

National Origin Identity and Descriptive Representativeness: Understanding Preferences for Asian Candidates and Representation

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Abstract

This paper examines how an Asian candidate's national origin background affects their perceived ability to represent different constituents. Would Asian voters prefer any Asian candidate over someone who is non-Asian? Using a series of survey experiments that randomly emphasize the national origin backgrounds of two real politicians and of a hypothetical politician, I find that politicians who are East or Southeast Asian are viewed as more representative of Asian American interests than those who are South Asian. Nonetheless, respondents agree that Asian politicians, regardless of national origin, will represent Asian Americans more than a non-Asian politician. While national origin background matters, there is still potential for an electoral advantage based on shared Asian pan-ethnicity. These results contribute to our understanding of the salience of pan-ethnic identities in electoral contexts.

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Introduction

Asians in the United States trace their ancestry to over twenty countries of origin, according to the 2010 US Census (Hoeffel et al. 2012). With such variation undergirding a pan ethnic label, what does it mean for Asian voters and constituents to be represented by an Asian politician? As a recent example, Kamala Harris made history as the first Black and Asian woman to be nominated and elected for Vice President in 2020. Notable during Harris's campaign was the news media coverage and public discourse around her candidacy. Harris, whose father is Jamaican and mother is Indian, was frequently described as the "first person of Indian descent" or the "first Asian American" to be nominated and elected (Burns and Glueck 2020; Honderirch and Dissanayake 2020). The presumed interchangeability between Harris's Indian identity and her Asian identity highlights a recurring debate about descriptive representation of Asians in the United States and whether Asians can be treated as a monolithic group. Does being Asian actually confer a candidate the perception that they can represent Asian American interests?

Research on descriptive representation suggests that voters tend to prefer political candidates with whom they share a racial identity (e.g., Bobo and Gilliam 1990). However, much of this work relies on intuition drawn from studies on Black or Latinx political behavior, or, if discussing Asian representation, overlooks heterogeneity within the pan-Asian community. While scholars of Asian American politics have long argued the importance of within-group variation, much of the empirical approaches have typically been constrained by limited data sources. More recent studies have taken advantage of more detailed data sources to show the importance of differentiating results by national origin ancestry when studying Asian voters. In line with recent work, I argue that the extent to which an Asian national origin identity is perceived as Asian will have consequences for how descriptive representation functions for

Asian voters. I use a series of surveys and survey experiments to first measure the perceived Asian-ness of various national origin groups and politicians and then to identify the effect of differences in politician national origin identity on electoral advantage among Asian voters.¹

From these data, I present three main results. First, Asian survey respondents perceive East Asian national subgroups to be “more Asian” than South or Southeast Asian subgroups. Second, national origin background matters. Politicians who are East Asian or Southeast Asian are viewed as more representative of Asian American interests than those who are South Asian. Finally, Asian respondents agree that any Asian politician, regardless of national origin, will represent Asian Americans more than a non-Asian politician, suggesting that while national origin background matters, there is still potential for an electoral advantage based on shared pan-ethnicity for Asian candidates. Together these results underscore the importance of differences in national origin identity organizing Asian individuals under a collective pan-Asian label. Whether expectations from traditional accounts of descriptive representativeness hold for Asian politician is likely conditional to some degree on the country to which they trace their Asian ancestry.

This paper contributes to the burgeoning literature on Asian American politics that measures the consequences of national origin heterogeneity in two ways. The first is novel data collection on attitudes of Asian respondents about the boundaries of Asian-ness, measuring the extent to which different national origin groups are considered more or less Asian. Much of the

¹ This study was pre-registered with Open Science Framework. This research was approved by the Yale University Institutional Review Board (#2000026097). REPLICATION DATA AND DOCUMENTATION will be available within 12 months of publication at <https://isps.yale.edu/research/data/deposit/yad>.

research on Asian identity has focused on measuring how individuals think about their Asian identity among their other identities. Few studies have explicitly asked people about their perceptions of Asian-ness of certain groups or politicians. Second, I specifically identify whether differences in a candidate's national origin background affects their perceived ability to represent Asian Americans through two survey experiments. Crucial to understanding the effectiveness of mobilization efforts by and electoral performance of Asian candidates, identifying these effects gives greater insight into understanding how Asian pan-ethnicity functions as a means of politically uniting a population of individuals whose ties to the Asian identity vary to a great degree.

Background

Prior work on descriptive representation supports the idea that voters will generally prefer a politician or candidate with whom they share a racial or ethnic identity (Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Leighley 2001). Beyond positive affect, sharing a racial identity can increase engagement and turnout via instrumental mechanisms, such as increasing the likelihood that voters will seek out information about a candidate who is part of their racial group (Banducci et al 2004; Broockman and Ryan 2016), increasing the perceived valence of a co-racial representative (Stout 2018), or increasing responsiveness of a representative to co-racial constituents (Butler and Broockman 2011; Broockman 2013). Additionally, expectations of shared policy positions of co-racial candidates can affect turnout (Griffin and Keane 2006).

These theories are underscored by the larger concepts of linked fate and group consciousness, in which individuals with shared racial background organize around group welfare and policies that promote the interests of the group (McClain et al 2009; Smith 2014).

For example, McConnaughy et al. (2010) show that while Latinos prefer Latino candidates, this is true only among those who score high in linked fate. In the Asian American context, Junn and Masuoka (2008) use a survey experiment design and find that when respondents are shown an image of an Asian American candidate, they express greater levels of linked fate with other Asian Americans and greater importance of both their Asian and national origin identities. Schildkraut (2013) finds Asian respondents who more strongly with their Asian or national origin identities are also more likely to prefer an Asian candidate to a non-Asian candidate.

Beyond pan-ethnicity, a particularly important factor is national origin background. In a specific case, Uhlaner and Le (2017) find evidence of co-ethnic mobilization among Vietnamese individuals for Vietnamese candidates. In a more comprehensive study, Sadhwani (2020) finds that co-ethnic mobilization occurs specifically among Indian and Japanese Americans, as well as Filipino and Korean Americans depending on the relative populations of those communities within the district. Additionally, Sadhwani (2021) finds that, while Asian voters are more likely to vote for an Asian candidate running against a non-Asian candidate, they are more likely to vote for a candidate with shared national origin background in a race with two Asian candidates (see also Leung 2021). However, these patterns may be a function of being more likely to be contacted by a campaign due to mobilization efforts. For example, Kim (2015) uses survey data to show that mobilization efforts by Asian candidates are more likely in areas with greater proportions of Asian individuals.

What these studies highlight is the problematic nature of relying on a pan-ethnic label born out of a process of racial classification for the census. While the question of, to whom the “Asian American” or “Asian” labels apply is one that arises out of external forces (i.e., by non-Asian groups and institutions, who may rely on heuristics to determine who counts as Asian),

there are important intuitions to be understood in how it is internally conceived (e.g., do individuals who fall under the label actually think of themselves as Asian). This likely has consequences for mobilization efforts attempting to promote political engagement among Asian individuals. It also suggests that candidates may need to use campaign strategies that do not rely on shared pan-ethnicity to recruit Asian votes (Espiritu 1992). If ascribed group members do not consider themselves to be part of the larger group, then we would expect considerations around whether an ascribed descriptive candidate can represent the individual to be moot, as far as the individual is concerned.

Accordingly, there are several reasons why the Asian pan-ethnicity may be insufficient to politically unite individuals who fall under the label. Lee and Ramakrishnan (2019) examine relative perceptions of Asian-ness of different national origin groups. Using the 2016 National Asian American Survey (NAAS), the authors test whether the racial identification (whether someone identifies as Asian) corresponds with people's understanding of the label (whether they perceive someone to be Asian). East Asians are most likely to "count" or be perceived as Asian by Asian respondents, while South Asians are less likely to be perceived by others as Asian. Rich qualitative accounts of the historical consequences of different immigration histories provide insight to these observed patterns. For example, Ocampo (2014) uses evidence from personal narratives of Filipinos in the US to highlight the myriad ways in which legacies of Spanish and US colonialism and class differences encourage them to stand apart from the more general Asian identity. Moreover, these differences in factors such as phenotype, religion, and culture may serve to further emphasize the line between who is racialized as Asian. Park (2008) finds evidence of Asian prototypicality, in which "Asian" is more frequently associated with East Asian backgrounds, rather than Southeast or South Asian backgrounds.

While political organizing is very much a part of Asian American history – the term “Asian American” can be traced back to the 1960s when it was first used to organize the interests of students and activists of Asian descent, alongside the civil rights movement (Espiritu 1992) – there is less clarity about how differences in national origin background affects Asian political preferences and attitudes. Sharing a racialized identity with a candidate may be less important for Asian voters if their idea of Asian identity primarily focuses on East Asian identity. In this case, it may be that other candidate characteristics are more relevant in driving voter preference. Framed differently, much research in this area has subsequently focused on understanding the conditions in which a pan-Asian identity develops – both at an individual-level (Sears et al. 2003; Deaux 2006; Okamoto 2006; Wong et al. 2011) and at a group-level (Okamoto 2014; Kim 2020) - and less so on the consequences of the subgroup differences within the pan-Asian identity.

If pan-Asian identity is a salient political identity for Asians in the US, a realization of this would be seen in whether an Asian candidate or politician can be perceived to represent the interests of Asian Americans, either of the group or of an individual. I follow prior studies that use descriptions of Asian candidates in experimental designs to answer this question (e.g., Clayton et al. 2020). In particular, rather than just measuring candidate choice, I measure individual’s perceptions of candidates based on their national origin backgrounds. In this way, the paper delves deeper into a possible mechanism for vote choice. In Study 1 of the project, I use descriptions of real Asian politicians to identify how different identity-based primes affect perceptions of and attitudes towards them. In Study 2 of the project, I refine the experimental design by randomizing a hypothetical candidate’s national origin background to identify the effect of national origin identity on perceived Asian representativeness.

Study 1: The Cases of Kamala Harris and Tammy Duckworth

Study 1 is designed with two aims. The first is to measure perceptions of “Asian-ness” of different Asian national origin groups among Asian survey respondents. Measuring perceptions of the relative Asian-ness of different groups provides insights about how group identity is perceived internally by group members themselves. Survey respondents are asked to rate how representative they perceive different national origin groups to be of Asians as a whole (exact question wording in Supplementary Material A). The list includes the fifteen most populous Asian subgroups in the US, as well as four groups that are not traditionally thought of as Asian to establish the base rates for responses to this question.

The second aim of Study 1 is to provide a motivating example in understanding the role of national origin background, particularly with some relevance to contemporary American politics. I draw on the profiles of two real politicians – current Vice President Kamala Harris and Illinois Senator Tammy Duckworth – to understand attitudes towards politicians with Asian backgrounds. These profiles are used experimentally to estimate changes in the attitudes of Asian respondents in whether they feel more represented when the politician’s Asian background is randomly primed.

The outcomes for the experimental component of Study 1 are comprised of: 1) a measure of perceived Asian-ness of either Harris or Duckworth (depending on treatment), 2) a measure respondent’s favorability towards the politician, and 3) measures of perceptions of a politician’s representativeness of different groups. For the third outcome, respondents are asked how representative the politician is of Asian Americans, Black Americans, the respondent themselves, and of the respondent’s community. Both sets of variables are measured on a five-point scale which is scaled linearly between 0 and 1 for analysis.

The main treatment is a brief vignette describing Harris’s nomination and Duckworth’s potential candidacy for Vice President in the 2020 election.² These vignettes are randomized to emphasize different parts of a given politician’s racial identity. For Harris, the treatment conditions highlight either her: 1) Asian identity, 2) Indian identity, 3) Asian and Black identities, 4) Black identity, or 5) do not highlight her racial identity. Respondents in the *Indian Prime*, for example, will see text that emphasizes her Indian background, without additionally describing her as Asian. For Duckworth, the treatment conditions either 1) highlight her Asian and Thai background or 2) do not highlight her racial background. Full wording of each treatment is provided in Supplementary Material A.

