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**Once Hated, Now Loved?: Explaining the Changes in the Attitudes towards
Asian Immigrants in the United States and Australia**

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Abstract

This study examines what has led to the change in views on Asian immigrants in the U.S. and Australia. Recent studies suggest that immigration from Asian countries is less opposed than other groups such as Latinos and/or Muslims. This is a drastic change in public opinion on Asian immigrants given the hostile attitudes reflected in historical polls and legislations designed to prevent Asian immigrants in the two countries. What explains the changes in the attitudes towards a certain group of immigrants in traditional immigrant receiving societies? I argue that such change takes place when economic consideration overrides a sense of cultural threat. Though Asians are still perceived as a culturally distinctive racial group, there has been a growing consensus that Asian immigrants are generally beneficial for the national economies, positively affecting the natives' attitudes towards Asian immigrants. Examining 4,757 newspaper articles from 4 newspapers and 11 national surveys, I find that (1) the newspaper coverage that discusses Asian immigrants in the context of economy is more likely to increase and to present more positive sentiment when the governments began admitting a large number of skilled Asian immigrants, that is the mid/late 1990s for the U.S. and the late 1990s-early 2000s for Australia; (2) During the early 2000s, the individuals who are more educated and more conservative about government spending are more likely to prefer Asian immigrants to Latinos (in the U.S.) or Middle Easterners (in Australia) than those who are less educated and less opposed to government spending. The results are consistent with past existing research, emphasizing public sensitivity to fiscal burdens that immigrants may bring to the host nation as well as varying degrees of attitudes towards immigrants based on the origin of the immigrant, rather than on general ethnocentrism, argued by the group-specific attitude hypothesis.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Are Asians welcomed as immigrants in the United States and Australia? As coronavirus disease 2019

(COVID-19) has rapidly proliferated, so has xenophobia and hate crimes against Asians in different parts of the world including Australia and the United States.¹ While such incidents can represent Asian immigrants' precarious 'forever foreigner' status in the Western host countries (Tuan 1998), recent studies also find that Asian immigrants have been less opposed than other groups such as Muslims and/or Latinos (Hitlan et al. 2007; Reyna, Dobria, and Wetherell 2013). This is a drastic change in public opinion on Asian immigrants given the hostile attitudes reflected in historical polls and legislations designed to prevent Asian immigrants in the two traditional immigrant receiving countries. How should we understand the shift in attitudes towards Asian immigrants overtime? What explains the changes in the attitudes towards a certain group of immigrants in traditional immigrant receiving societies? What are the characteristics of those who prefer Asian immigrants to Latino immigrants or Middle Eastern immigrants in the early 2000s?

I argue that such change takes place when economic consideration overrides a sense of cultural threat. Though Asians are still perceived as a culturally distinctive racial group, there has been a growing consensus that Asian immigrants are generally beneficial for the national economies, positively affecting the natives' attitudes towards Asian immigrants. Examining 4,757 newspaper articles from 4 newspapers and 11 national surveys, I find that (1) the newspaper coverage that discusses Asian immigrants in the context of economy is more likely to increase and to present more positive sentiment when the governments began admitting a large number of skilled Asian immigrants, that is the mid/late 1990s for the U.S. and the late/1990s-early 2000s for Australia; (2) During the early 2000s, the individuals who are more educated and more conservative about government spending are more likely to prefer Asian immigrants to Latinos (in the U.S.) or Middle Easterners (in Australia) than those who are less educated and less opposed to government spending. The results are consistent with existing research, emphasizing public sensitivity to fiscal burdens that immigrants may bring to the host nation as well as varying degrees of attitudes towards

¹ Recent reports on Asian-hate crimes include: CNN, March 22 2021 (<https://www.cnn.com/2021/03/21/world/anti-asian-hate-crime-intl/index.html>); Time, March 22 2021 (<https://time.com/5947862/anti-asian-attacks-rising-worldwide/>).

immigrants based on the origin of the immigrant, rather than on general ethnocentrism, argued by the group-specific attitude hypothesis.

Although this paper provides a within-country analysis rather than cross-country analysis, it is worth pointing out some similarities between the two countries' historical developments of immigration. In fact, many existing studies have examined the two countries together by considering those as "traditional countries of immigration", "traditional immigrant receiving countries", and/or "industrialized Western countries of immigration" (Freeman 2000; Hogan and Haltinner 2015; Joppke 2005; Reitz, Zhang, and Hawkins 2011; Simon and Lynch 1999). First, the U.S. and Australia are often considered as the traditional countries of immigration for permanent settlement with relatively longer history of immigration (Freeman 2000, 8). Further, the two countries have been through similar paths of immigration policy. For example, their initial reactions towards non-White and non-European immigrants were hostile as suggested by discriminatory policy programs such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 in the U.S. and the White Australia policy that was established in 1901 (Hogan and Haltinner 2015; Tavan 2004). Then, there was the call for skill-based immigration raised in both countries since "the onset of "globalization" in the late 1980s" which led to an influx of Asian immigrants (Joppke 2005, 7).

This article increases scholarly understanding of political economy and racial attitudes. One established line of scholarship has emphasized the role of education in predicting higher levels of racial tolerance and stronger preference for diversity (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007, 2010; Haubert and Fussell 2006; Mayda 2006). However, the results of this article suggest that more educated respondents can still be intolerant of cultural/racial diversity and immigration if they are concerned about government spending. I show that those who are more educated and more opposed to government spending are likely to exhibit negative attitudes towards Latinos (in the U.S.) or Middle Easterners (in Australia) but exhibit positive attitudes towards Asian immigrants. Such findings suggest that those respondents of such social characteristics - higher educational attainment and being opposed to increased government spending - are

tolerant of a certain group only rather than being tolerant of diversity and immigration in general.

Further, this article attempts to weave together the nexus between public opinion over time, the role of education in pro/anti-immigration sentiment, and the group-specific attitudes by investigating two main puzzles. First, I explore whether and how news coverage around Asian immigrants has changed over time. I consider that a careful analysis of news coverage of Asian immigrants over time can explain why the natives' attitudes towards Asians have become largely positive in the two immigrant receiving countries. I argue that the increasingly positive attitudes towards Asian immigrants may not necessarily be a function of positive social interactions between natives and Asians but involves the influence of news coverage portraying Asian immigrants as a beneficial group of immigrants for national economies. Second, I ask, what types of individuals opt to prefer Asian immigrants today but not in the past? I argue that those who are more educated and more conservative about government spending favor Asian immigrants over other immigrant groups. Together with my first claim about the news coverage of Asian immigrants over time, I suggest that these individuals have stronger motivation to believe in the messages they receive from the news about which group is economically beneficial and adopt new attitudes as indicated.

The article proceeds as follows. I begin by theorizing how economic concerns can lead to Asian-specific preference. Next, I introduce my research design, followed by a discussion of shifts in attitudes towards Asian immigrants over time in order to gain a sense of how attitudes towards Asians have changed in the two countries in the last 3 decades. Fourth, I provide evidence showing how the tone and the context of newspaper coverage discussing Asian immigrants have changed in both countries. Fifth, I provide evidence that the respondents who are more educated and more concerned about government spending are more likely to prefer Asian immigrants during the early 2000s in both countries. Finally, I conclude by discussing this article's contributions and some policy implications.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND EMPIRICAL EXPECTATIONS

Earlier studies examining anti-immigrant attitudes can be classified into two broad sets: those highlighting

the role of ‘ideas’ and others giving weight to ‘interests’. Ideas-related explanations include non-economic factors such as beliefs, identity and/or ethnocentrism. Their argument typically highlights the link between anti-immigration sentiment and a larger set of ideologies such as xenophobia or cultural concerns. Some studies find that immigrants are often perceived as a threat to the majority’s cultural and/or ethnic identity in a settler’s society, and such perceptions can contribute to opposition to immigration (Hogan and Haltinner 2015; Kinder and Sears 1981; Shapiro 1997; Sides and Citrin 2007; Wilson 2000). While many scholars have provided ethnocentrism as a predictor of anti-immigrant sentiment or support for restrictive immigration policies (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014; Kinder and Kam 2010; Sniderman et al. 2002; Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Hagendoorn 2007), several recent works pay attention to group-specific attitudes (Ford 2011; Konitzer et al. 2019; Poynting and Mason 2007; Reyna, Dobria, and Wetherell 2013; Valentino, Brader, and Jardina 2013). Group-specific attitudes hypothesis argues that attitudes towards immigrants vary depending on the origin of the immigrant, rather than on general ethnocentrism.

