From: **Journal of Demographic Economics** onbehalfof@manuscriptcentral.com
Subject: Journal of Demographic Economics - Decision on Manuscript ID JODE-2025-0009
Date: April 5, 2025 at 7:54 AM
To: hussainhadah@gmail.com

05-Apr-2025

Dear Dr. Hadah:

I have now heard back from referee(s) who reviewed manuscript # JODE-2025-0009 entitled "The Effect of Racial and Ethnic Attitudes on Asian Identity in the U.S" which you submitted to the Journal of Demographic Economics(JODE).

The comments of the reviewer(s) can be found in this e-mail. Unfortunately, both reviewers recommend rejection the paper and have converging comments. They point issues with measurement of your outcomes as well as with the fact that your analysis does not address a number of identification issues, making the paper mostly descriptive.

Based on this feedback, I am afraid that I have no choice but to decline publishing your paper in JODE. I trust you will find a lot of useful suggestions in the report to improve your paper for your next submission.

Thank you for considering JODE as a potential outlet for your research. I hope this decision does not discourage you from submitting your research to JODE in the future.

Sincerely,
Prof. Hillel Rapoport
Associate Editor, Journal of Demographic Economics
hillel.rapoport@psemail.eu

Reviewer(s)' Comments to Author:
Reviewer: 1

Comments to the Author
"The Effect of Racial and Ethnic Attitudes on Asian Identity in the U.S" Manuscript ID: JODE-2025-0009

Summary

This paper attempts to link racial bias at the state level to Asian identification of individuals with some Asian ancestry (limited to children under age 17 living with their parents). The bias measure used is a composite measure of Implicit Association Tests (IAT), the American National Election Studies (ANES), and hate crimes against Asians. Results suggest that states that have higher levels of bias have lower levels of Asian identification among individuals with Asian ancestry.

Comments

1. This is an interesting topic. I appreciate the attempt to construct a measure of racial bias, however, it is something of a black box, so it would be much more transparent to separate out the measures to see which measure is driving the effect.
2. A related issue that should be discussed further is whether the measures of bias used in the paper are based on physical aspects of Asian ancestry or bias related to names or other factors. Should we expect all individuals with Asian ancestry to be equally affected by these types of biases or would some groups be more affected than others? Can you connect the paper more closely to your other paper (Hadah, cited in the paper), but with Asian ancestry and name-related biases that can be uncovered through analysis of children of intermarriages?
3. I am curious as to why the main specification does not control for state and year fixed effects since they are likely to be correlated with unobservables that may be driving the estimates of interest. I am concerned that the results may not hold up to their inclusion. It would also be important to control for as many time-varying observables as possible using this type of identification strategy, or state-year time trends.
4. A related concern is that the Asian population is not equally distributed across states or cities in the U.S., and population is likely to be correlated with racial bias and other unobservables such as economic opportunities. I appreciate that the broader correlation between migration and bias is discussed in the article, but a more focused discussion of unobservables that may be correlated with the variables of interest and any expected biases that may result would be helpful.
5. The Data section should specify what years, states, and localities are included in each of the data sources and the extent to which they are representative of those populations.
6. The paper should discuss the link between survey responses and the children's racial identity, since parents are likely to be identifying the race of children.

Reviewer: 2

Comments to the Author
Summary:
An extensive literature examines Asian-White labor market gaps, where identity is typically self-reported. The paper analyses if individuals with Asian ancestry living in states with high levels of bias are less likely to self-identify as Asian. The author constructs a bias measure using a composite index derived from the Implicit Association Test (IAT), the American National Election Studies (ANES), and records of hate crimes against Asians. A 1 SD increase in bias decreases self-reported Asian identity by 9 percentage points among the first-generation immigrants. These findings have implications for research studying Asian-White gap in economic outcomes.

Major Points:
(1) Measurement: The paper uses IPUMS Current Population Survey (CPS) on ancestry to construct objective identity measure. The author restricts the sample to Asian, first-, second-, and third-generation immigrants who are "17 year old or younger and still live with their parents" between 2004 and 2021. A significant concern is that the CPS relies on household respondents—typically parents or caregivers—to report children's ethnic identity. This approach rests on two critical assumptions: (1) that the reported identity accurately reflects the child's true self-identification, and (2) that reporting

approach rests on two critical assumptions: (1) that the reported identity accurately reflects the child's true self-identification, and (2) that reporting tendencies are consistent across respondents (mother, father, or caregiver) and do not differ systematically between high- and low-bias states. The validity of these assumptions is not thoroughly addressed, and failing to account for potential reporting biases may significantly distort the findings. The author needs to do more work here in convincing that these assumptions hold.

(2) Empirical Strategy: The author examines the correlation between self-reported Asian identity at the individual level on the average bias in the state where the individual resides. An endogeneity problem arises because individuals may sort themselves into states based on prevailing levels of bias. In which direction should we expect these OLS estimates to be biased? There might be other unobserved variables that impact the self-reported Asian identity. The author should consider applying Oster bounds to assess robustness and discuss the implications of potential omitted variable bias. The paper needs to be upfront about this issues and discuss them thoroughly. Currently, the paper skips over these points.

(3) Results: Table A.1 suggests that the point estimates drop to around 3 percentage points as soon as the author includes state fixed effects and the coefficient is insignificant. One reason for excluding state fixed effects from the main empirical strategy is because of lack of large within-state variation in bias over time. This result raises a crucial concern: incorporating geographic fixed effects or using appropriately defined sampling units may absorb much of the variation in bias, potentially obscuring its impact on the estimated Asian-White wage gap. It underscores the need for an alternative empirical strategy leveraging within-state variation over time.

Minor Points:
(1) The author repeatedly emphasizes results based on point estimates without adequately addressing their statistical significance (e.g., Page 16, paragraph 2; Page 18, paragraph 1). In several cases, the standard errors are large relative to the point estimates, yet the discussion implies economically significant effects without sufficient caution. This lack of clarity risks overstating the findings and could mislead readers about the strength of the evidence.
(2) The discussion of the results section contains a few instances where the text does not accurately correspond to the figures and tables presented. For example, on page 15, the author writes: "I report the main results of estimating equation (4) in Figure (5). I present the results of estimating the main specification for second-generation immigrants in panel (A) and for sub-samples of AA, AW, and WA children in panels (B), (C), and (D), respectively". However, Figure (5) presents results for all generations, as well as first-, second-, and third-generation immigrants, respectively.