Of primary interest for this study is whether Asian respondents will respond differently to the two politicians when the politicians’ Asian backgrounds are primed. For a given politician, we should expect them to be viewed more favorably or perceived to better represent Asian community when their Asian backgrounds are emphasized relative to when respondents are not primed. This effect could be due to respondents not knowing that the politician was Asian making new inferences about the politician. Similarly, even if respondents are already familiar with a politician’s racial background, by virtue of receiving an additional prime, differences between respondents in the treatment conditions and respondents in the control condition would suggest that the emphasis on Asian identity is effecting some change in respondents’ attitudes

² While Duckworth was not actually nominated for Vice President alongside Joe Biden, news outlets considered her a contender in the early days of the election cycle (e.g., <https://www.npr.org/2020/07/21/892585038/tammy-duckworths-stock-rises-as-a-possible-vp-choice-after-a-high-profile-few-we>).

and beliefs. In line with the prior discussion about variation in perceived Asian-ness, we may expect there to be differences in how Harris and Duckworth's perceived Asian-ness change, given that Harris is South Asian and Duckworth is Southeast Asian.

Harris and Duckworth were chosen as motivating examples for several reasons. Both are female politicians of Asian background currently in office, who have made notable achievements over the course of their political careers. Kamala Harris, who is Indian, has a prominent place in current political discourse as the first Asian American Vice President. Her racial identity was extensively discussed during her campaign. While she is perhaps most noted for being the first Black vice president, her Asian American background was frequently cited as well.³ She has been described in news media as contributing to the increase in Asian turnout in the 2020 election.⁴ Tammy Duckworth, who is Thai Chinese, is arguably less well-known than Harris, though no less notable in her achievements. Duckworth is a decorated Army veteran and is frequently noted as one of few Asian Americans to serve in Congress. Using Harris and Duckworth as examples accounts for some variation from comparing candidates of different genders or political experience.

While Harris and Duckworth differ on several dimensions, which complicates the interpretation of a difference between treatment effects, the choice is not without empirical and inferential merit. Using the profiles of real-life politicians provides some external validity and

³ For examples, see <https://time.com/5908579/kamala-harris-historic-vice-president/> and <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-55738741>.

⁴ E.g., <https://www.latimes.com/politics/story/2021-05-19/harris-asian-americans-democrats-voters>

relevance. As noted above, the racial background of political candidates is often discussed in campaign coverage, particularly when the candidate will be the first elected official from a given group. Understanding how individuals react to emphasized placed on a candidate's racial identity lends insights to how similar framings can be used in a campaign context. Randomization ensures that, at minimum, the estimated effect for a given politician is a consequence of the identity prime, rather than prior familiarity with that politician. Interpreting potential differences in treatment effects between Harris and Duckworth is less straightforward, but at minimum, can be understood as the difference in effectiveness of the politician-relevant identity primes.⁵ In this way, differences in treatment effects across politicians broadly encompass differences between the two politicians themselves, including their Asian national origin identity.

Data collection occurred in two parts. An initial survey containing only the five treatment conditions specific to Kamala Harris was fielded in late October 2020 on Turk Prime and Prolific, with a total sample size of 546 and restricted to Asian respondents. A second version of the survey, which included the five Harris treatments as well as the two Duckworth treatments, was run in late January 2021. Pre-treatment items focusing on participant attentiveness were added to this survey. Respondents were similarly recruited between the two platforms, with 480 Asian-identifying respondents from Prolific. Responses from both runs of the surveys are pooled in the final analysis for a total sample size of 1,026 Asian respondents. Descriptive statistics on the survey samples are provided in Supplementary Material, Table C1. Additionally, given the

⁵ Thus, while we cannot explicitly attribute differences between politicians solely to differences in national origin, we can attribute it to differences in how effective an identity prime is for a politician.

difference in timing and additional pre-treatment items in the second survey, there are potential concerns about comparability of responses between the two samples. Supplementary Material A provides a discussion and analysis that acknowledges addresses these concerns.

Results

I first ask whether and to what extent there is variation in how Asian different groups are perceived to be. Figure 1 plots the mean responses to the Asian-ness question for national origin subgroups in decreasing order based on average ranking. The responses are limited to individuals who are in either the control condition for the Harris treatments or the control condition for the Duckworth treatments. We see that there is indeed variation in how individuals perceive different national origin groups. Among respondents, East Asian groups (Chinese, Korean, and Japanese) are perceived to be significantly more Asian than other subgroups. Southeast Asian groups are ranked higher than South Asian groups, though the differences between some Southeast Asian groups (Indonesian, Laotian, Cambodian, and Hmong) are not significantly different from most of the South Asian groups. Additionally, Supplementary Material, Figure B1 considers the respondent's own background. Respondents tend to rate their own group as relatively more Asian than non-group members, though the differences are not different in most cases. Notably, South Asian respondents give significantly higher ratings for their own groups than other Asian respondents, speaking to the marginalization of South Asians within the pan-Asian label.

[Figure 1 Here]

The next set of results considers whether these differences in perceived Asian-ness of different groups is also observed in the context of political representation. In the following, I use OLS with robust standard errors and regress each outcome variable on indicator variables for the treatment condition. Because the treatment conditions are randomized and no additional covariates are entered, the marginal effects estimated from these models will be equivalent to a difference-in-means estimate between each individual condition and the control (Gerber and Green 2013).

Figure 2 presents the first set of outcomes related to attitudes towards Kamala Harris (panels a and b) and Tammy Duckworth (panels c and d), plotting the marginal effects with 95% confidence intervals for the perceived Asian-ness and favorability outcomes.⁶ Estimates in Panel (a) suggest that the identity primes in the treatment conditions did in fact increase Harris's perceived Asian-ness. Respondents who saw a vignette emphasizing some part of Harris's Asian background reported a significantly higher rating of Harris's Asian-ness relative to those who did not receive a racial prime. Respondents who were in the Black treatment condition did not perceive Harris to be any more Asian than those in control, implying that merely being primed to think about Harris's identity did not change responses to perceptions around her Asian identity.

[Figure 2 Here]

⁶ The control points are plotted for reference and to reflect the independent variables that were entered into the regression model.

Panel (b) of Figure 2 similarly plots the treatment effects for respondents' favorability towards Harris. Despite increasing her perceived Asian-ness, Asian respondents do not feel any more favorable to Kamala Harris than those in control. While both Harris and Duckworth are perceived to be significantly more Asian by respondents in the relevant treatment conditions relative to control, the actual difference is much larger between the Harris and Duckworth outcomes (about 0.30 units for Duckworth; the largest effect for Harris is about 0.10 units). Additionally, whereas Harris's favorability did not increase, we see in panel (d) that Duckworth's favorability increases in response to treatment for Asian respondents.

I next consider whether there are changes in a candidate's perceived representativeness of different constituents. Figure 3 presents treatment effect estimates on the four items pertaining to representation, with those for Harris on the top row (a-d) and those for Duckworth on the bottom row (e-h). In the Harris experiment, there are no significant estimates for Asian respondents in response to treatment. This suggests that reminding or informing people that Kamala Harris is Asian does not increase their belief that she can act as a descriptive representative for Asian constituents. However, priming Duckworth's Asian background does seem to have an effect on perceived representation. Notably, respondents are more likely to believe that Duckworth will represent Asian Americans, the (Asian) respondent themselves, and the respondent's community when they are primed to Duckworth's Asian identity.

[Figure 3 Here]

In a supplementary analysis, I estimate treatment effect heterogeneity by region in Supplementary Material, Figure B4. If, as suggested by Figures 1 and Figure B1, East Asians are

perceived to more Asian than other groups and South Asians are more likely to perceive their own groups as more Asian than East Asians perceive them, we might expect this to also explain responses to politicians of varying backgrounds. Notably, we see that while the treatment prime increases Duckworth's perceived Asian-ness, favorability, and perceived representativeness of Asian Americans, we do not see similar patterns for Harris.

To summarize, the differences between Harris and Duckworth treatments suggest that Asian respondents perceive Asian candidates differently. However, given the number of differences between Harris and Duckworth, it is difficult to identify the specific dimension that explains why Duckworth is seen as more representative of Asians than Harris. For example, respondents may have strong enough priors about Harris from a representation standpoint that her co-racial identity does not matter.⁷ Notably, Harris is also half Black, and is likely to be perceived by individuals as Black more so than as Asian. This may attenuate any effect of increasing perceived Asian-ness if respondents' attitudes towards Blackness have any bearing (particularly if they hold anti-Black attitudes; see Lemi et al (2022) who find that respondents are less likely to express support for Harris when her Blackness is highlighted). Conversely, it could be due to the fact that her Indian background, which from Figure 1 we know is perceived to be less Asian than other groups, does not tie her enough to the pan-Asian identity such that she is an appropriate descriptive representative for Asians as a whole. The main advantage of using actual politicians is the external validity provided by the analysis. Nonetheless, this comparison does

⁷ Approximately 49% of the respondents in the Harris-control did not know who Tammy Duckworth was, whereas 0.1% of those in the Duckworth-control did not know who Harris was.

come with disadvantages for inference for several reasons related to differences between politicians, which I will address in a second experiment.

Study 2: Identifying the Effect of Differences in National Origin

Design and Data Collection

Study 2 uses a similar experimental design as in Study 1 but with the profile of a hypothetical mayoral candidate. While Study 1 relied on actual politicians, both of whom are/were members of Congress, the choice to describe the hypothetical politician as a mayor was made primarily to address concerns that individuals evaluate local government representatives differently than those at the federal level (Wolak and Palus, 2010). Even though the vignette is described as hypothetical, respondents may have stronger feelings about a congressperson than they do about a mayor from an unnamed city. Having the candidate be a mayoral also addresses concerns about additional inferences or responses respondents may make when being asked about the scope of the candidate's representativeness. Thus, keeping the hypothetical candidate focuses the question of representativeness on the individual politician herself and minimizes potential spillover from inferences made about her ability to serve as a member of Congress.

Similar to the first experimental vignette, the candidate's racial background in Study 2 varies across five possible treatment conditions. Depending on the treatment assignment, the candidate's background is emphasized and described as being either 1) Chinese, 2) Vietnamese,

3) Indian, or 4) Black. In a fifth condition, which acts as the control, the candidate's racial background is not stated, though their name is chosen to imply that they are white.⁸

The first three treatments emphasize a candidate's Asian background. The fourth condition, in which the candidate is described as being Black, is included as a check to confirm that differences observed between an Asian-identity treatment and control are due to the candidate's Asian background, rather than just being non-white. For example, if the treatment effects for the Black identity prime are similar to the effects for one of the Asian-relevant identity primes, then it would be less clear if respondents are reacting to the candidate's Asian background or to the fact that the candidate is not white. Exact wording for the vignette is provided in Supplementary Material A3.

As in Study 1's experiment, respondents are asked to: 1) rate how Asian they perceive the hypothetical politician to be, 2) how favorable they find her, and 3) how representative she would be of different constituent groups. I test a number of hypotheses, as outlined in Table 1. In particular, and central to this project, is the concept of a pan-ethnic boost. While we may have expectations for whether individuals feel some level of descriptive representation from politicians who share a national origin background, the more telling question is whether Asian respondents feel represented by Asian candidates who do not share a national origin background.

[Table 1 Here]

⁸ A short survey to pre-test the inferred race of the candidate based on the name was run on Turk Prime and suggests that respondents perceived the candidate to be of the racial background intended by the treatments (see Supplementary Material Table C2).

Listed as hypotheses H3a and H3b, the presence of a pan-ethnic boost would be confirmed if respondents perceive a candidate, with whom they do not share either a national origin or regional background, to nonetheless be representative of Asian Americans. This analysis is conducted by dropping respondents who report tracing their ancestry to the country that matches their treatment assignment and comparing them to similar respondents in control. For example, to estimate the effect of the Chinese prime on a pan-ethnic boost, Asian respondents who are not Chinese are coded as “Asian, Not Matching National Origin” (those who are Chinese are dropped from this specific analysis). These respondents are then compared to other non-Chinese Asian respondents in the control condition. Similar analyses are separately conducted for respondents in the Indian prime and Vietnamese prime conditions. Additionally, a similar coding scheme is produced based on regional background. For example, East Asian respondents are coded as “Asians, Matching Region” if they are in the Chinese prime condition, but are coded as “Asians, Not Matching Region” in the Indian and Vietnamese prime conditions.

An alternative way to consider respondent national origin background would be to subset the main analyses to respondents whose national origin background matches that of the candidate. This analysis would estimate the effect of sharing identity along national origin lines but is constrained by sample size of the relevant groups. Nonetheless, I present results from this specification in the Supplementary Material.

Asian respondents were primarily recruited from Lucid Marketplace and Prolific in July 2021 for a total sample size of approximately 2000. Both Lucid Marketplace and Prolific have pre-screen questions to determine eligibility for the survey based on racial identification.