Among those who see ‘interests’ as an explanatory variable, the focus is often made on economic forces and their studies can be divided into two categories: (1) individual-level circumstances including fears of labor-market competition, and (2) sociotropic accounts such as public sensitivity to fiscal burdens that immigrants may bring to the host nation. In the first case, fears about economic effects of labor-market competition drive anti-immigration feeling. In advanced economies, low-skilled, blue collar, and low-wage laborers are more likely to oppose immigration because they are subject to greater occupational competition with foreign workers immigrating to the host nation (Borjas and Freeman 1992; Clark and Legge 1997; Pettigrew, Wagner, and Christ 2007; Scheve and Slaughter 2001). The second variant of economic explanation includes the impact of economic downturns and public sensitivity to fiscal burdens that new citizens or immigrants may bring to the host nation. Some find that the level of opposition to immigration increases during economic downturns (Alexander and Simon 1993; Espenshade and Calhoun 1993; Gimpel and Edwards 1998; Goldstein and Peters 2014; Higham 2002; Lapinski et al. 1997; Olzak 1994), and others

argue that concerns or fears of fiscal burdens on national economy/infrastructure can contribute to the resistance to new immigrants (Coenders and Scheepers 1998; Quillian 1995). Several recent studies have shown that more educated respondents tend to be more tolerant of cultural diversity and immigration believing that immigration generates economic benefits for the host nation (Dustmann and Preston 2007; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007).

As discussed above, there is a rich literature on attitudes towards immigrants. However, there are at least three limitations in the existing research. First, the literature lacks a temporal comparative aspect of anti-immigrant sentiment. The fact that only a limited number of studies have examined anti-immigrant sentiment over time may explain why we see inconsistent findings in earlier studies. For instance, as a result of overlooking over-time trend of opposition to immigrants, one predictor that explains attitudes towards immigrants at one time period fails to explain the same relationship at another time period. Second, recent scholarly work on Asian immigrants is almost absent. Those examining group-specific attitudes, for instance, have their foci on Muslims and/or Latinos. The relative absence of scholarly attention on Asians is puzzling given that Asians are the fastest growing minority group in the two countries² and that the changing attitudes towards Asians represent a unique and dramatic shift from “coolie” to “model minority” (Ho 2017; Junn 2007; Stratton 2009). Third, considering the group-specific attitude hypothesis and the role of education in explaining pro-immigration attitudes together, it is hard to believe that more educated individuals tend to be more tolerant because of their economic knowledge or belief about immigration. Those who are more educated can be better at differentiating racial/ethnic groups on associated traits. Then, if they are particularly concerned about government spending, they would be likely to show positive attitudes towards an economically beneficial group only - not towards other immigrant groups. While I

² For example, the Parliamentary Library of Australia reports “the country profile for those born overseas has changed significantly” as 6 of the top 10 countries of birth according to 2016 Census are Asian countries whereas none of 10 were Asian in 1954. For more information, see https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1819/Quick_Guides/PopulationStatistics . Pew Research Center also reports that the Asian population in the U.S. is the fastest growing as of 2017. See <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/09/08/key-facts-about-asian-americans/>

agree that more educated individuals are more likely to exhibit higher levels of ethnic/racial tolerance and/or stronger preference for diversity, I consider that those of higher educational attainment might not necessarily be more tolerant of diversity if they are strongly opposed to government spending; thus, they selectively welcome a certain immigrant group that appears to be beneficial for the host economy.

Importantly, I join previous studies contending that the actual size of immigrant population itself is not associated with anti-immigration sentiment (Escandell and Ceobanu 2009; Gorodzeisky and Semyonov 2020; Herda 2013; Pottie-Sherman and Wilkes 2017; Semyonov et al. 2004; Semyonov, Raijman, and Gorodzeisky 2008). Whereas sorting out the causal issues is beyond the scope of this paper, one mechanism I propose, in an effort to explain the association between changes in newspaper coverage and the size of skilled Asian immigrants, is ‘efforts of interest groups and/or government in advocating the decision to admit a large number of Asian immigrants during the period using news coverage’. In other words, news coverage began discussing Asian immigrants more often in the context of economy and more positively when the size of skilled Asian immigrants began increasing and surpassing other racial groups.

My argument that Asian immigrants are preferred when they are considered as a benefit for the host economies leads to several observable implications. First, I consider that news coverage plays a significant role in portraying Asian immigrants as a beneficial group of immigrants for national economies. For both countries, I predict that changes in the context and tone of the newspaper coverage of Asian immigrants occur when the governments began admitting a large number of skilled Asian immigrants. I expect the following to be true:

***H1:** The newspaper coverage that discusses Asian immigrants in the context of economy is more likely to increase and to present more positive sentiment when the governments began admitting a large number of skilled Asian immigrants, that is the mid/late 1990s for the U.S. and the late/1990s-early 2000s for Australia.*

Second, assuming that the individuals who are more educated and more conservative about government spending are more likely to differentiate racial/ethnic groups on attributed traits (e.g. believing

a certain group makes more contribution to the host nation's economy), I expect the following to be true:

H2: During the period when the host countries start to face an influx of skilled Asian immigrants, the individuals who are more educated and more conservative about government spending are more likely to prefer Asian immigrants to Latinos (in the U.S.) or Middle Easterners (in Australia) than those who are less educated and less opposed to government spending.

3. DATA AND METHODS

Newspaper Text Data

Aiming to test H1 which predicts changes in the context and tone of newspaper coverage of Asian immigrants, I conduct two tests: (1) context analysis and (2) sentiment analysis. Given that having access to historical texts is a major limitation for analysis, the main advantage of using the four sources is that the text data as early as the late 1980s is accessible and downloadable. Though I focus on the mid/late 1990s (including early 2000s for Australia), my text data covers a longer time period - 1987~2005 for the U.S. and 1988~2014 for Australia - in order to have more coverage of time thus to provide a better overview of the contexts and tone of the coverage.

I collected the newspaper text from Factiva, Access World News, ProQuest Newspapers, and the New York Times Annotated Corpus. In total, 4,757 articles from 4 sources have been downloaded and analyzed. The two sources used for the case of U.S. are (1) the New York Times and (2) the USA Today and the 2 sources for Australia are (3) the Sydney Morning Herald and (4) the Australian Financial Review. The main advantage of using these four sources is that text data as early as the late 1980s is accessible and downloadable.³ I collected the newspaper articles in which Asian immigrants are discussed (i.e., the articles where one of the following words is mentioned: Asian immigrant, Asian immigration, Asian American/Asian Australian).⁴ As a result, 4,757 articles were identified and downloaded. 3,811 are from

³ Due to data and access limitations, I was not able to download other newspaper sources' historical texts. The 4 sources were the only newspaper sources downloadable and the articles published in the late 1980s were the earliest accessible.

⁴ In this paper, I consider Asian immigrant and Asian American/Asian Australian the same for the purpose of analysis. The terms,

the U.S. newspaper sources (i.e. the New York Times and the USA Today) and 946 are from the Australian newspaper sources (i.e. the Sydney Morning Herald and the Australian Financial Review). I refer to this text dataset as “Asian articles”. The downloaded text was unorganized and required considerable cleaning. I deal with this by processing the text with a set of cleaning rules (Appendix A⁵).

Text Analysis

I use some of word-counting techniques and dictionary-based methods to analyze newspaper sources and to test H1. First, I created my own dictionaries of terms - economic and cultural - to create two subsets of text data: one for the articles that contain words associated with the economy and the other for culture. All words in the two lists were stemmed meaning that the words are in the most basic conjugate forms.⁶ The list of economic words includes 8 words: *worker, job, labor (labour for Australia), employ, tax, skill, econom, financ*. Then, I pulled out all the articles where one or more economic words are mentioned. I call this subset of text as “Asian-Economic articles” and interpret it as the coverage discussing Asian immigrants in the context of economy. My cultural words are also in the most basic conjugate forms and 6 words are included: *custom, tradition, religio, ideolog, language, culture*. I repeated the searching process to pull out all “Asian-Cultural Articles”.

One might ask whether including 2 more words in the list of economic words can cause a problem such as pulling out and analyzing more economic articles. However, it is not overly problematic because

of course, are not always interchangeable. For example, Asian immigrants are more often used to refer to foreign-born Asian population whereas the term Asian Americans tends to refer to Asians who are US-born or have lived in the United States relatively longer. However, it is not overly problematic to consider the terms the same because the majorities of Asians in the U.S. and Australia are foreign-born. According to Pew Research Center, as of 2017, 59% of the U.S. Asian population was born in another country and this share rises to 73% among adult Asians (<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/09/08/key-facts-about-asian-americans/>). A directly comparable statistic doesn't exist for the case of Australia but the majority of Australians who are born overseas are Asian (39.7%) followed by European (33.9%) according to 2016 Census (<https://www.news.com.au/national/how-asian-are-we-really-what-australias-census-2016-showed-us/news-story/2f055e32e74cbe4341953006379b6394>).

