don't I don't think they don't apply and. I’ll tell you one thing like I had gone to this like for our like you know thing, where there were like multiple dogs. were pretty much like the entirety of the talk like we had like six to seven people walk on stage and talk about this was exclusively focused on like you know sort of like micro aggressions and language policing. Just to be clear, I think those issues deserve attention that sort of issues deserve talking about but those are not the only issues that are facing in Americans at this point like you know, so we have integration that is a major problem, the fact that I’m not eligible to have the fellowships that I applied to the fact that I cannot work in if I wanted to shift careers and become like a government policy specialist I guess there's no realistic pathway for me to even do that and, and so on and so forth, so I found that to be very frustrating and, and this is again me being a little bit salty when you know the conversations about like you know the inherited or the sort of like secondhand you know memories of the immigrant experiences of your parents, unfortunately, like you know seems to carry more weight than the first-hand experience of people that face similar issues that their parents face right, like, for instance, like the financial stress tables and like you know it felt like nobody was even focusing on the fact that. You know, immigrants face a lot of financial pressures, they have to send that money they have might have health issues and so on. There was zero talks or zero focus on it, there was zero emphasis on the diversity in within the Asian communities or Asian American Communities like you know oftentimes it's usually the I call it the big three like the Indian Americans or you know South Asian Americans, which is a it's a I’m pulling it up Chinese Americans and Korean Americans it's usually the sort of dominated by three and for the better or worse they're usually represented by the upper middle class, and they don't see a face any financial stresses, for us, you know Filipino Americans and lotion Americans and so on, they face it disproportionately more it was completely brushed over right they know and yeah so it's stuff like that I think it's like it's, not that I don't want descriptions about micro aggressions and workplace, and you know, the fact that your Starbucks employee messed up your name. Those are important conversations to have, but that should not be the only conversations we have.

Allison S: So yeah no that makes perfect sense. Cool well um I have a couple of demographic questions that I am they might have already come up in our conversation but I’m just going to make sure I hit them all. You are located in Atlanta still right okay. And, did you mentioned already, where you were born?

Participant 15: Um did, I don't think so. I was born in Chennai.

Allison S: Okay. Yeah, got it and, what is your age?

Participant 15: I’m 31.

Allison S: And your ethnic background is Indian right. Okay um and then do you have, what are your gender pronouns?

Participant 15: He/ him. Yes, I should have again laziness I need to included.