Results

Figure 4 presents coefficients from an OLS regression where each outcome is regressed on indicator variables for a given treatment (with the control condition as reference).⁹ Here we find evidence in support of hypotheses H1, H1a, H2, and H3. Hypotheses H1 and H1a focused on expected changes in attitudes. In panel (a) of Figure 4, we see that the treatment conditions primed the candidate's Asian background in the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Indian conditions (H1). In panel (b), as predicted, we see that the candidate's favorability significantly increased for Asian respondents, relative to both the control condition, as well as the Black prime condition. H2 predicted that the candidate's representativeness of Asian Americans would be greater in the any of the Asian prime conditions relative to control, which is demonstrated in panel (c), comporting with expectations around descriptive representation. While Asian respondents are also more likely to say that an Asian candidate will represent themselves and their community, the extent to which this is the case is lower compared to perceived representation at the group level. This suggests that while there is a general expectation of descriptive representation for the group as a whole, it only weakly translates to representation at the individual or personal level. Finally, we find some evidence that national origin background matters. In panel (a), the candidate is perceived to be less Asian when she is Indian relative to when she is either Chinese or Vietnamese. This difference seems to have some spillover on perceived representation in panel (c), where the Indian candidate is also perceived to be less representative of Asian Americans than a Chinese or Vietnamese candidate. There are no significant differences between the Chinese and Vietnamese profiles on these measures.

[Figure 4 Here]

⁹ The main analyses are conducted without weighting.

In a supplementary specification, I consider the role of respondent partisanship. Given that the candidate's Democratic partisanship is fixed, it is possible that respondents' own party identification affects how they respond to the vignette. Supplementary Material Table C10 presents estimates from a model where respondent partisanship and treatment condition are interacted. We see that while there are intercept differences between Republicans and Democrats, the patterns between treatment conditions are broadly similar to those in the uninteracted model.

Finally, I consider the role of a respondent's own national origin identity. To investigate whether the lack of personal descriptive representation persists once we account for differences in national origin background, I turn to Figure 5, which provides evidence for the hypotheses questioning political saliency of an Asian pan-ethnic identity (H3a and H3b). For these regression, I compare a specific treatment condition (either Chinese prime, Indian prime, or Vietnamese prime) to the control condition and drop respondents whose national origin background (or regional background, for the relevant specification) matches that of the candidate. Importantly, respondents are dropped from both the treatment responses and from control responses, in order to make the comparison comparable between the two groups. Thus, unlike previous figures, each panel in Figure 5 reports regression estimates from six different regression specifications. For example, in panel (a), the solid circle for the Chinese prime condition is the treatment effect of seeing a Chinese candidate relative to seeing a (presumed) white candidate among respondents who are not Chinese.

[Figure 5 Here]

By and large, the main effects from previous figure remain in these specifications, suggesting that while there is variation within Asian subgroups, there is nonetheless some saliency of a pan-Asian identity. In panel (c), we see evidence of a pan-ethnic boost across all treatments relative to Asian respondents in control, with the estimates for the Indian prime condition being lower – Asian respondents who do not share a national origin background with an Asian candidate nonetheless perceive the candidate to still be able to represent Asian Americans. However, these perceptions again do not translate directly to perceptions about personal or community-level representation, as show in panels (e) and (f). Similar results are seen based on regionality – Asian respondents who do not match the candidate based on regionality nonetheless perceive them to be representative of Asian Americans (panel c). Together, Figure 4 and Figure 5 suggest that while there are indeed differences in perceptions of a candidate based on their national origin background, there is nonetheless political saliency of a pan-ethnic Asian identity.

Supplementary Material Tables C7, C8, and C9 provide supplementary results where the analyses are subset to respondents whose national origin background matches the candidate's. These estimates broadly show that respondents tend to prefer candidates with whom they share a national origin background.

Discussion

This project aims to understand whether differences in national origin are a barrier to an Asian candidate's ability to mobilize Asian individuals in the United States. The question of whether a pan-Asian label can be politically unifying, in the way scholars posit is true for other racial groups, is complicated by the historical development of the label itself and the heterogeneity in

national origin countries it is intended to cover. Indeed, recent research on Asian turnout has suggested that theories of descriptive representation seem to find less footing in explaining Asian voter preferences. This project measures the variation in perceived Asian-ness of different Asian national origin groups and identifies the effect of increasing a politician's perceived Asian-ness on their perceived ability to represent the Asian community. Data collected from a series of survey experiments suggest that: 1) East Asians are perceived as more Asian than South and Southeast Asians, 2) East and Southeast Asians politicians are perceived to be more representative of Asian Americans than South Asian politicians, but 3) Asian politicians are nevertheless viewed as more representative of Asian American interests than non-Asian politicians, even by Asians who do not share a national origin identity. Thus, while differences in national origin identity present variation between Asian subgroups, there is nonetheless some salience of a shared pan-Asian identity. However, this salience does necessarily not operate at an individual level, suggesting that Asian individuals may need to be mobilized using appeals based on other facets of their identity, such as class or policy preferences.

There are a number of limitations to the present paper. Substantively, the empirical design does not allow us to ask *why* East Asian national origin groups are perceived to be more Asian than others. A relevant concept here is that of colorism. Colorism, defined as “discriminatory treatment of individuals falling within the same racial group on the basis of skin color” (Herring, 2004), is most commonly associated with the favoring of lighter-skinned over darker-skinner group members (Lemi and Brown 2020). Rondilla and Spickard (2007) provide multiple accounts given by South and Southeast Asians where they describe the negative connotations within their communities of darker skin tones. In line with his 2014 article, Ocampo (2016) details how Filipinos may perceive themselves to be more excluded from the Asian

identity, attitudes which are likely in part due to exclusionary practices from group members and outsiders. Relevant to the present studies, colorism may contribute to the construction of Asian-ness (by Asians) either by 1) decreasing the perception that individuals from countries traditionally perceived to have darker skin tones are less Asian and/or 2) generating negative affect towards Asians who trace ancestry from those countries. In both cases, the observable outcome would be the perception that national origin groups whose members are typically perceived to have darker skin tones to be “less Asian” than groups with lighter skin tones. If we contend that Asian is an important pan-ethnic label, then we must contend with the issues of colorism that arise within the group as well.

A second limitation concerns sampling. Beyond common concerns about who participates on online surveys (see Berinsky et al. 2012), the surveys were conducted in English. Thus, the analysis automatically excludes would-be effects among Asian individuals who are not English speakers. We might suspect that, because non-English speakers are more likely to have stronger attachments to their national origin groups than Asians who can speak English, the main effects, that national origin identity matters, might be even stronger among this unrepresented population.

Relatedly, sample composition complicates generalizability of the results to Asians in the US writ large. As reflected in the demographics of the sample (Supplementary Material Table C1), the distribution of national origin backgrounds skews in favor of a select number of backgrounds, particularly towards respondents who are Chinese, Indian, and Filipino. Because the analysis in Study 2 was designed to estimate a pan-ethnic boost for candidates with whom individuals did *not* share a national origin background, the interpretation of the effect, which

marginalizes over all other national origin backgrounds, may be limited due to the representativeness of different groups in the sample.

Beyond these limitations, these results contribute to an understanding of descriptive representation among Asians in the US, focused primarily on a psychological and public opinion-driven perspective. One fruitful extension along the lines of the project would be to identify whether respondents are using candidate national origin to make additional policy inferences that might explain the observed outcomes. While the experimental set up tells us that mentioning a politician's national origin background affects perceptions around how well they can represent Asian constituents, it may be the case that these perceptions are made on the basis of inferred policy positions rather than on the basis of affect towards a given national origin background. Along these lines, it is not obvious what the trade-off of policy congruence and descriptive representation looks like among Asian voters. While research suggests that identity-based appeals may work well for Black candidates, Asian candidates may need to make appeals on the basis of other dimensions, such as policy or shared values. Additionally, this project focuses on attitudes underlying candidate choice but does not explicitly measure choice itself.

Beyond the scope of this project, but no less important, is the observed variation in levels of political engagement and participation (beyond just turnout) across different national origin groups. It is unlikely that perceived Asian-ness alone accounts for differences in attitudes and behaviors among Asian voters, and subsequent research will undoubtedly prove insightful by also considering factors beyond the individual. Why some Asian individuals are more or less likely to be politically engaged in American politics remains an important question that likely undergirds many of the empirical patterns we see. Subsequent research may well uncover

different trends among those engaged, particularly as the engagement rates have been increasing over the past few years.

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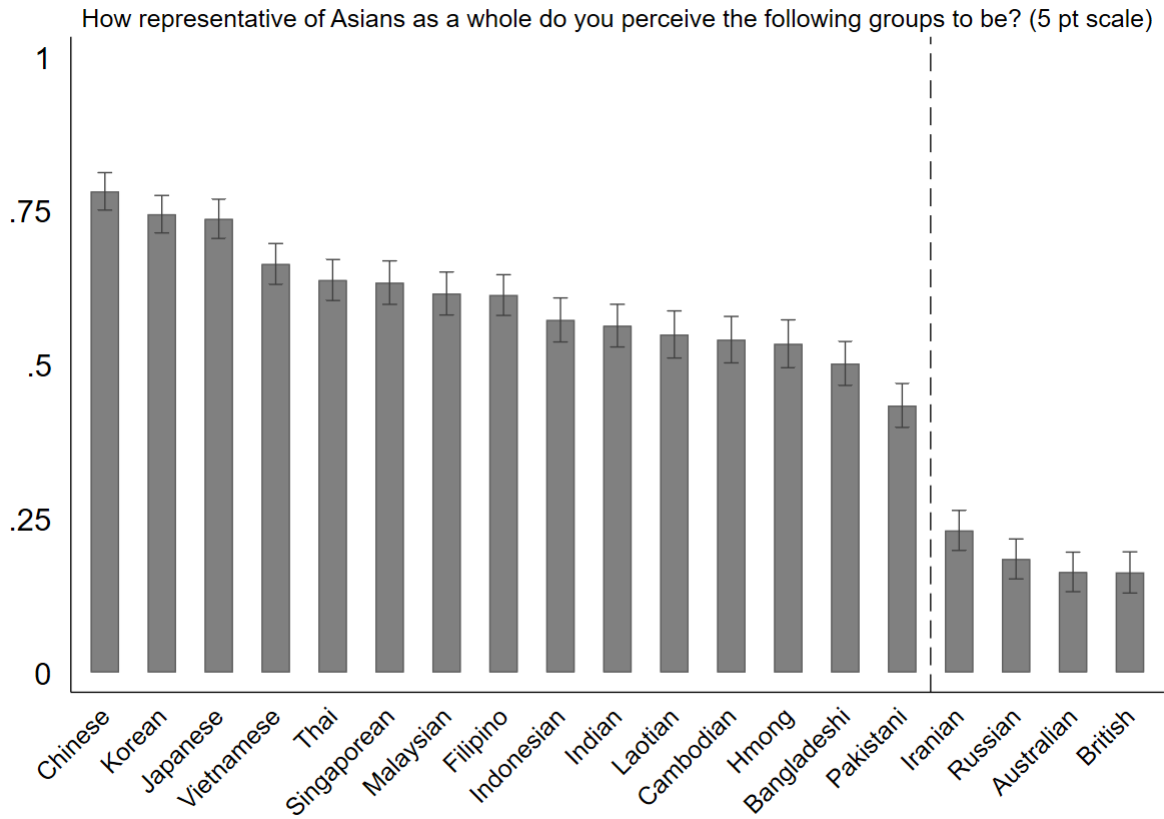
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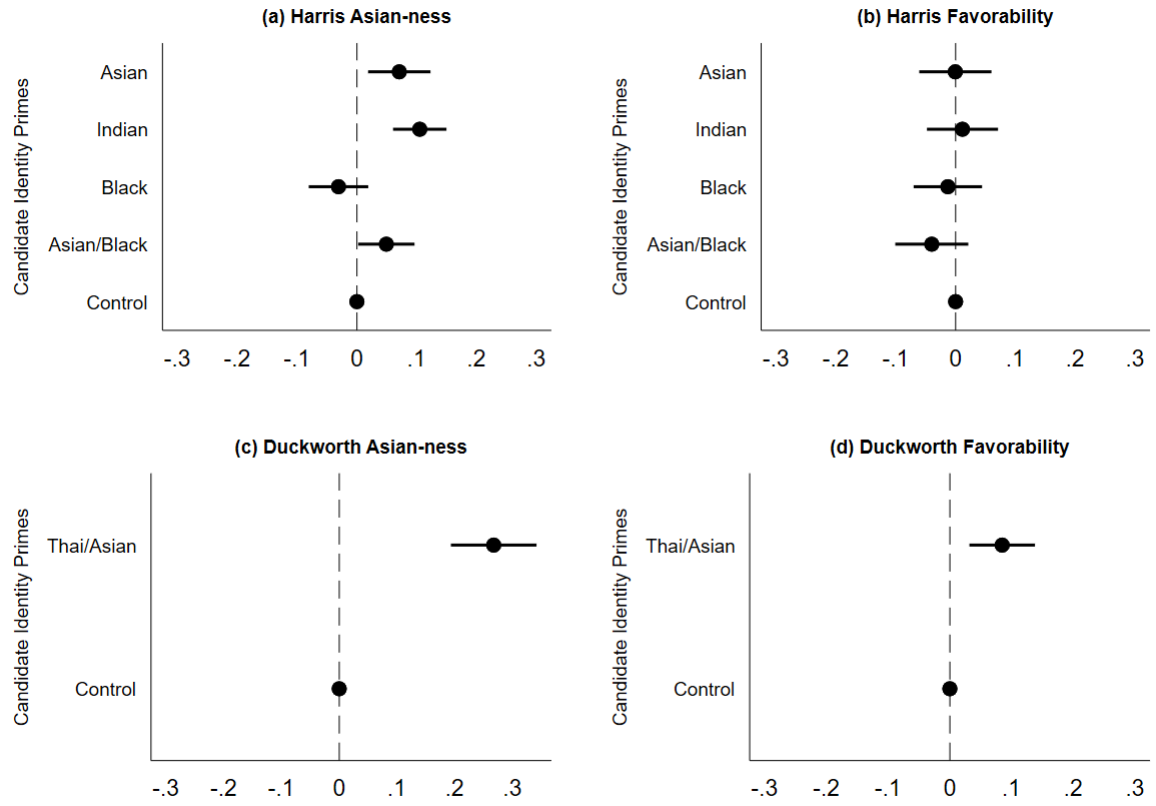
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Figure 1. Perceptions of Asian-ness of National Origin Groups (Study 1).