⁵ Appendix A will be available soon.

⁶ Stemming is a common practice in text pre-processing and is seen in many studies utilizing text analysis (Ban et al. 2019; Haddi, Liu, and Shi 2013). For example, because I do not want “economic” and “economy” to convey different meanings to the algorithms, I include “econom” which is the most basic conjugate form of the word in my economic dictionary.

the 4 words included in the list of economic words (*worker, job, labor, employ*) have similar meanings if not synonymous. Also, the numbers of newspaper articles searched and pulled out using each of the lists are close: For the U.S. newspaper text data, 2,439 Asian-Economic articles and 2,072 Asian-Cultural articles were found which also means that there are 700 articles being categorized as both economic and cultural contexts. For the Australian newspaper text data, 616 Asian-Economic articles and 572 Asian-Cultural articles were found, meaning that 242 articles overlapping.

Importantly, I do not use raw counts of the mentions of economic and cultural words for my analysis. Instead, I find the proportions of “Asian-Economic” or “Asian-Cultural” articles to all “Asian articles” and compare the proportions over time in an effort to deal with some years when the total numbers of “Asian articles” are extremely small so that the raw counts of the mentions hardly mean anything when it is compared over time. The aforementioned steps for context analysis can be summarized in the following form:

$$\% \text{ Asian-Economic Articles}^* = \frac{\# \text{ of articles "Asian articles" Mentioning One or More Economic Words}}{\# \text{ of "Asian articles"}^{**}}$$

*articles discussing Asian immigrants in the context of economy

**articles mentioning one or more words from the following list: *Asian immigrant, Asian immigration, Asian American (Asian Australian for Australia)*

As previously discussed, I expect changes not only in the context of newspaper coverage of Asian immigrants but also in the tone or sentiment of the coverage. More specifically, I hypothesized that the tone of those economic discourses are more likely to increase in response to an influx of skilled Asian immigrants, that is the mid/late 1990s for the U.S. and the late/1990s-early 2000s for Australia. Measuring the sentiment of the “Asian-Economic articles” is important because an increase in economic context might be driven by increasingly ‘negative’ coverage of Asian immigrants. I conduct sentiment analysis to test the latter part of H1 which predicted the tone of those economic discourses presenting more positive sentiment during the period. Sentiment analysis, which can be defined as a “computational treatment of opinion, sentiment and

subjectivity in text” (Pang and Lee n.d., 1), enables the researcher or analyst to extract subjectivity and polarity of text and to classify the orientation of a text into either positive or negative (Enevoldsen and Hansen 2017, 88; Haddi, Liu, and Shi 2013, 26; Taboada et al. 2011, 268).

Whereas I create my own dictionaries of economic and cultural terms to examine the contexts in which Asian immigrants are discussed, I use one of the dictionaries already developed by scholars and analysts to capture the tone or sentiment of newspaper coverage. I use AFINN which is a sentiment dictionary constructed by Finn Årup Nielsen (Nielsen 2011). It is composed 2,477 sentiment-laden words manually scored in a range from -5 (very negative) to +5 (very positive) and works on the bag-of-words principle, meaning that a text is presented as a bag of its words wherein the words are treated and scored independently. This approach can cause some problems. For example, because it treats all words as independent entities, it disregards the semantic relation between the words. Despite such limitations, AFINN has been widely used and is considered to be a “quite successful and powerful” way of capturing the overall sentiment of the text (Enevoldsen and Hansen 2017, 89; Lai et al. 2020; Shugars and Beauchamp 2019). For my analysis, I use the sum of the numerical values associated at the words contained in the newspaper text data and examine over-time changes. If my hypothesis is correct, the sentiment scores of Asian-Economic articles during the mid/late 1990s for the U.S. and the late 1990s-early 2000s for Australia should appear to be an upward trend.

Survey Data & Survey Analysis

The United States

Data for Section 4:

In Section 4, I use 7 polls to examine the over-time attitudes towards Asian immigrants during a longer time period, that is between 1984 and 2015 (See Figure 1a). Those polls are not used to test any of the hypotheses but only to show the over-time attitudes towards Asian immigrants in Section 4 of this paper. In total, the datasets of 7 polls have been downloaded from Roper Center and the polls are:

Gallup/Newsweek Poll, Gallup Poll, Gallup/CNN/USA Today Poll, PSRA/Newsweek Poll, Columbus Day Survey, Princeton Survey Research Associates International/Newsweek Poll, Associated Press/GfK Knowledge Networks Poll.⁷ While the texts of the preambles are not identical, all 7 polls ask: “Do you think the number of immigrants now entering the U.S. from each of the following areas is too many, too few or about right?”. Thus, I consider the results to be comparable. In section 4, I report the % respondents who answered either “Too few” or “About right”, as a proxy for “positive attitude”.

Data and Variables for Section 5:

To test H2, I rely primarily on national surveys. For the analysis of the U.S., I draw on the 1992 and 2000 American National Election Studies (ANES) surveys, with representative samples of American adult citizens. For comparability across years, I use the ANES Time Series Cumulative Data file in which all of the ANES Time Series Studies since 1948 are merged into a single file. Only two years - 1992 and 2000 - are used to test H2 because the dependent variable of interest, the feeling thermometer item for Asian Americans, was not asked in other years such as 1994, 1996, and 1998. I restrict my analysis of ANES to Whites only.⁸

To proxy the relative standing of Asian immigrants or Asian-specific preference, I created a group difference score subtracting the thermometer scores for Latinos from the scores for Asians. I chose Latino immigrants as a comparable group as they represent the largest immigrant group followed by Asian immigrants. In both 1992 and 2000 ANES surveys, respondents were asked to rate each group between 0 and 100 degrees where 100 degrees mean that they feel favorable and warm towards the particular immigrant group.⁹ Using the two feeling-thermometer ratings for Latinos and Asians, I constructed a group

⁷ Original Datasets Downloaded from Roper Center (<https://ropercenter.cornell.edu/>)

⁸ A number of existing studies focus on White citizens only including those examining group specific attitudes as well as others studying ethnocentrism more generally (Kinder and Kam 2010; Konitzer et al. 2019; Valentino, Brader, and Jardina 2013). However, I was not able to apply the same restriction to the Australian national surveys as those do not contain a question item asking respondent’s racial identity.

⁹ Respondents are given the explanation of the feeling thermometer and asked to rate specific political figures. Then, respondents are asked to recall the explanation of the thermometer and asked to rate groups using the thermometer. In both years (1992 and 2000) respondents are asked to rate “Asian-Americans”. However, slightly different terms have been used to refer to Latinos. For

difference score subtracting the thermometer scores for Latinos from the scores for Asians and scaled it to range from -1 to +1. OLS (Ordinary Least Square) is used for regression models.

I include an interaction term of “Education” and “Opposing Government Spending” to test H2. Education in ANES cumulative data was coded on a 7-point scale, ranging from “8 grades or less” to “Advanced degrees incl. LLB”. However, I merged the third and fourth options - “12 grades, diploma or equivalency” and “12 grades, diploma or equivalency plus non-academic” respectively - so it is now on a 6-point scale. “Government Services-Spending Scale” was originally measured on a 7-point scale with higher values representing supporting more services provided by government (i.e. not opposed to government spending) but I recoded it. It is still on a 7-point scale but higher values now represent opposition to more services (i.e. opposed to government spending). I control for standard demographic variables and other relevant factors whenever possible. These controls include a standard seven-category measure of party identification, ranging from strong Democrat to strong Republican, a five-category measure of respondent’s financial situation over the last year as well as a five-category measure of respondent’s attitudes about the condition of nation’s economy over the last year both ranging from much better (1) to much worse (5).