Notes: Means are based on responses from Control conditions. Groups are ordered from highest to lowest based on means. Groups to the right of dotted lines are placebos.

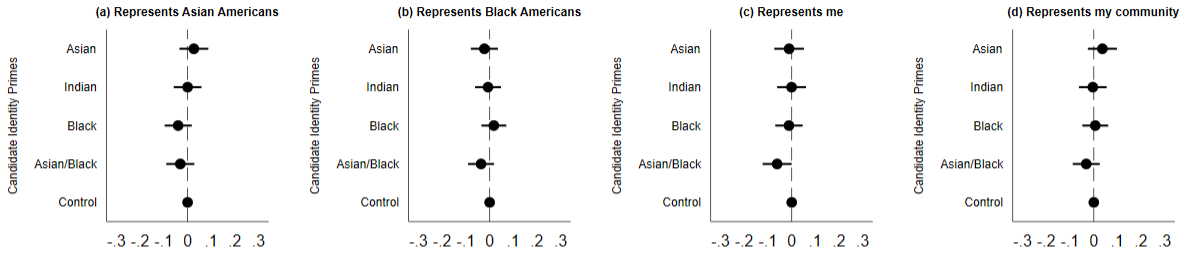
Figure 2. Effect of Priming Asian-ness on Attitudes Towards Politicians (Study 1).



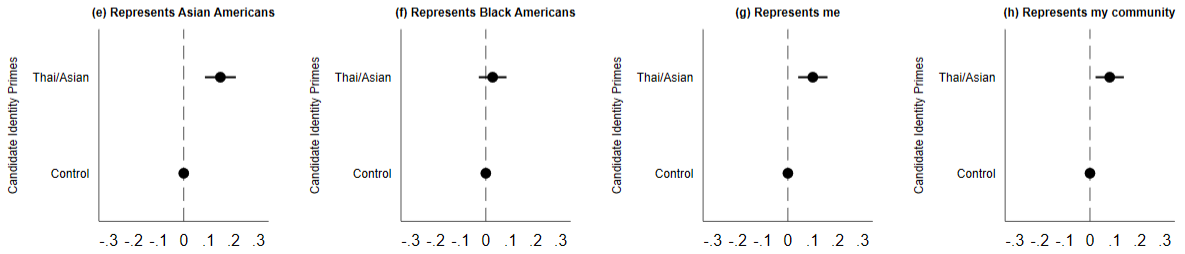
Notes: Points are regression estimates with 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 3. Effect of Priming Asian-ness on Perceptions of Representation (Study 1).

Kamala Harris

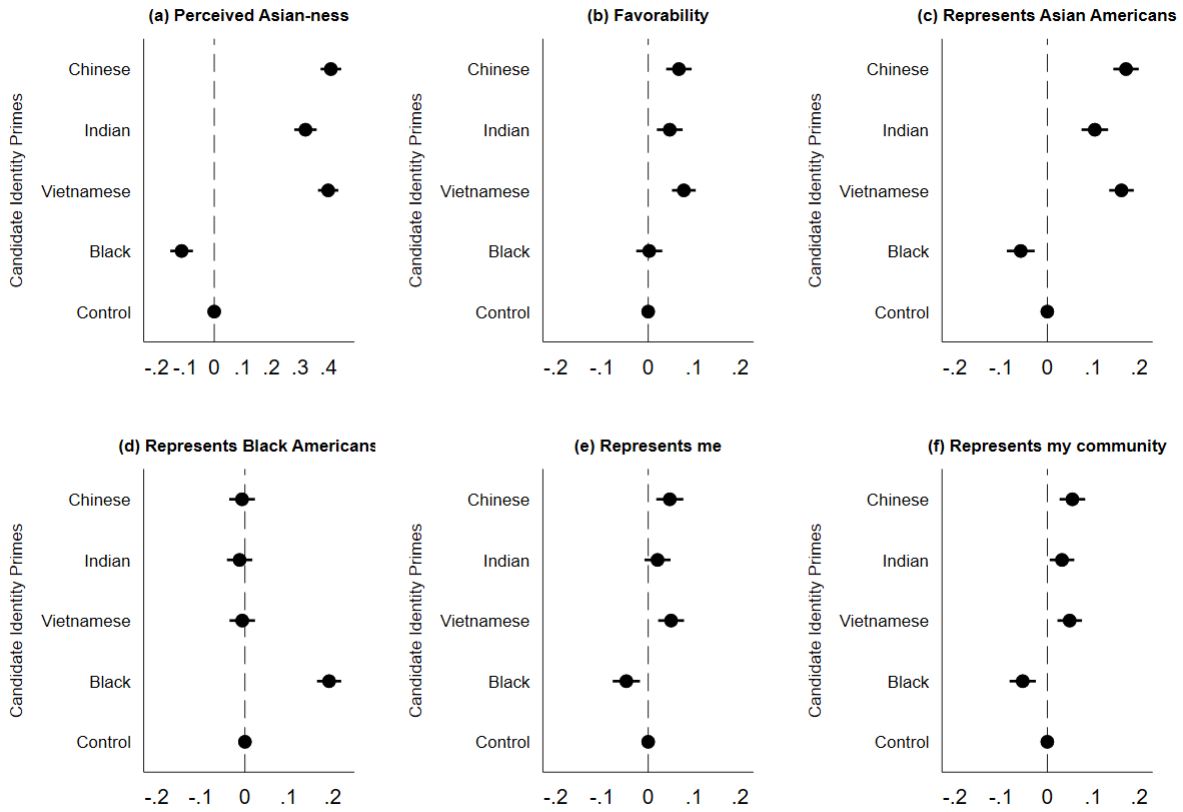


Tammy Duckworth



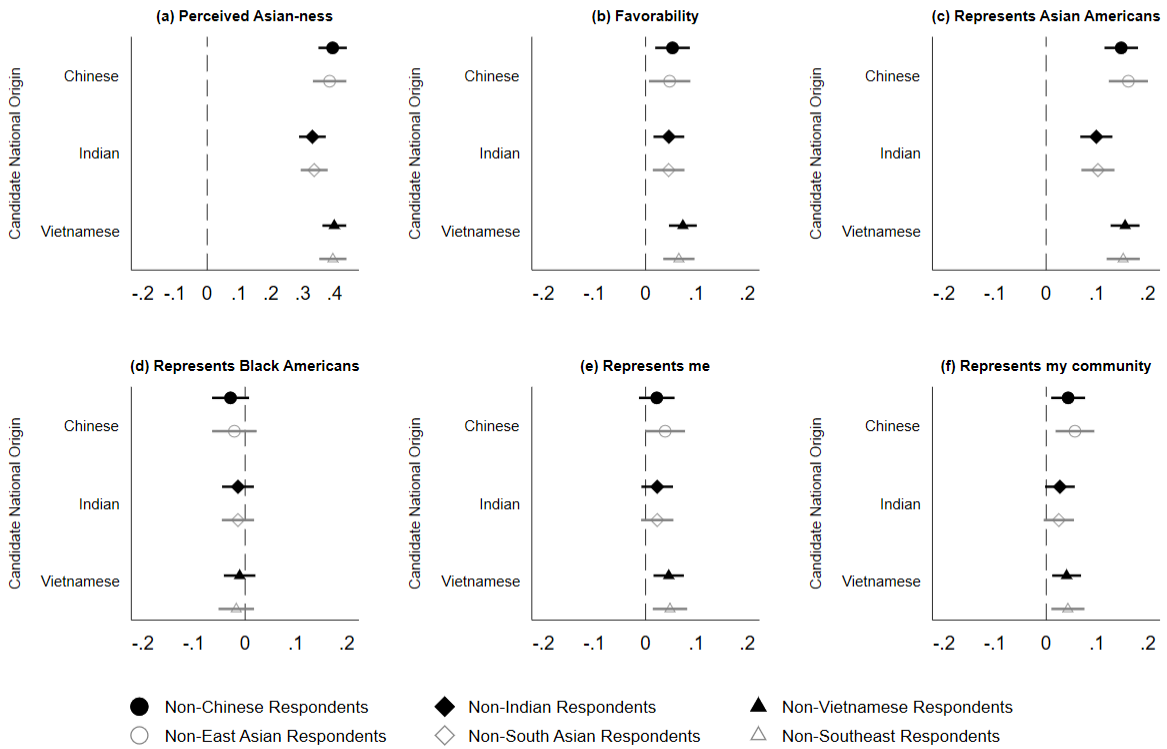
Notes: Points are regression estimates with 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 4. Effect of Candidate National Origin (Study 2).



Notes: Points are regression estimates with 95% confidence intervals.

Figure 5. Effect of National Origin for Respondents of Different National Origin (Study 2).



Notes: Points are regression estimates with 95% confidence intervals. Each point is a coefficient from a separate regression of the outcome on the treatment indicator relative to control. Respondents are excluded from the regression if they match the candidate either on national origin or region.

Table 1. Study 2 Hypotheses

Changes in Attitudes

H1: Perceived Asian-ness will be greater in the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Indian conditions than in the control or Black conditions

H1a: Among Asian respondents, favorability will be greater in the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Indian conditions relative to the control condition or Black conditions

Descriptive Representation

H2: The politician's perceived ability to represent Asian Americans will be greater in the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Indian conditions, relative to control

Relative Asian-ness

H3: Among the three Asian prime conditions, the politician's perceived ability to represent Asian Americans will be greatest in the Chinese and weakest in the Indian conditions.

Pan-ethnic Boost

H3a: Asian respondents who do not share a national origin background with the politician will perceive her ability to represent Asian Americans and themselves to be greater in an Asian prime condition relative to control

H3b: Asian respondents who do not share regionality with the politician will perceive her ability to represent Asian Americans and themselves to be greater in an Asian prime condition relative to control

**Supplementary Material for National Origin Identity and Descriptive Representativeness:
Understanding Preferences for Asian Candidates and Representation**

Appendix A. Description of Survey Items and Question Wording

This section describes the main survey items in order of appearance on the survey. The survey flow is generally similar between Study 1 and 2. Respondent national origin background is measured pre-treatment, and the outcomes are asked post-treatment in the same order across both studies.

Treatments

Study 1 Treatments

Harris common wording:

The next set of questions will be focused around your attitudes towards Kamala Harris. We'd like for you to read the following excerpt below from an article discussing Kamala Harris's candidacy during the 2020 presidential election.

Kamala Harris is Biden's Choice for Vice President
August 19, 2020

If Joe Biden is elected to the presidency this fall, Harris would become the first [**Treatment**]. Her acceptance of Democrats' VP nomination marked yet another trailblazing moment this week.

(If not control:) Democrats are also hopeful that Harris's nomination continues to send a strong message about the importance of women of color to the party.

Treatment 1 – Black Prime

Black woman to hold the role of VP. Harris, who is half-Black from her father's side, is also the first Black woman to become a California senator, the state's attorney general, and San Francisco's district attorney.

Treatment 2 – Asian Prime

Asian woman to hold the role of VP. Harris, who is half-Asian from her mother's side, is also the first Asian American woman to become a California senator, the state's attorney general, and San Francisco's district attorney.

Treatment 3 – Indian Prime

Indian woman to hold the role of VP. Harris, who is half-Indian from her mother's side, is also the first Indian American woman to become a California senator, the state's attorney general, and San Francisco's district attorney.

Treatment 4 – Multiracial Prime

Black and Asian woman to hold the role of VP. Harris, who is half-Black from her father's side and half-Asian from her mother's side, is also the first Black and Asian woman to become a California senator, the state's attorney general, and San Francisco's district attorney

Treatment 5 – Control

Harris would become the first woman to hold the role of VP. She was previously a California senator, the state's attorney general, and San Francisco's district attorney.

Duckworth Common Wording:

The next set of questions will be focused around your attitudes towards Tammy Duckworth, who is currently a United States Senator from Illinois. We'd like for you to read the following excerpt below from an article discussing Tammy Duckworth's potential vice-presidential candidacy during the 2020 presidential election.

Who is Tammy Duckworth? Illinois Senator on Biden's VP List
July 21, 2020

In combat and in Congress, Illinois Sen. Tammy Duckworth has seen a lot of firsts. **[Treatment]**. She was the first female soldier to lose both her legs in the Iraq War. She was the first U.S. Senator to give birth while in office. Now she may become the first **[Asian American]** woman nominated to be vice president for a major party in the United States.

As Biden, the presumptive Democratic nominee for president, nears the announcement of his running mate, Duckworth's political stock has risen.

Treatment 6 – Thai/Asian

Duckworth, whose mother is Thai Chinese, became the first Asian American from Illinois in Congress.

Treatment 7 – Duckworth control

(none)

Study 2 Treatments

In the next section, you will be asked to read a brief news article about a local mayoral election. We have redacted the name of the city.

Local Government Sees Its First [Prime American and] Female Mayor

August 27, 2016

Mayoral candidate Michelle [Name] makes local history as the first [Prime American and first] woman elected to the mayor’s office in [city name redacted]. Born in Michigan and a registered Democrat, [Name] beat out longtime incumbent John Harrison, winning nearly 62% of the vote. In 2013, [Name] was [the first Prime American] elected to city council, on which she has served since. As the first [Prime] woman from [city name redacted] to serve as mayor, [Name] hopes this marks a moment in history, encouraging other [Prime Americans and] women to enter into politics.

Speaking on her mayoral win, [Name] comments, “We have the resources, we have the activism, we have the ideas to be a city that is welcoming to everyone. We see communities really walled off from each other by geography and by neighborhood as well. So, I come with a drive to make sure that we are building a city that everybody feels reflected in and welcome in.”

Treatments:

1. Indian Prime
 - a. Name: Jayapal
 - b. Prime: Indian
2. Chinese Prime
 - a. Name: Wong
 - b. Prime: Chinese
3. Vietnamese Prime
 - a. Name: Nguyen
 - b. Prime: Vietnamese
4. Black Prime
 - a. Name: Davenport
 - b. Prime: Black
5. Control
 - a. Name: Miller
 - b. Prime: none

Measuring Asian-ness

Political Figures:

To measure perceived Asian-ness of the different political figures, respondents are asked the following question for each of five individuals:

We are interested in understanding Asians in politics. For each of the following political individuals, please rate how “Asian” you perceive each group or person to be, on a scale from 1 (not at all Asian) to 5 (who I think of when I think of “Asian”).

The responses are valued on a five-point Likert scale starting with “Not at all Asian”, “A little Asian”, “Somewhat Asian”, “A typical Asian”, “Who I think of when I think of someone Asian”. Respondents have an additional option of selecting “I don’t know who this person is”.

National Origin Groups:

To measure Asian-ness of different groups, respondents are asked the following question. Each option is listed in a matrix, with responses starting on the left with “Not at all representative”, “A little representative”, “Somewhat representative”, “Representative”, and “Extremely representative”. The options (rows) in the matrix are randomized. This question comes at the end of the survey after the questions on politician Asian-ness and representativeness.

We are interested in understanding perceptions of Asian-ness on a more general level. For each of the following, please rate how representative you perceive each group to be of Asians as a whole, on a scale from 1 (not at all representative) to 5 (extremely representative). Remember that there are no right or wrong answers.

People who are:

- Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Indian, Filipino, Vietnamese, Pakistani, Singaporean, Thai, Malaysian, Bangladeshi, Hmong, Indonesian, Laotian, Cambodian, British, Australian, Russian, Iranian

Post-treatment Measures

Outcomes:

1. How “Asian” would you say [Candidate Name] is on a scale from 1 (not at all Asian) to 5 (who I think of when I think of “Asian”)?
 - Not at all Asian
 - A little Asian
 - Somewhat Asian
 - Very Asian
 - Who I think of when I think of “Asian”

2. To what extent do you agree with the following statements:
 - [Candidate Name] would represent the interests of the Asian American community
 - Strongly disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Strongly agree
 - [Candidate Name] would represent the interests of the Black community
 - Strongly disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Strongly agree
 - [Candidate Name] would represent my interests
 - Strongly disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Strongly agree
 - [Candidate Name] would represent the interests of my community
 - Strongly disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Strongly agree

3. On a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being “extremely unfavorable” and 5 being “extremely favorable”, how favorable do you feel towards [Candidate Name]?
 - Extremely unfavorable
 - Somewhat unfavorable
 - Neither favorable nor unfavorable
 - Somewhat favorable
 - Extremely favorable

Note on Missing Data

Analysis for both studies are conducted without accounting for missing responses. Because missing responses in the outcome variable are post-treatment, excluding observations on the basis of missingness will potentially induce post-treatment bias.

Attention Check

In order to address potential concerns about participant attentiveness on online surveys, I include two measures to capture inattentive respondents in the data collection for Study 1. The first attention check measure is a vignette that describes a bank robbery and was included in the first wave of data collection:

MAN ARRESTED FOR STRING OF BANK THEFTS

Columbus Police have arrested a man they say gave his driver's license to a teller at a bank he was robbing.

According to court documents, Bryan Simon is accused of robbing four Central Ohio banks between October 3 and November 5, 2018.

During a robbery on November 5 at the Huntington Bank, the sheriff's office says Simon was tricked into giving the teller his drivers' license.

According to court documents, Simon approached the counter and presented a demand note for money that said "I have a gun." The teller gave Simon about \$500, which he took.

Documents say Simon then told the teller he wanted more money. The teller told him a driver's license was required to use the machine to get our more cash. Simon reportedly then gave the teller his license to swipe through the machine and then left the bank with about \$1000 in additional cash, but without his ID.

Detectives arrested him later that day at the address listed on his ID.

Respondents then are asked two short recollection multiple-choice questions: 1) How was Simon identified by police for the crime he allegedly committed, and 2) How much money did Simon allegedly steal? If respondents answer both recollection questions incorrectly, they are coded as being inattentive.

A second attention check was used for the second wave of data collection for Study 1 and for Study 2 and embedded in the matrix of national origin groups at the end of the survey in which respondents are asked to rate the Asian-ness of various groups. In addition to 19 options, an additional option that read “Please select Representative” was randomized into the list of groups that respondents saw. Participants who did not select “Representative” on this item were coded as inattentive

The robustness checks on attentiveness (Figure B2 and Figure B3) exclude a total of 94 responses from the overall total of 2315. For both surveys, I sample from high quality participants as part of the platform’s pre-screen measures. Thus, the fact that only a small portion of respondents are dropped on the basis of attentiveness is encouraging.

Sample Recruitment

Participants for Study 1 were recruited through survey platforms Prolific and Turk Prime over two data collection efforts, once in October 2020 and once in January 2021. Prolific was used to recruit Asian-identifying respondents for both the first and second survey. Turk Prime was used to recruit a non-restricted sample for only the second survey, which generally resulted in responses from white and Black participants. Respondents were \$0.60 on Turk Prime and \$0.65 on Prolific for a 5-minute survey, which on average corresponded to between \$7.80-\$9/hour (since most respondents took under 5 minutes to complete the survey). Before any survey questions were asked, respondents were shown a consent form page outlining the details of their involvement and how their data were to be collected. Respondents were required to consent to the study terms prior to entering into the survey.

Respondents in the first data collection for Study 1 were randomized into the four Harris treatment conditions with probability 1/6 and into the control condition with probability 1/3. This was to ensure that there were enough respondents in the control condition to conduct the descriptive analyses. Respondents in the second data collection for Study 1 were randomized into the two Duckworth conditions (one treatment and one control) with probability 2/9 for each condition and the five Harris

conditions with a probability of 1/9 each. This was to ensure there were sufficient responses collected for the Duckworth conditions, as well as a sufficient number collected in the Harris conditions to compare between the first and second surveys. Respondents from Turk Prime were randomized into each of the 7 conditions with equal probability.

Participants for Study 2 were recruited through Lucid Marketplace and Prolific. Lucid Marketplace is an online survey platform that allows researchers to recruit participants directly from survey vendors (as opposed to Lucid Theorem, which recruits participants on behalf of the researcher). Respondents recruited from Lucid were paid \$1 for completing the survey. Additional respondents were recruited from Prolific and paid \$0.80 for completing the survey. For both samples, respondents were pre-screened and eligible for the survey only if they reported identifying as Asian American or Asian.

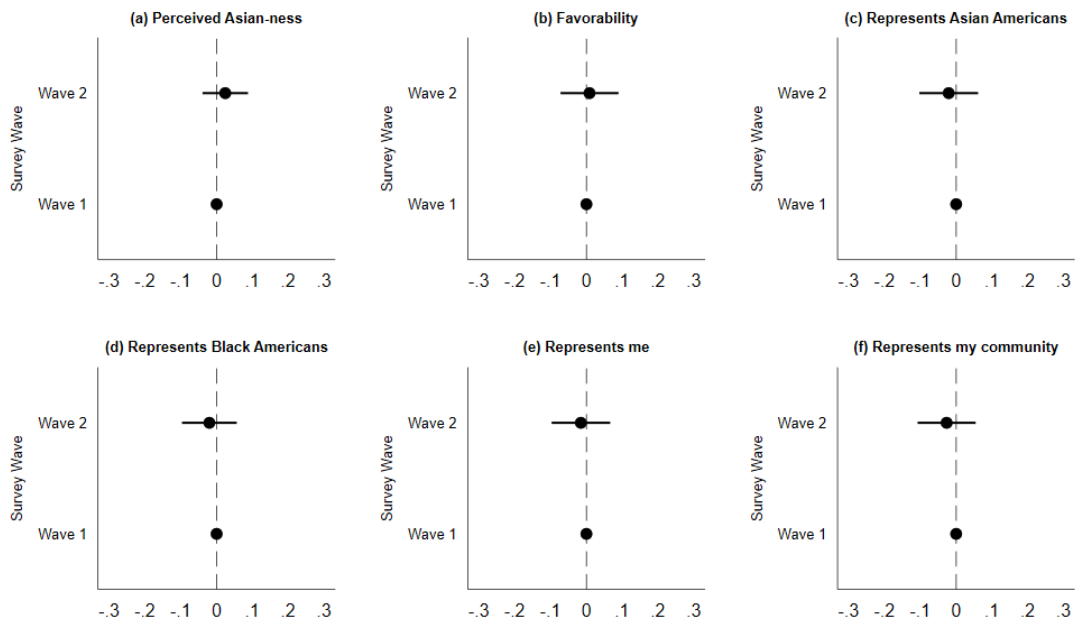
Study 1 Sample Check

One concern relevant to Study 1 is about conducting multiple waves of the same survey design (in a non-panel study) is that small differences between the surveys, in this case both timing and the inclusion of additional pre-treatment measures, may be correlated with factors or induced additional treatment effects that bias outcome responses. One point worth highlighting is that this concern primarily affects the Harris-related outcomes, since 1) these are the only outcomes that were fielded across two different time periods, and 2) Kamala Harris's election to Vice President would lead us to expect some changes in respondents' ex ante attitudes towards her. To this end, even if there are differences between the two waves of data collection for the Harris-specific outcomes, they should not change the substantive interpretation of the analysis for the Duckworth-specific outcomes or for Study 2. Additionally, the concern about sample comparability should be more focused on the portion of Asian respondents in Study 1, since only 100 out of approximately 1,400 non-Asian respondents were recruited in the first wave of data collection.