Australia

Unlike the U.S., there is no time series Australian survey that includes identical items measuring the attitudes towards Asians across decades. In an effort to circumvent the problem with data limitations, numerous national surveys are pooled together and the items with similar wordings are used for comparability. For Section 4 where the over-time trends of the attitudes towards Asian immigrants are

example, the 1992 ANES asks respondents to rate “Hispanic-Americans” whereas “Hispanics (Hispanic-Americans)” is the term that has been used since 1996. The text of the preamble to the questions is as follows: “I’d like to get your feelings towards some of our political leaders and other people who are in the news these days. I’ll read the name of a person and I’d like you to rate that person using something we call the feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm towards the person. Ratings between 0 degrees and 50 degrees mean that you don’t feel favorable towards the person and that you don’t care too much for that person. You would rate the person at the 50 degree mark if you don’t feel particularly warm or cold towards the person.”

reported, I draw on 5 Australian surveys: the Australian Election Study (1987, 2001), the National Social Science Survey (1995-6), and the Scanlon Social Cohesion Survey (2010, 2011).

Data for Section 4:

The wordings for items used for analysis are not identical across the numerous surveys that have been pooled together.¹⁰ One issue that arises when comparing the two different items is that the ‘seemingly neutral’ responses such as ‘stay about the same’ responses to the question asking if the government should accept more or less of Asian migrants can imply positive/warm or at least lukewarm attitudes towards Asian immigrants. It is unclear whether respondents answered “stay about the same” because they feel neutral or no feeling towards Asian immigrants, or because their feelings towards Asian immigrants are warmer than neutral so that they are happy to see the inflow of Asian immigrants continue.

In an effort to help solve the issue and make those items comparable with feeling thermometer items, I coded 1 for positive responses as well as neutral responses, thus creating a binary variable for non-negative attitude towards Asian immigrants. For example, positive and neutral responses include thermometer score 50 or higher (ex. NSSS 1995-6) as well as “Neutral/Stay about the Same” and above for categorical items (ex. AES 2001, SSCS 2010 and 2011).

Data and Variables for Section 5:

NSSS 1995-6: In Section 5 where I test H2, I only utilize 2 of the 5 surveys – the National Social Science Survey (1995-6) and the Australian Election Study (2001) - because the dependent variable of interest was not asked in the other three surveys.¹¹ Fortunately, though, because the two surveys were conducted in 1995-6 and 2001 respectively, having these two surveys for analysis allows me to test my argument that the changes in the relative standing of Asian immigrants occurred during the late 1990s and

¹⁰ For example, the measure for feeling thermometer is not comparable with categorical items which give respondents options to choose one answer from “Accept a lot more”, “Accept some more”, “stay about the same”, “Accept some less”, and “Accept a lot less” to assess respondents’ level of acceptance for Asian immigrants.

¹¹ The other three surveys (Australian Election Study 1987, Scanlon Social Cohesion Survey 2010 and 2011) asked about the feelings towards Asian immigrants only.

early 2000s. To proxy for the relative standing of Asian immigrants in Australia, I created a group difference score subtracting the thermometer scores for Middle Easterners from the scores for Asians. I chose Middle Eastern immigrants as an immigrant group for comparison with Asian immigrants. One advantage of comparing Asian and Middle Eastern immigrants is that some surveys contain questions about feelings towards both immigrant groups. Also, there is not a sizable group that is non-white and non-European other than Asians and Middle Easterners in Australia.

Though the dependent variables for all 2 Australian survey are the difference scores between Asians and Latinos, the dependent variables are constructed slightly differently. In NSSS 1995-6, respondents were asked to rate a number of racial/ethnic groups between 0 and 100 degrees where 100 degrees mean that they feel favorable and warm towards the group.¹² Instead of asking respondents about their feelings towards “Asian immigrants” or “Middle Eastern immigrants” as a group, respondents were to rate 7 ethnic groups separately. The groups include (1) Vietnamese migrants, (2) Chinese migrants, (3) Migrants from India, and (4) Lebanese migrants. I consider the three items measuring respondents’ feelings towards Vietnamese, Chinese, and Indian immigrants to be the proxy for the feeling towards Asian immigrants, and the item on Lebanese migrants to proxy the feeling towards Middle Eastern immigrants. I merged the responses to the three items and recoded it from 0 to 100 to create a proxy for the feelings towards Asian immigrants. Then, I created a group difference score subtracting the thermometer scores for Middle Eastern immigrants from the scores for Asians and scaled it to range from -1 to +1. The main dependent variable used for NSSS 1995-6, therefore, is the difference scores between Asian immigrants and Middle Eastern immigrants as a proxy for ‘Asian-specific preference’. It is scaled to run from -1 (preference for Middle Eastern immigrants) to +1 (preference for Asian immigrants). OLS (Ordinary Least

¹² Similar to ANES, respondents are given the explanation of the feeling thermometer and asked rate specific political figures are asked first. Then, respondents are asked to recall the explanation of the thermometer and asked to rate groups using the thermometer. The text of the preamble to the questions is as follows: “You probably feel favourable about some people or groups and unfavourable about others. Please show your feelings with this ‘feeling thermometer’- use any number from 0 to 100 for a rating. 100 is the highest, for people you feel very warm or favourable about, and 0 is the lowest, for people you feel very strongly against. If you are neutral, neither for nor against, give a rating of 50.”

Square) is used for the regression model.

Again, I include an interaction term of “Opposing Government Spending” and “Education”. Unlike the case of ANES, education in NSSS 1995-6 is not measured on a scale but through separate question items. The responses to the questions were coded on a single 4-point scale, with 1 corresponding to “completed an apprenticeship, vocational qualification, or basic certificate after year 9 or 10 in school” and 4 representing “a higher degree (MA, PhD) or post-graduate diploma”. Two question items were merged to proxy “opposition to government spending” as NSSS 1995-6 does not contain “Government Services-Spending Scale” item. One of the two items asks about entitling an imaginary character introduced in the survey to welfare benefits, and the other asks the same question but entitling it to the character’s children.¹³ The responses to the two questions were merged and recoded to lie between 0 to 1 where 1 indicates a respondent being strongly opposed to both cases. Also, I control for standard demographic variables and other relevant factors including a seven-category measure of party identification, ranging from strong Labour to strong Liberal, a eight-category measure of respondent’s financial situation over the last year ranging from “delighted” (1) to “terrible” (8).

AES 2001: Australian Election Study 2001 contains a question item asking “Do you think the government should accept more or less of the following groups of migrants?”, measured on five-category measure. Respondents were asked to rate 4 ethnic groups including (1) Migrants who are Asian and (2) Migrants who are from the Middle East. In order to create a proxy for the relative standing of Asian immigrants, I, first, recoded the responses to scale from “Accept a lot less” to “Accept a lot more”, then subtracted the Middle Eastern immigrant responses from Asian immigrant responses.

¹³ The story about an imaginary character is as follows: “Consider the following situation. Hans van Deth is a 30 year old Dutch man who came to Australia in 1987 on a six month visitor’s visa to stay with his cousin. While he was here he found that he liked Australia very much. During that time, a friend of his cousin offered him a job in his small business, which Hans accepted. When the visa ran out Hans did not return to the Netherlands. He moved into his own flat and began to build up a social life. He knew that he should do something about his illegal status as an unlawful overstayer, but he just didn’t get around to it. He became involved with an Australian woman whom he now lives with. He’s never been in any trouble with the law, has a good work record and is well accepted by his neighbours. He speaks good English.”

Education, the first variable for the interaction term, is coded on a single 6-point scale, with 1 representing “No qualification since leaving school” and 6 being “Postgraduate Degree or Postgraduate Diploma 2”. I use “Reducing Taxes-Spending more on Social Services Scale” to proxy “opposition to government spending”, which is another variable for the interaction term. The item was originally measured on a 5-point scale with higher values representing supporting more services (i.e. not opposed to government spending). I rescaled it to range from (1) ‘strongly favour spending more on social services’ to (5) ‘strongly favour reducing taxes’ (i.e. opposed to government spending). The controls include: a seven-category measure of party identification ranging from strong Labor to strong Liberal, a five-category measure of respondent’s current financial situation compared to 12 months ago as well as a five-category measure of respondent’s attitudes about the current economic situation of the country compared to 12 months ago both ranging from “a lot better” (1) to “a lot worse” (5).

4. OVER TIME SHIFTS IN ATTITUDES TOWARDS ASIANS

The purpose of this section is to show that the attitudes towards Asians have become increasingly positive in the U.S. since the mid/late 1990s and in Australia since the late 1990/early 2000s. Also importantly, this section explores the relative standing of Asian immigrants through within-country-across-group-comparison. To gain a sense of how attitudes towards Asians have changed in the two countries, the following Figure 1 and Figure 2 report the positive attitudes towards Asian immigrants in the last 3-4 decades.