To identify potential differences between the two samples for Study 1, I compare the control responses from respondents across the two data collection periods. Figure A6.1 below compares baseline responses to each of the six main outcomes – differences from zero would suggest that control/untreated responses in the second wave of data collection are different at baseline than those from the first wave. Among Asian respondents, we see that no significant differences between the two waves of surveys along the control responses. Among non-Asian respondents, however, we do observe differences in Harris’s perceived Asian-ness. Non-Asian participants in the second wave of data collection were more likely to perceive Harris as being Asian, even in the absence of identity primes.

Analytically, that wave 2 participants already perceived Harris as more Asian suggests that the treatments, which generally produced effects that were positive and significant for non-Asian respondents, worked even in spite of respondents thinking she was already “more Asian” than those from a few months prior. This suggests that the treatment is not merely an informational treatment, i.e., that respondents updated favorably for Harris (in Figures 2 and 3) simply because they newly learned about her racial identity.

Figure A6.1 Sample Comparisons Between Wave 1 and 2 Data Collection (Experiment 1) on Harris Outcomes



Sample differences are among control units from each survey.

Study 1 Power Analysis

To acknowledge concerns about power in Study 1, I conduct a post-hoc power analysis for the two main outcome of interest from the Harris experiment. The treatment effect of the Asian prime condition on Harris's perceived Asian-ness has an estimated treatment effect size of 0.074, relative to a control mean of 0.303 (SD = 0.228). The calculated sample size for this effect is 162 responses in each condition.

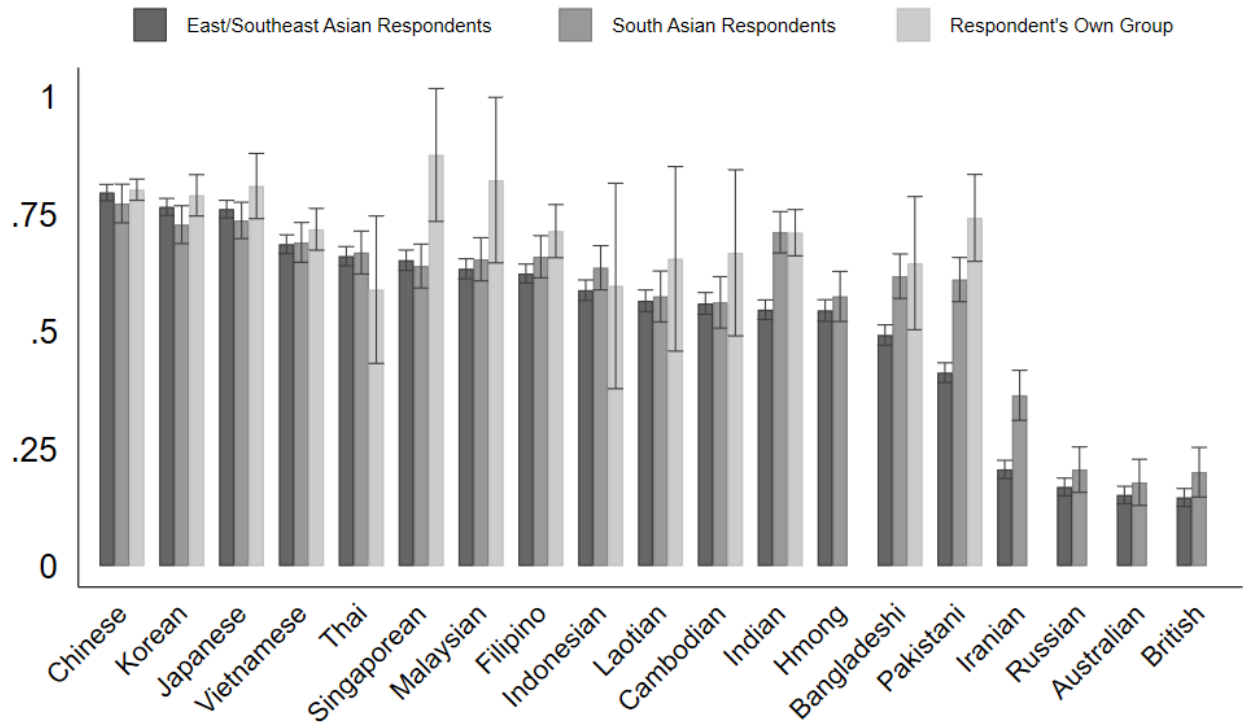
While the control condition has a sufficient number of respondents ($n = 225$), there were 123 respondents randomized into the Asian prime condition, meaning that the test is powered at 69%.

For the same outcome in the Duckworth experiment, the estimated effect size is 0.27, which requires a much smaller sample ($n=19$) to reach 80% power. The treatment condition in the Duckworth experiment had 125 respondents and the control condition had 117.

Appendix B. Supplementary Figures

Figure B1. Perceptions of Asian-ness of National Origin Groups

How representative of Asians as a whole do you perceive the following groups to be? (5 pt scale)



Notes: Means for *Respondent's Own Group* are based on responses from individuals whose country of origin matches that of the group being rated.