The United States

As Figure 1a shows, the positive attitudes towards Asian immigrants have increased steadily since 1993 until 2006. For example, 33 percent of respondents expressed positive feelings towards Asian immigrants in 1993 but more than 60 percent showed positive feelings towards Asian immigrants in 2006 (61%). In 1984, the difference between Asian immigrants and European immigrants was 22 percentage points but in 1995 it is as close as 9 percentage points, which suggests that though Americans still prefer

European immigrants more, the relative standing of Asian immigrants has increased steadily and strikingly.

Figure 1a. The U.S.: % Positive Attitudes towards the Numbers of Immigrants from 4 Regions, 1984 – 2015¹⁴

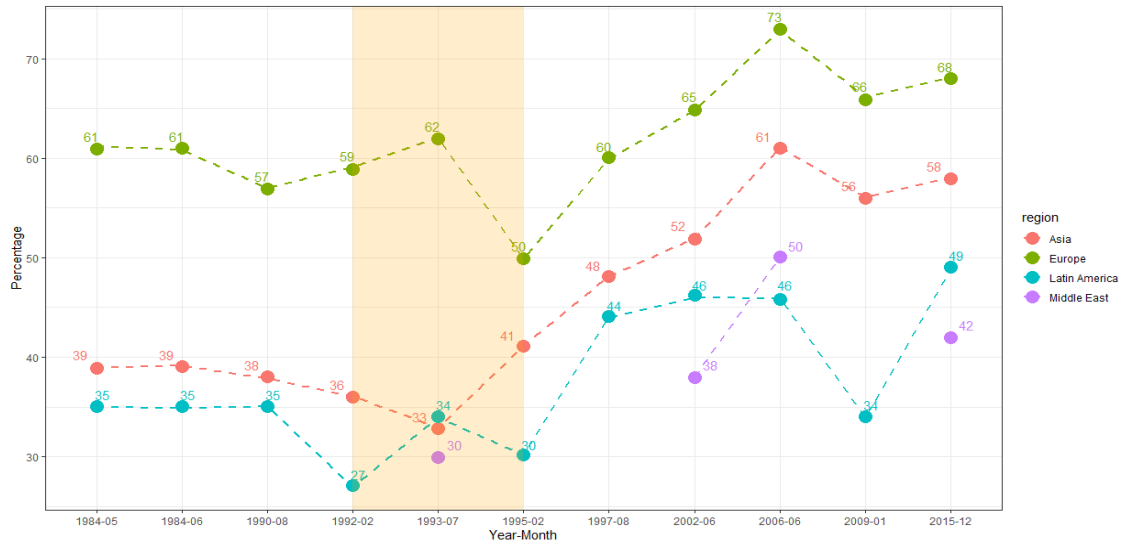


Figure 1b. The U.S.: White Mean Feeling Thermometer Scores of Asian Americans and Latino Americans, ANES 1992-2016



The relative levels of positive attitudes towards Asian immigrants amongst White Americans have

¹⁴ While the texts of the preambles are not identical, all 7 polls ask: “Do you think the number of immigrants now entering the U.S. from each of the following areas is too many, too few or about right?”. Thus, I consider the results to be comparable. I report the % respondents who answered either “Too few” or “About right”. Source: Gallup/Newsweek Poll, Gallup Poll, Gallup/CNN/USA Today Poll, PSRA/Newsweek Poll, Columbus Day Survey, Princeton Survey Research Associates International/Newsweek Poll, Associated Press/GfK Knowledge Networks Poll (Downloaded from Roper Center)

increased dramatically since the mid 1990s. Looking at the period 1993-1995, the positive attitudes towards Asian immigrants increased by 8 percentage points whereas the positive attitudes towards European and Latino immigrants decreased during the same period. Starting in 1995, the difference between European and Asian immigrants becomes generally narrower and the difference between Latino and Asian immigrants appears to be generally larger. Such pattern suggests that Asian immigrants' relative standing has become closer to the Europeans immigrants and further from the Latino immigrants since the mid/late 1990s.

Similar patterns emerge in Figure 1b which presents White Americans' feelings towards Asian Americans and Latino Americans between 1992 and 2016. The weighted mean feeling thermometer scores of Asian Americans and Latino Americans in 1992 is only 0.19 (58.24-58.05) but the difference score in 2000 is 2.36 (63.77-61.41). Taken together, the patterns shown in Figure 1a and 2b suggest, first, Asian immigrants' relative standing within the U.S. across groups has increased over time, and, second, that such change in relative standing of Asian immigrants took place in the mid/late 1990s.

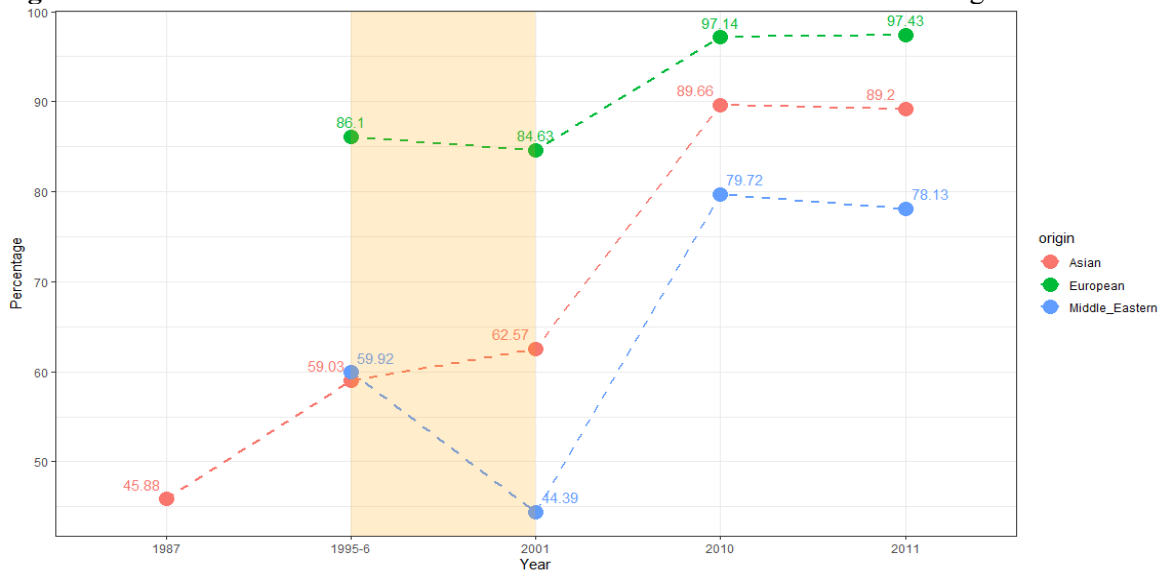
Australia

Looking at Figure 2, the positive attitudes towards Asian immigrants have increased steadily since 1987 until 2010. In 1987, for example, 45.88% expressed either positive or neutral feelings towards Asian immigrants but it increased to almost 90% in 2010. The relative standing of Asian immigrants is more striking when the measures are compared across other immigrant groups. Though the attitudes towards European immigrants also show an increase in 2010 from 84.63% to 97.14%, the rate of increase is not as striking as Asian immigrants' (from 62.57% to 89.66%). Though the attitude towards the migrants from Middle East was more positive than towards Asians in 1995-6, the two estimates crossed in 2001 and the relative standing of Middle Eastern immigrants continues to stay lower than Asian immigrants since then. In fact, during the the late 1990s and early 2000s, the relative standing of Asians, alone, shows an increase whereas other groups' standings decline during the same period.

Also as indicated in Figure 2, the distance between green and orange line graphs representing

European and Asian immigrants' standings becomes smaller over time – suggesting that though Australians still prefer European immigrants the most, their feelings towards Asian immigrants have become more positive in a relative sense. Taken together, the patterns shown in Figure 2 lead us to consider, first, Asian immigrants' relative standing within Australia has increased over time, and, second, that such change took place in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Figure 2. Australia: % Neutral or Positive Attitudes towards the Numbers of Immigrants from 3 Regions



5. NEWSPAPER ANALYSIS

In the previous section, I showed that the attitudes towards Asians, in fact, have become increasingly positive in the U.S. and Australia since the mid/late 1990s for the U.S. and the late 1990/early 2000s for Australia. In this section, I test Hypothesis 1, with the twofold aim to suggest that the news coverage began discussing Asian immigrants more often in the context of economy and more positively when the size of high skilled Asian immigrants increased dramatically and even started to surpass the size (s) of high skilled workers from other region (s), on the one hand, and that news coverage plays a significant role in portraying Asian immigrants as a beneficial group of immigrants for national economies. Aiming to test H1 which predicts changes in the context and tone of newspaper coverage of Asian immigrants, I conduct two tests - (1) context analysis and (2) sentiment analysis - on the newspaper text I collected. From the two tests, I

expect to find results lending support to H1 predicting changes in the context and tone of the newspaper coverage discussing Asian immigrants in the mid/late 1990s for the U.S. and the late/1990s-early 2000s for Australia.