Figure B2. Effect of Priming Identity on Harris Outcomes

Excluding respondents who failed the attention check items

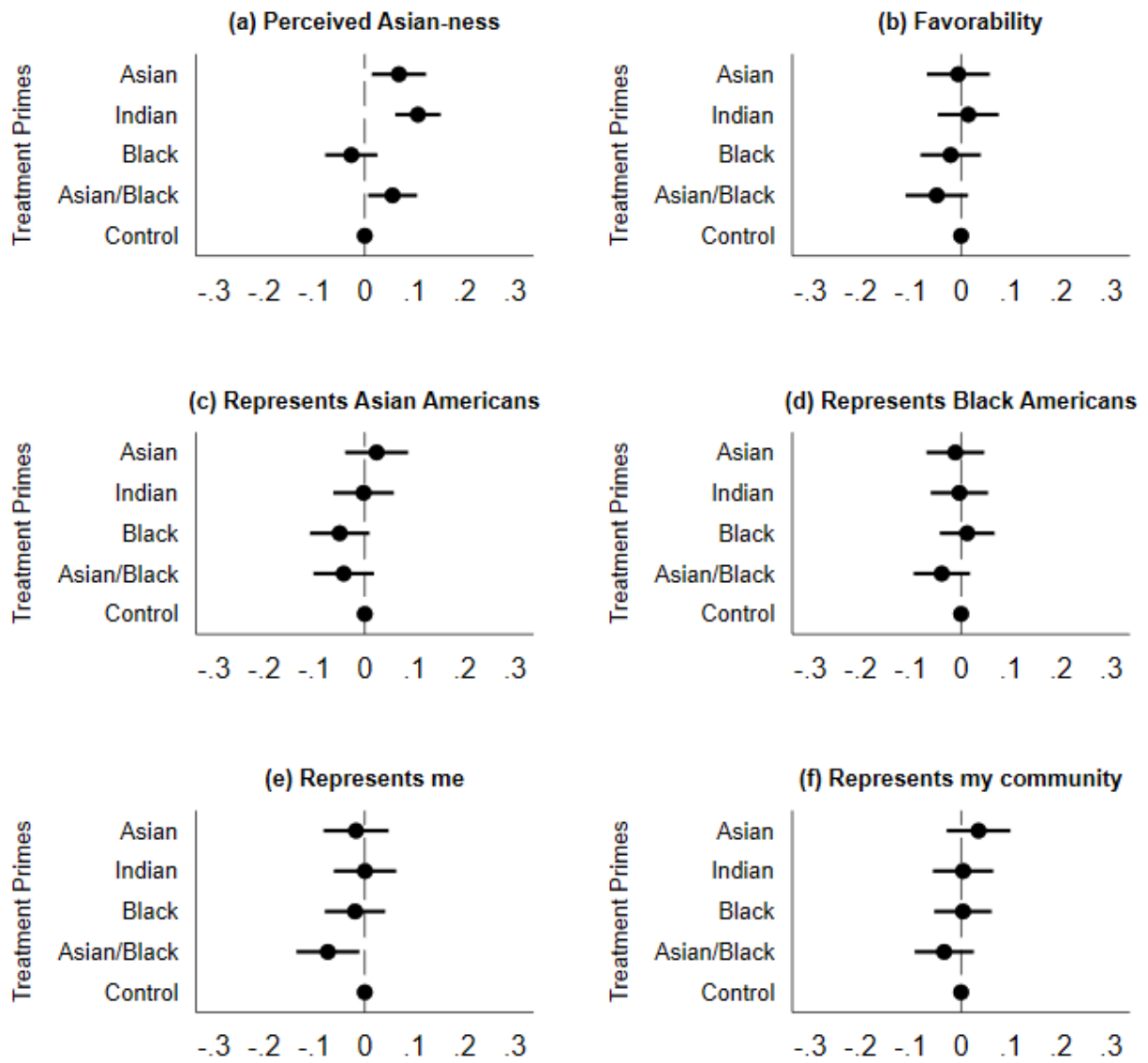


Figure B3. Effect of Priming Identity on Duckworth Outcomes

Excluding respondents who failed the attention check items

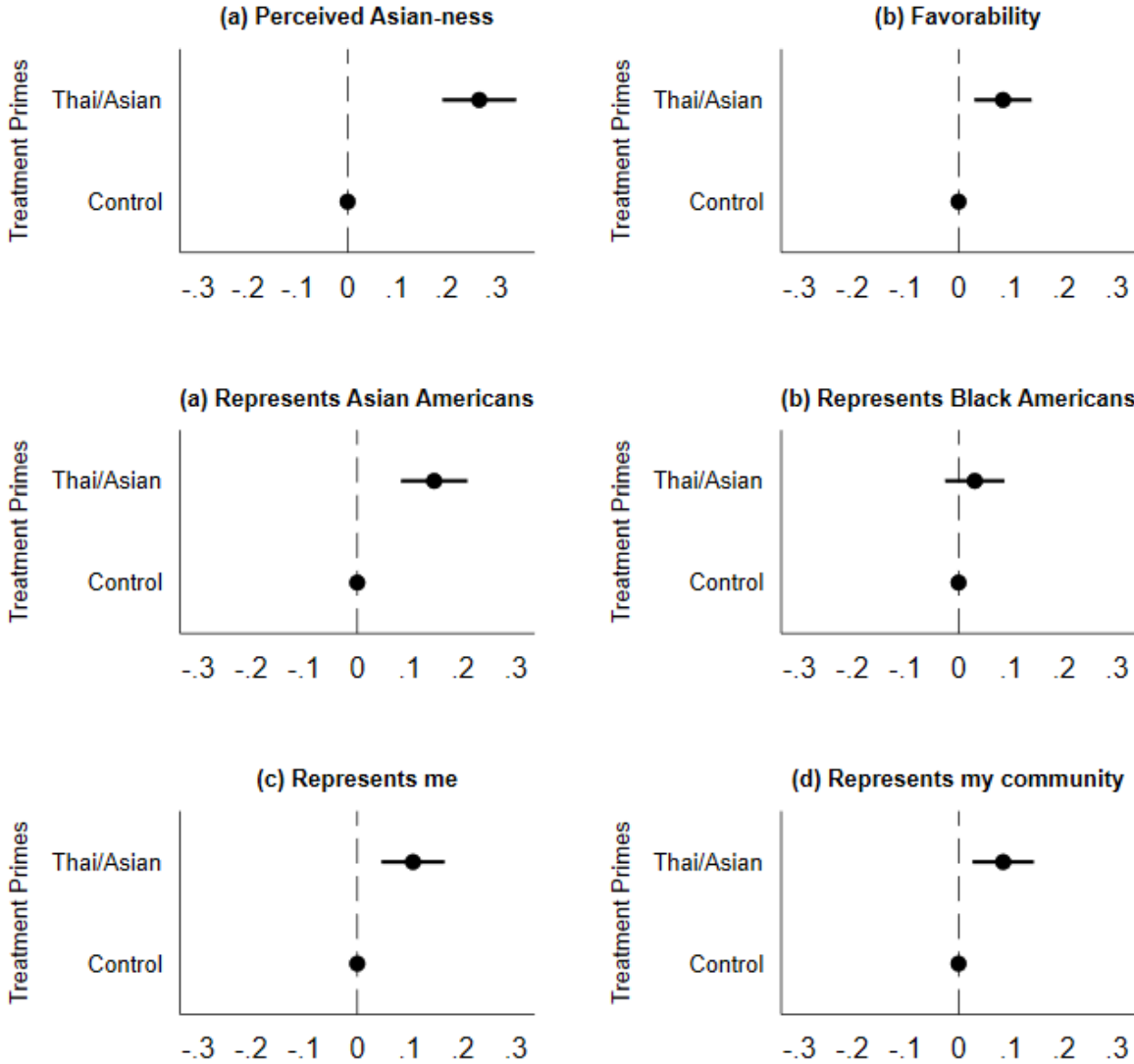
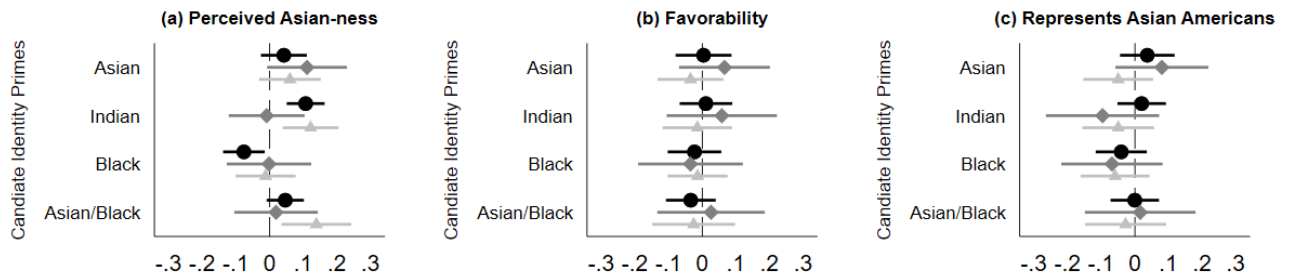
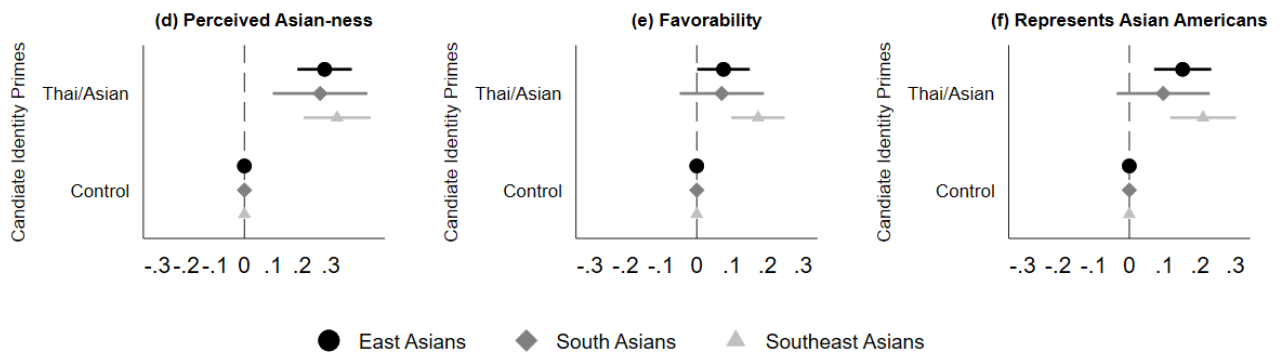


Figure B4. Effect of Priming Asian-ness, By Region (Experiment 1)

Kamala Harris



Tammy Duckworth



Notes: Points are regression estimates relative to control, with 95% confidence intervals.

Note: East Asian includes respondents who report tracing ancestry to China, Japan, or Korean. South Asian: Bangladesh, India, or Pakistan. Southeast Asian: Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, or Vietnam.

Appendix C. Supplementary Tables

Table C1. Respondent Demographics

	<i>Study 1</i>		<i>Study 2</i>	
	N	Mean	N	Mean
Age	-	27.72		30.16
Female	473	0.46	1296	0.60
Hispanic	7	0.01	56	0.03
<i>Generational Status</i>				
Generation 1	246	0.24	698	0.32
Generation 2	677	0.66	1058	0.49
Generation 3	96	0.09	274	0.13
<i>Party Identification</i>				
Democrats	660	0.64	1233	0.57
Republicans	76	0.07	226	0.11
Independents	240	0.23	526	0.24
Total	1,026	-	2,148	-
<i>National Origin Ancestry (among Asian respondents)</i>				
Bangladesh	17		43	
Cambodia	14		26	
China	424		675	
India	124		273	
Indonesia	11		21	
Japan	50		184	
Korea	89		229	
Laos	15		28	
Malaysia	5		24	
Myanmar	5		5	
Pakistan	29		63	
The Philippines	108		325	
Singapore	4		10	
Taiwan	69		113	
Thailand	18		43	
Vietnam	171		231	
# Respondents w/ >1 country	145		260	

Notes: The total number of respondents in the sample used in the main analysis is 2,432. Generation 1 respondents are those who were born outside of the United States but are currently living in the US. Generation 2 respondents are those who were born in the US but whose parents were both born outside of the US. Generation 3 respondents are those who were born in the US and have at least one parent who was also born in the US.

Table C2. Pre-Testing Names for Study 2

<u>Treatment Primes</u>	<i>Respondent guessed candidate was:</i>				
	Black	Chinese	Indian	Vietnamese	White
Black	15	0	0	0	1
Chinese	1	17	0	1	0
Indian	0	0	18	0	1
Vietnamese	0	0	0	22	0
White (Control)	11	5	0	2	101

Notes: Data are collected from Turk Prime. More respondents were allocated to the control condition in the pre-test since it is the only treatment condition in which the candidate's race or ethnicity was explicitly stated in the vignette.

Table C3. Regression Results for Figure 2 (Effect of Priming Asian-ness on Attitudes towards Politicians)

(a) Kamala Harris		
	<u>Perceived Asian-ness</u>	<u>Favorability</u>
	(1)	(2)
<i>Treatments</i>		
Asian	0.071 (0.027)	-0.000 (0.031)
Indian	0.105 (0.023)	0.011 (0.030)
Black	-0.031 (0.025)	-0.013 (0.029)
Asian/Black	0.049 (0.024)	-0.040 (0.031)
Constant (No Prime)	0.303 (0.015)	0.624 (0.019)
N	774	784
(b) Tammy Duckworth		
	<u>Perceived Asian-ness</u>	<u>Favorability</u>
	(3)	(4)
<i>Treatments</i>		
Thai/Chinese	0.267 (0.038)	0.085 (0.027)
Constant (No Prime)	0.309 (0.031)	0.583 (0.020)
N	194	242

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Separate regressions are run for Harris in Panel (a) and Duckworth in Panel (b). The outcomes (1)-(4) are measured on a 5-point scale, rescaled to take evenly-spaced values from 0 to 1. Each outcome is regressed on an indicator for treatment assigned, with the reference category noted in parentheses.

Table C4. Regression Results for Figure 3 (Effect of Priming Asian-ness on Perceptions of Representation)

	(a) Kamala Harris Represents...			
	<u>Asian Americans</u> (1)	<u>Black Americans</u> (2)	<u>Me</u> (3)	<u>My Community</u> (4)
<i>Treatments</i>				
Asian	0.026 (0.031)	-0.022 (0.029)	-0.011 (0.032)	0.036 (0.031)
Indian	0.000 (0.030)	-0.007 (0.028)	-0.001 (0.031)	-0.004 (0.030)
Black	-0.040 (0.029)	0.018 (0.027)	-0.012 (0.030)	0.006 (0.028)
Asian/Black	-0.031 (0.030)	-0.036 (0.028)	-0.062 (0.031)	-0.032 (0.029)
Constant (No Prime)	0.500 (0.019)	-0.022 (0.029)	0.558 (0.020)	0.551 (0.019)
N	784	784	784	784
	(b) Tammy Duckworth Represents...			
	<u>Asian Americans</u> (5)	<u>Black Americans</u> (6)	<u>Me</u> (7)	<u>My Community</u> (8)
<i>Treatments</i>				
Thai/Chinese	0.146 (0.031)	0.027 (0.028)	0.100 (0.030)	0.079 (0.029)
Constant (No Prime)	0.524 (0.023)	0.543 (0.019)	0.504 (0.021)	0.547 (0.021)
N	242	242	242	242

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Separate regressions are run for Harris in Panel (a) and Duckworth in Panel (b). The outcomes (1)-(8) are measured on a 5-point scale, rescaled to take evenly-spaced values from 0 to 1. Each outcome is regressed on an indicator for treatment assigned, with the reference category noted in parentheses.

Table C5. Regression Results for Figure 3 (Effect of Priming Asian-ness on Outcomes, by Region)

	(a) Kamala Harris								
	<u>Perceived Asian-ness</u>			<u>Favorability</u>			<u>Represents Asian Americans</u>		
	East	South	Southeast	East	South	Southeast	East	South	Southeast
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
<i>Treatment Primes</i>									
Asian	0.042	0.111	0.060	0.004	0.066	-0.035	0.037	0.080	-0.050
	(0.035)	(0.060)	(0.046)	(0.042)	(0.068)	(0.050)	(0.041)	(0.070)	(0.053)
Indian	0.107	-0.009	0.122	0.011	0.058	-0.015	0.020	-0.096	-0.050
	(0.029)	(0.057)	(0.042)	(0.040)	(0.083)	(0.052)	(0.037)	(0.085)	(0.054)
Black	-0.076	-0.002	-0.012	-0.023	-0.035	-0.014	-0.041	-0.068	-0.059
	(0.032)	(0.063)	(0.045)	(0.041)	(0.079)	(0.045)	(0.039)	(0.076)	(0.052)
Asian/Black	0.047	0.019	0.139	-0.034	0.026	-0.026	-0.000	0.016	-0.028
	(0.028)	(0.063)	(0.053)	(0.038)	(0.081)	(0.062)	(0.037)	(0.083)	(0.061)
Constant (No Prime)	0.311	0.389	0.292	0.621	0.632	0.647	0.474	0.576	0.555
	(0.019)	(0.037)	(0.029)	(0.025)	(0.053)	(0.032)	(0.025)	(0.054)	(0.034)
N	448	135	265	456	135	268	456	135	268

<i>Represents...</i>	(b) Tammy Duckworth								
	<u>Perceived Asian-ness</u>			<u>Favorability</u>			<u>Represents Asian Americans</u>		
	East	South	Southeast	East	South	Southeast	East	South	Southeast
	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)
<i>Treatment Primes</i>									
Thai/Chinese	0.277	0.262	0.321	0.075	0.070	0.173	0.150	0.095	0.208
	(0.047)	(0.080)	(0.058)	(0.037)	(0.059)	(0.038)	(0.041)	(0.065)	(0.047)
Constant (No Prime)	0.276	0.333	0.331	0.574	0.600	0.539	0.486	0.575	0.517
	(0.039)	(0.058)	(0.049)	(0.029)	(0.038)	(0.025)	(0.030)	(0.041)	(0.033)
N	119	36	67	148	42	84	148	42	84

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Separate regressions are run for Harris in Panel (a) and Duckworth in Panel (b). The outcomes (1)-(18) are measured on a 5-point scale, rescaled to take evenly-spaced values from 0 to 1. Each outcome is regressed on an indicator for treatment assigned, with the reference category noted in parentheses, on subgroups of Asian respondents by region. For example, Column (1) reports coefficients for the Perceived Asian-ness outcome for East Asian respondents in the Harris experiment.