The United States

Figure 3 represents the contexts of newspaper articles in which Asian immigrants are discussed during the period 1987-2005. The two subfigures report the proportions of economic context and cultural context respectively to the entire newspaper articles discussing Asian immigrants, Asian immigration and/or Asian Americans. For example, looking at the bar for 1997 in Figure 3a, almost 67 percent of the newspaper articles discussing Asian immigrants mention economic words such as employ, job, and tax. Figure 3b indicates that only 45.45 percent of the newspaper articles that mention Asian immigrants include cultural words such as custom, tradition, and religion. In other words, the results shown in Figure 3 report the contexts in which Asian immigrants are discussed in the newspaper articles being analyzed.

Looking at Figure 3a, there is an upward trend during the mid/late 1990s - highlighted in darker green. Such trend appears to be even more evident when it is compared with Figure 3b representing the proportion of cultural context over time to the total articles discussing Asian immigrants. As indicated in Figure 3b, the bars highlighted in darker yellow do not show an increase during the same period, suggesting that it is the economic context, not the cultural context, that continues to increase during the mid/late 1990s. This finding is consistent with the first part of H1 expecting that the newspaper coverage discusses Asian immigrants more often in the context of economy during the mid/late 1990s in the U.S..

The result reported in Figure 3 is an evidence in support of the first part of H1 predicting ‘increasing economic context’ of the coverage discussing Asian immigrants. Then, I now conduct sentiment analysis of the same subset of articles analyzed and reported in Figure 3 in order to test the remaining component of H1 expecting ‘increasing positive sentiment’ of the coverage over time.¹⁵

¹⁵ It is worth noting that similar upward trends can also be found in other period such as between 1987~1989. However, looking

Figure 3a: The U.S.: % Economic Contexts Over Time in the articles discussing Asian immigrants/Asian Americans

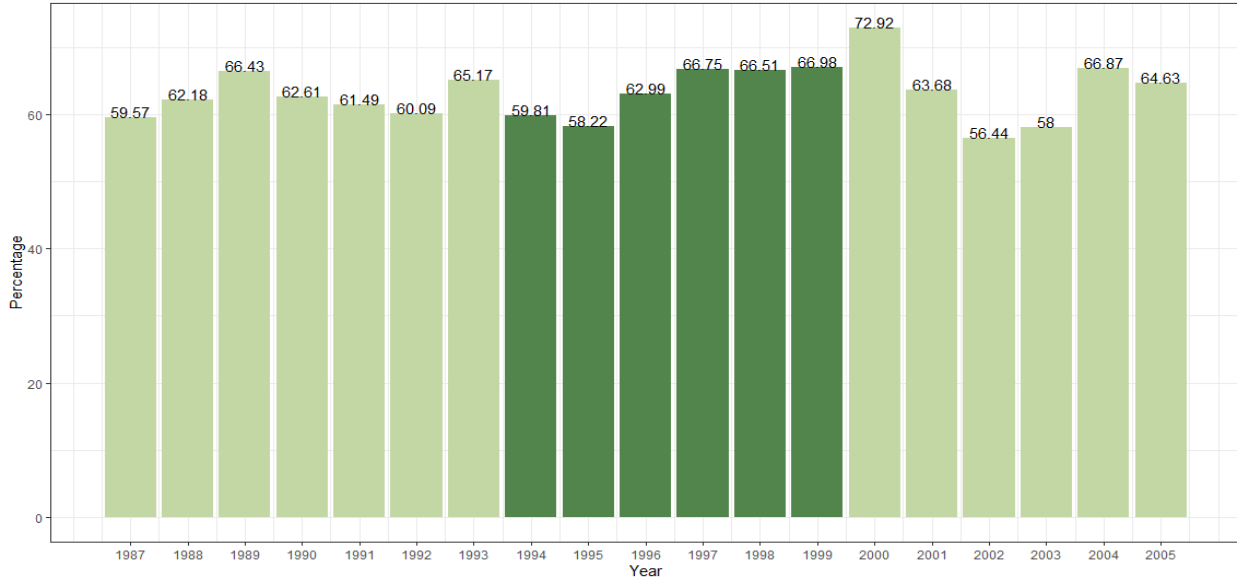


Figure 3b: The U.S.: % Cultural Contexts Over Time in the articles discussing Asian immigrants/Asian Americans

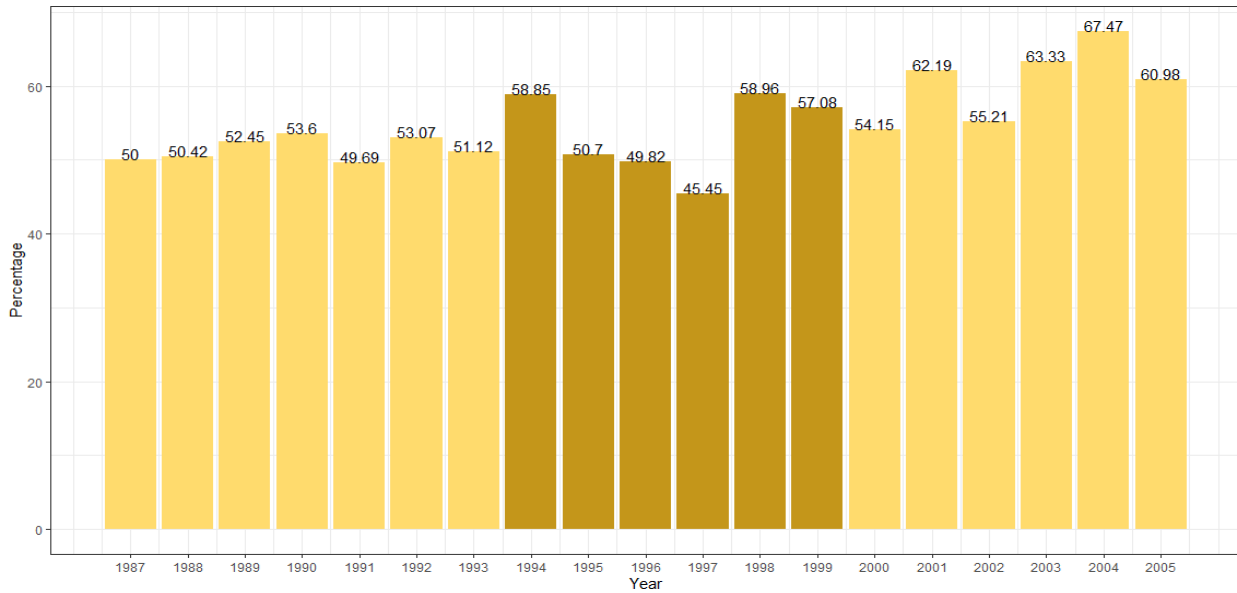
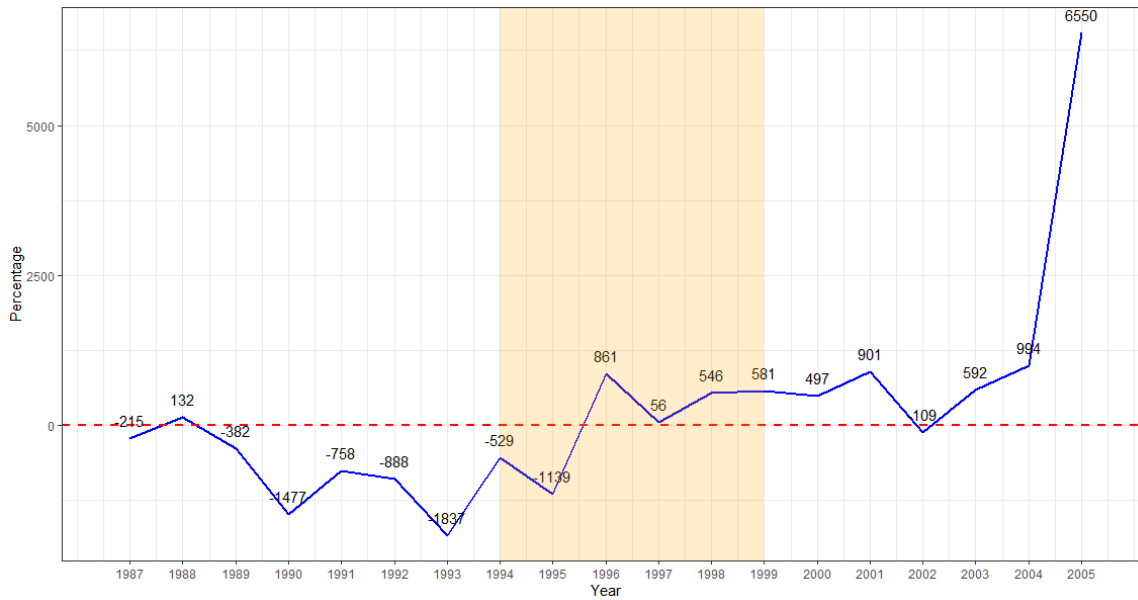


Figure 4 reports the results of sentiment analysis. The sentiment score remains negative (i.e. remains

across Figure 3 and Figure 4, we see that the increase in the economic context during 1987~1989 does not entail an increase in positive tone as the sentiment scores of 1987 and 1989 are negative (i.e. remains below the red dashed line indicating 0 sentiment score).

below the red dashed line indicating 0 sentiment score) in almost all years prior to 1996 - one exception is 1988. Then, there is a significant increase in the sentiment score between 1995 and 1996 (from -1139 to +861) and the score stays positive (i.e. stays above the red dashed line) until the early 2000s. Therefore, the result of Figure 4 lends support to the second part of H1 predicting the tone of coverage discussing Asian immigrants in the context of economy becomes increasingly positive in the mid/late 1990s.

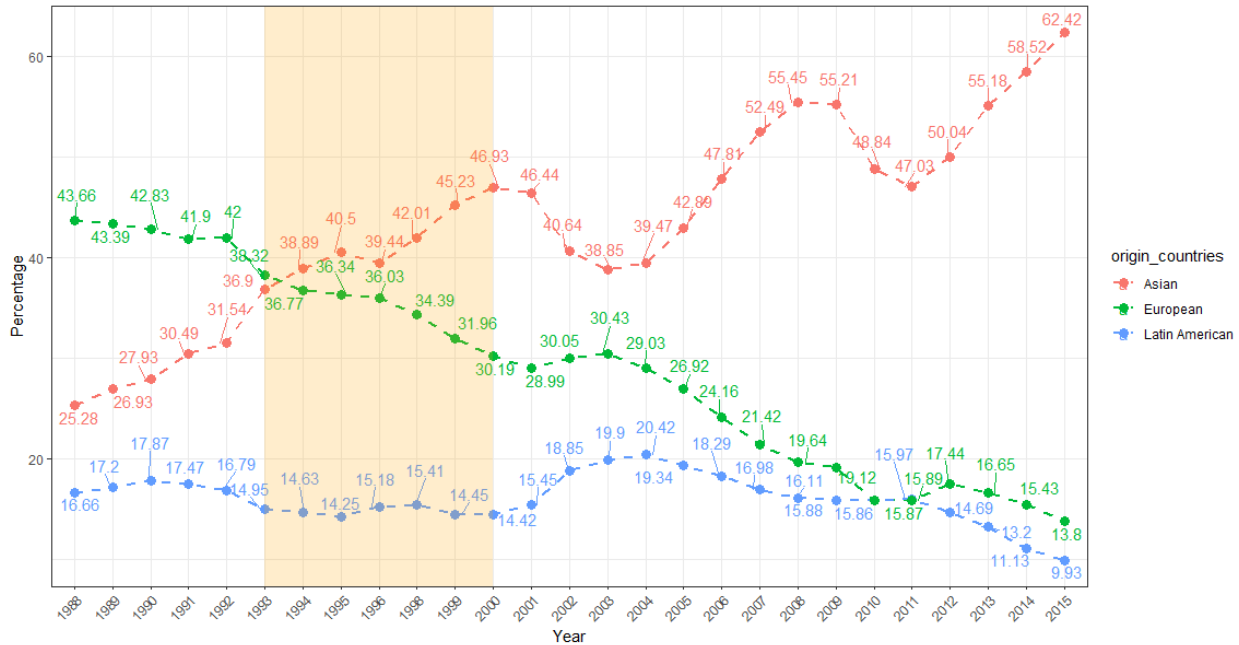
Figure 4. The U.S.: Sentiment Score of Coverage Discussing Asian Immigrants in Economic Context



One question that arises when examining the results of text analysis reported in Figure 3 and 4 is about the timing. One might ask “why” it was during the mid/late 1990s when the change occurred. Why did the newspaper coverage change its tone and context during the period? The mechanism I propose is about an association between the changes in the tone and context of news coverage and the size of skilled Asian immigrants during the period. My claim is that news coverage began discussing Asian immigrants more often in the context of economy and more positively when the size of skilled Asian immigrants began increasing and surpassing other racial groups, suggesting potential efforts of interest groups and/or government in advocating or justifying the decision to admit a large number of Asian immigrants during the period. Though sorting out the causal issue is beyond the scope of this paper, the results of Figure 5 together

with the results of Figures 3 and 4 lend support to this mechanism.

Figure 5. The U.S.: Admitted Workers with H-1B (Specialty Occupations) by Region of Citizenship (Initial & Continued Approvals)¹⁶



The H-1B is a non-immigrant visa that allows U.S. employers to employ high skilled foreign workers or foreign workeres in “specialty occupations”.¹⁷ The H-1B visa program was launched in 1990, and H-1B entries were termed “Distinguished meriod or ability (H1)” prior to 10/01/1991 (Fiscal Year 1992). Figure 5, reporting the distribtuion of beneficiaries by region, shows that the % beneficiaries from Asian countries has increased steadily since 1984. In 1984, for example, Asian workers represented only 18% of all beneficiaries which is only 1.3 percentage points higher than Latino workers and almost 30 percentage points lower than European workers. By 2015, however, Asians make up over 60% of all admitted H-1B workers whereas European and Latino workers are only 13.8% and 9.9% respectively.

The upward trend and the overall increase in the size of Asian high skilled worers is striking when

¹⁶ H-1B visa program was launched in 1990 (Immigration Act of 1990). Prior to 10/01/1991 (fiscal year 1992), H1-B entries were termed 'Distinguished merit or ability (H1)'.
¹⁷ A specialty occupation requires the application of highly specialized knowledge and a bachelor’s degree (or equivalent work experience). Source: <https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/temporary-workers/h-1b-specialty-occupations-dod-cooperative-research-and-development-project-workers-and-fashion>

it is compared with other groups. For example, only Asians show an upward trend during the early/mid 1990s. The % Asian beneficiaries increased by over 5 percentage points in 1993 and surpasses Europeans for the first time in 1994. Therefore, the results of Figure 5 showing that Asian high skilled workers have steadily increased in their size and even surpassed European workers during the mid 1990s show support for the mechanism I proposed in an effort to explain the timing of changes in newspaper coverage.

Australia

Though I was able to access and collect the text of a longer period (i.e. 1987-2014) for the Australian sources, the number of Australian newspaper articles discussing Asian immigrants, Asian immigration and/or Asian Australians is considerably smaller than the case of the U.S. (See Appendix B1 and B2¹⁸). For example, less than 10 articles discuss Asian immigrants in 1999, 2007, 2008, 2010 and 2012. In order to circumvent the problem of having not enough text to analyze, I merge two consecutive years' text data for analysis (i.e. datasets for 1987 and 1988 are combined).

Figure 6 shows the contexts of Australian newspaper articles in which Asian immigrants are discussed during the period 1987-2013. The two subfigures report the proportions of economic context and cultural context respectively to the entire newspaper articles discussing Asian immigrants, Asian immigration and/or Asian Australians. For example, in 1997-98, about 69 percent of the newspaper articles discussing Asian immigrants mention economic words such as job, tax, and employ (Figure 6a), but less than 58 percent mention cultural words (Figure 6b). I expected that the economic context would increase during the late 1990s and early 2000s. However, the results reported in Figure 6a are not consistent with the expectation. The estimate for 1997-98 stays almost the same as the estimate for 1995-96. The estimates even decrease by almost 7 percentage points from 1997-98 to 1999-2000. In other words, the economic context during the time period this study focuses on - i.e. from the late 1990s to early 2000 for the Australian case - does not show support for my expectation.

¹⁸ Appendix B will be available soon.