Table C6. Regression Results for Figure 4 (Effect of Candidate National Origin)

	<u>Perceived</u> <u>Asian-</u> <u>ness</u> (1)	<u>Favorability</u> (2)	<u>Represents</u> <u>Asian</u> <u>Americans</u> (3)	<u>Represents</u> <u>Black</u> <u>Americans</u> (4)	<u>Represents</u> <u>Me</u> (5)	<u>Represents</u> <u>My</u> <u>Community</u> (6)
<i>Candidate is ...</i>						
Chinese	0.407 (0.018)	0.067 (0.014)	0.171 (0.014)	-0.007 (0.015)	0.047 (0.015)	0.054 (0.014)
Indian	0.318 (0.020)	0.047 (0.014)	0.103 (0.015)	-0.012 (0.015)	0.02 (0.014)	0.032 (0.014)
Vietnamese	0.398 (0.018)	0.077 (0.013)	0.161 (0.014)	-0.006 (0.015)	0.050 (0.014)	0.049 (0.014)
Black	-0.114 (0.020)	0.002 (0.014)	-0.058 (0.015)	0.191 (0.014)	-0.047 (0.015)	-0.053 (0.015)
Constant (Presumed white)	0.278 (0.014)	0.698 (0.009)	0.623 (0.010)	0.627 (0.010)	0.658 (0.010)	0.679 (0.009)
N	1,843	2,146	2,147	2,147	2,146	2,146

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Coefficients correspond to estimates in Figure 4 from Study 2. Each column reports regression estimates from a regression of the outcome variable on indicators for treatment conditions, relative to a presumed White candidate. The outcomes are measured on a 5-point scale, rescaled to take evenly-spaced values from 0 to 1.

Table C7. Study 2 - Effect of Candidate National Origin, Chinese Respondents Only

	<u>Perceived Asian-ness</u>	<u>Favorability</u>	<u>Represents Asian Americans</u>	<u>Represents Black Americans</u>	<u>Represents Me</u>	<u>Represents My Community</u>
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Candidate is...</i>						
Chinese	0.436 (0.031)	0.096 (0.024)	0.219 (0.026)	0.040 (0.025)	0.100 (0.027)	0.078 (0.026)
Indian	0.348 (0.033)	0.017 (0.025)	0.112 (0.028)	-0.022 (0.027)	0.022 (0.027)	0.019 (0.025)
Vietnamese	0.411 (0.030)	0.078 (0.021)	0.172 (0.025)	-0.032 (0.025)	0.059 (0.027)	0.048 (0.024)
Black	-0.149 (0.031)	0.024 (0.024)	-0.059 (0.028)	0.230 (0.023)	-0.016 (0.026)	-0.049 (0.025)
Constant (Presumed white)	0.246 (0.024)	0.691 (0.015)	0.593 (0.019)	0.614 (0.018)	0.631 (0.018)	0.668 (0.017)
N	568	675	675	675	675	675

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Each column reports regression estimates from a regression of the outcome variable on indicators for treatment conditions from Study 2 on Chinese respondents, relative to a presumed White candidate. The outcomes are measured on a 5-point scale, rescaled to take evenly-spaced values from 0 to 1.

Table C8. Study 2 - Effect of Candidate National Origin, Vietnamese Respondents Only

	<u>Perceived Asian-ness</u>	<u>Favorability</u>	<u>Represents Asian Americans</u>	<u>Represents Black Americans</u>	<u>Represents Me</u>	<u>Represents My Community</u>
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
<i>Candidate is...</i>						
Chinese	0.458 (0.051)	0.133 (0.040)	0.240 (0.040)	0.006 (0.052)	0.115 (0.044)	0.165 (0.041)
Indian	0.292 (0.059)	0.029 (0.048)	0.131 (0.050)	-0.024 (0.045)	0.002 (0.048)	0.054 (0.041)
Vietnamese	0.379 (0.059)	0.114 (0.038)	0.203 (0.040)	0.033 (0.041)	0.085 (0.042)	0.114 (0.037)
Black	-0.137 (0.057)	0.018 (0.045)	-0.065 (0.044)	0.218 (0.040)	-0.044 (0.045)	-0.039 (0.043)
Constant (Presumed white)	0.266 (0.042)	0.691 (0.030)	0.595 (0.029)	0.614 (0.030)	0.641 (0.028)	0.636 (0.028)
N	181	231	231	231	231	231

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Each column reports regression estimates from a regression of the outcome variable on indicators for treatment conditions from Study 2 on Vietnamese respondents, relative to a presumed White candidate. The outcomes are measured on a 5-point scale, rescaled to take evenly-spaced values from 0 to 1.

Table C9. Study 2 - Effect of Candidate National Origin, Indian Respondents Only

	<u>Perceived</u> <u>Asian-</u> <u>ness</u> (1)	<u>Favorability</u> (2)	<u>Represents</u> <u>Asian</u> <u>Americans</u> (3)	<u>Represents</u> <u>Black</u> <u>Americans</u> (4)	<u>Represents</u> <u>Me</u> (5)	<u>Represents</u> <u>My</u> <u>Community</u> (6)
<i>Candidate is...</i>						
Chinese	0.336 (0.057)	0.042 (0.036)	0.150 (0.039)	0.007 (0.037)	0.008 (0.035)	0.038 (0.037)
Indian	0.234 (0.056)	0.040 (0.037)	0.117 (0.036)	-0.009 (0.038)	-0.008 (0.032)	0.051 (0.032)
Vietnamese	0.313 (0.055)	-0.010 (0.042)	0.087 (0.040)	-0.056 (0.041)	-0.055 (0.038)	-0.001 (0.036)
Black	-0.119 (0.068)	0.020 (0.045)	-0.018 (0.050)	0.174 (0.042)	-0.016 (0.040)	-0.035 (0.043)
Constant (Presumed white)	0.356 (0.048)	0.764 (0.030)	0.671 (0.029)	0.667 (0.027)	0.731 (0.024)	0.722 (0.024)
N	240	273	273	273	273	273

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Each column reports regression estimates from a regression of the outcome variable on indicators for treatment conditions from Study 2 on Indian respondents, relative to a presumed White candidate. The outcomes are measured on a 5-point scale, rescaled to take evenly-spaced values from 0 to 1.

Table C10. Study 2 - Effect of Candidate National Origin, with PID

	<u>Perceived</u> <u>Asian-</u> <u>ness</u> (1)	<u>Favorability</u> (2)	<u>Represents</u> <u>Asian</u> <u>Americans</u> (3)	<u>Represents</u> <u>Black</u> <u>Americans</u> (4)	<u>Represents</u> <u>Me</u> (5)	<u>Represents My</u> <u>Community</u> (6)
<i>Respondent PID x Candidate National Origin Treatment</i>						
Rep. x Chinese	-0.068 (0.031)	-0.166 (0.042)	-0.125 (0.039)	-0.069 (0.037)	-0.149 (0.047)	-0.177 (0.038)
Rep. x Indian	-0.040 (0.037)	-0.139 (0.040)	-0.096 (0.042)	-0.035 (0.037)	-0.126 (0.042)	-0.118 (0.039)
Rep. x Vietnamese	-0.070 (0.031)	-0.124 (0.032)	-0.090 (0.031)	-0.073 (0.035)	-0.136 (0.037)	-0.124 (0.039)
Rep. x Black	0.031 (0.055)	-0.310 (0.045)	-0.223 (0.050)	-0.171 (0.045)	-0.287 (0.048)	-0.252 (0.044)
Rep. x White	-0.020 (0.047)	-0.107 (0.039)	-0.095 (0.042)	-0.092 (0.038)	-0.102 (0.041)	-0.066 (0.033)
Dem. x Chinese	0.437 (0.025)	0.080 (0.017)	0.178 (0.017)	-0.004 (0.020)	0.060 (0.017)	0.083 (0.016)
Dem. x Indian	0.348 (0.026)	0.066 (0.016)	0.109 (0.018)	-0.004 (0.019)	0.019 (0.016)	0.047 (0.016)
Dem. x Vietnamese	0.425 (0.024)	0.061 (0.016)	0.149 (0.017)	0.004 (0.019)	0.045 (0.017)	0.053 (0.016)
Dem. x Black	-0.129 (0.026)	0.023 (0.017)	-0.062 (0.019)	0.211 (0.017)	-0.041 (0.018)	-0.042 (0.018)
Control (Dem. x White)	0.270 (0.020)	0.741 (0.012)	0.661 (0.013)	0.651 (0.013)	0.703 (0.012)	0.709 (0.011)
N	1,245	1,458	1,458	1,458	1,458	1,457

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Each column reports regression estimates from a regression of the outcome variable on indicators for treatment conditions from Study 2 interacted with respondent partisan identification. The outcomes are measured on a 5-point scale, rescaled to take evenly-spaced values from 0 to 1. Analysis is limited to respondents who identified as either Democrat or Republican.

Table C11. Regression Results for Figure 5 (Effect of Candidate National Origin, Detecting Panethnic Boost)

(a) Perceived Asian-ness						
<i>Respondents:</i>	Non-Chinese (1)	Non-Indian (2)	Non-Vietnamese (3)	Non-East Asian (4)	Non-South Asian (5)	Non-Southeast Asian (6)
<i>Candidate is...</i>						
Chinese	0.394 (0.023)			0.384 (0.027)		
Indian		0.330 (0.021)			0.336 (0.022)	
Vietnamese			0.399 (0.019)			0.394 (0.022)
Constant	0.293 (0.018)	0.267 (0.015)	0.279 (0.015)	0.313 (0.021)	0.256 (0.015)	0.272 (0.018)
N	500	641	672	353	610	523
(b) Favorability						
<i>Respondents:</i>	Non-Chinese (1)	Non-Indian (2)	Non-Vietnamese (3)	Non-East Asian (4)	Non-South Asian (5)	Non-Southeast Asian (6)
<i>Candidate is...</i>						
Chinese	0.053 (0.017)			0.047 (0.021)		
Indian		0.046 (0.015)			0.045 (0.016)	
Vietnamese			0.073 (0.014)			0.065 (0.016)
Constant	0.702 (0.012)	0.689 (0.010)	0.699 (0.010)	0.714 (0.015)	0.684 (0.010)	0.700 (0.011)
N	573	753	765	407	718	589
(c) Represents Asian Americans						
<i>Respondents:</i>	Non-Chinese (1)	Non-Indian (2)	Non-Vietnamese (3)	Non-East Asian (4)	Non-South Asian (5)	Non-Southeast Asian (6)
<i>Candidate is...</i>						
Chinese	0.148 (0.017)			0.162 (0.020)		
Indian		0.099 (0.016)			0.102 (0.017)	
Vietnamese			0.155 (0.014)			0.152 (0.017)
Constant	0.637 (0.011)	0.616 (0.011)	0.627 (0.011)	0.643 (0.014)	0.610 (0.011)	0.624 (0.012)
N	575	755	767	409	720	591
(d) Represents Black Americans						
<i>Respondents:</i>	Non-Chinese (1)	Non-Indian (2)	Non-Vietnamese (3)	Non-East Asian (4)	Non-South Asian (5)	Non-Southeast Asian (6)
<i>Candidate is...</i>						
Chinese	-0.029 (0.019)			-0.021 (0.022)		
Indian		-0.014			-0.014	

		(0.016)			(0.016)	
Vietnamese			-0.011			-0.017
			(0.016)			(0.018)
Constant	0.634	0.622	0.629	0.640	0.617	0.633
	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.010)	(0.014)	(0.011)	(0.012)
N	575	755	767	409	720	591

(e) Represents Me

<i>Respondents:</i>	Non-Chinese (1)	Non-Indian (2)	Non-Vietnamese (3)	Non-East Asian (4)	Non-South Asian (5)	Non-Southeast Asian (6)
<i>Candidate is...</i>						
Chinese	0.022 (0.018)			0.038 (0.020)		
Indian		0.023 (0.016)			0.023 (0.016)	
Vietnamese			0.045 (0.015)			0.048 (0.017)
Constant	0.671 (0.011)	0.647 (0.010)	0.660 (0.010)	0.682 (0.013)	0.643 (0.011)	0.658 (0.012)
N	574	754	766	408	719	590

(f) Represents My Community

<i>Respondents:</i>	Non-Chinese (1)	Non-Indian (2)	Non-Vietnamese (3)	Non-East Asian (4)	Non-South Asian (5)	Non-Southeast Asian (6)
<i>Candidate is...</i>						
Chinese	0.043 (0.017)			0.057 (0.019)		
Indian		0.027 (0.015)			0.025 (0.015)	
Vietnamese			0.040 (0.014)			0.043 (0.017)
Constant	0.684 (0.011)	0.673 (0.010)	0.685 (0.009)	0.692 (0.012)	0.672 (0.010)	0.680 (0.011)
N	574	755	767	408	720	591

Robust standard errors in parentheses. Coefficients correspond to estimates presented in Figure 5. The outcomes are measured on a 5-point scale, rescaled to take evenly-spaced values from 0 to 1. Each outcome, represented by panels (a)-(f), is run in six separate specifications, represented by columns (1)-(6). For each specification, the outcome is run on a subsets of respondents whose national origin identification does *not* match that of the candidate's. For example, in Column (1), the outcomes are regression on an indicator for a Chinese candidate, among non-Chinese respondents.