Figure 6a. Australia: % Economic Contexts Over Time in the articles discussing Asian immigrants/Asian Australians

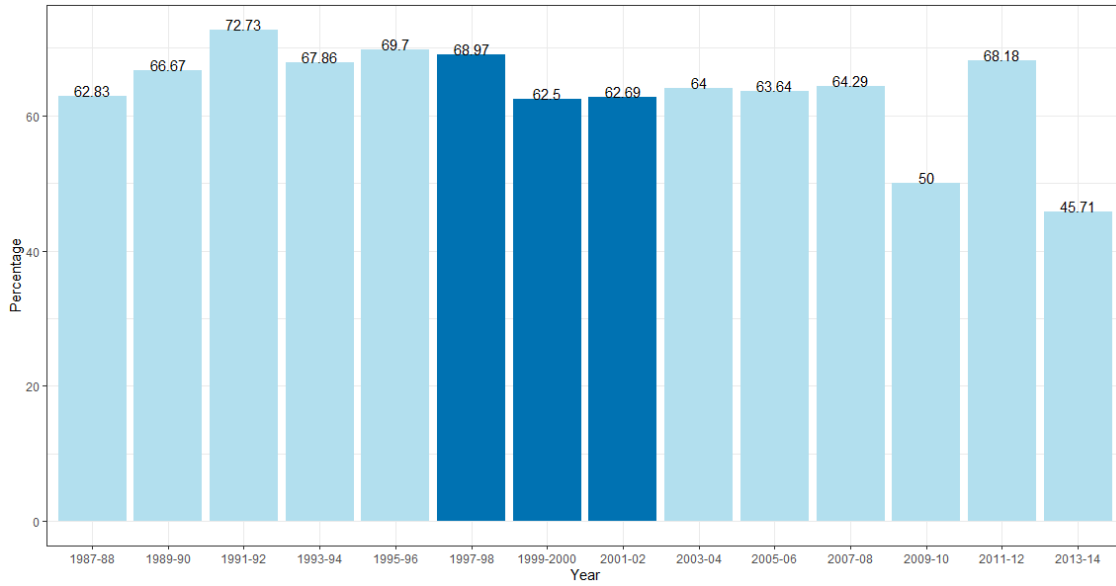
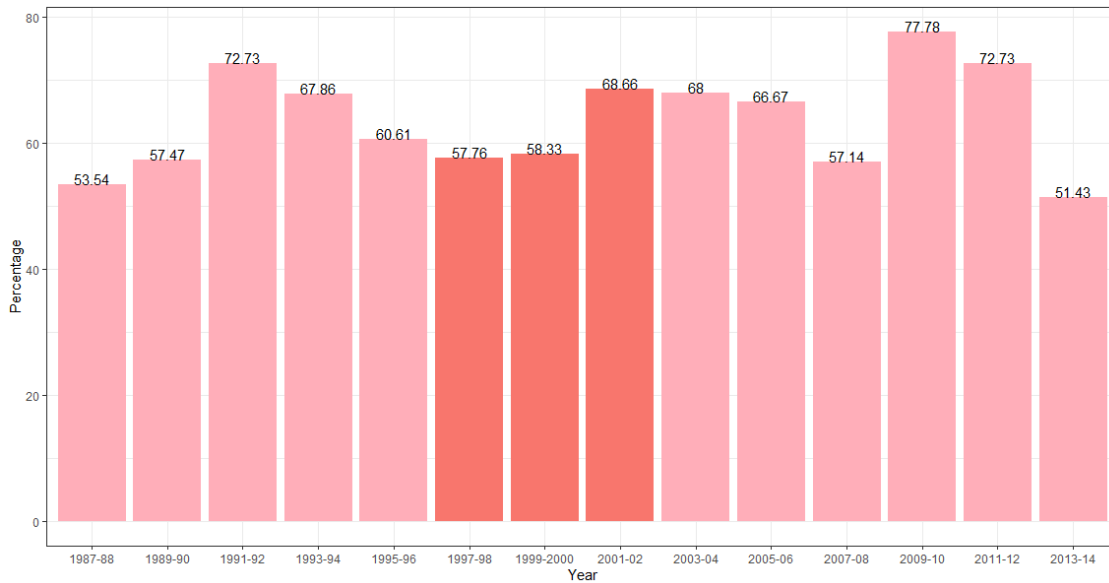


Figure 6b. Australia: % Cultural Contexts Over Time in the articles discussing Asian immigrants/Asian Australians



One possible explanation for this result is that Asian immigration was already discussed in the context of economy before the late 1990s - probably since the early/mid 1980s. It is known that the Labor governments of Bob Hawke and Paul Keating (1983-96) had “engagement with Asia” as a central element

of Australian foreign policy discourse and such approach led “Australia’s patterns of immigration and trade” to be “reoriented to the Asian region” (Capling 2008, 609). For example, Whitlam who consistently made his intention of abolishing the White Australia policy completely criticized the opposing views and expressed his support for Asian skilled immigrants by stating that “If a man or a woman has the skills which are welcome in Australia - the last thing we should have in mind is what race he or she is” (Tavan 2004, 119).

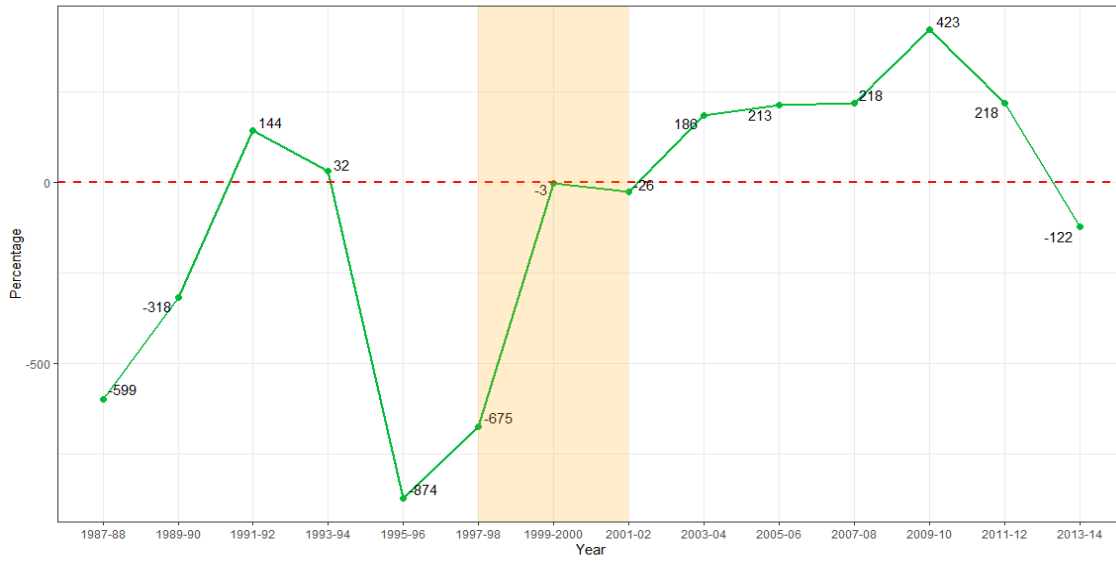
That being said, the estimate for economic context during the late 1990s and early 2000s is still higher than the estimate for cultural context of the same period. Looking across the subfigures, though there is a moderate upward trend in the cultural context, the estimates stay below 60 percent during the late 1990s (Figure 6b). In contrast, the economic context during stays above 60 percent during the period 1995-2002 (Figure 6a). This result is partially consistent with the first part of H1 because Asian immigrants during the period were more often discussed in the context of economy than culture in the Australian newspaper sources I analyze.

Looking at the overall estimates reported in Figure 6a again, it is worth noting that the proportions of economic context remain relatively high and stable over time. This result suggests that Asian immigrants in the Australian newspaper sources have long been discussed in the context of economy. Asian immigrants in the Australian newspaper sources have constantly been discussed in the context of economy since 1987-88, except several recent years such as 2009-10 and 2013-14 when the economic context is 50 percent or less. Such high and consistent estimates appear even clearer when Figure 6a is compared with other figures such as Figure 6b reporting the cultural context of Australian newspaper articles mentioning Asian immigrants and Figure 3 showing the contexts of the U.S. newspaper articles discussing Asian immigrants.

Though an increase in economic context of the period is not evident from Figure 6a, the results of sentiment analysis lend support to the second part of H1. As predicted, the sentiment score of coverage discussing Asian immigrants in economic context shows a significant increase during the period this article

focuses on – also highlighted in light orange. Though the scores of the period still stay negative (below the red dashed line), it started to increase in 1995-96 and continues to increase until 2009-10. In other words, the tone of coverage discussing Asian immigrants in the context of economy gets less hostile or more positive during the period.

Figure 7. Australia: Sentiment Score of Coverage Discussing Asian Immigrants in Economic Context

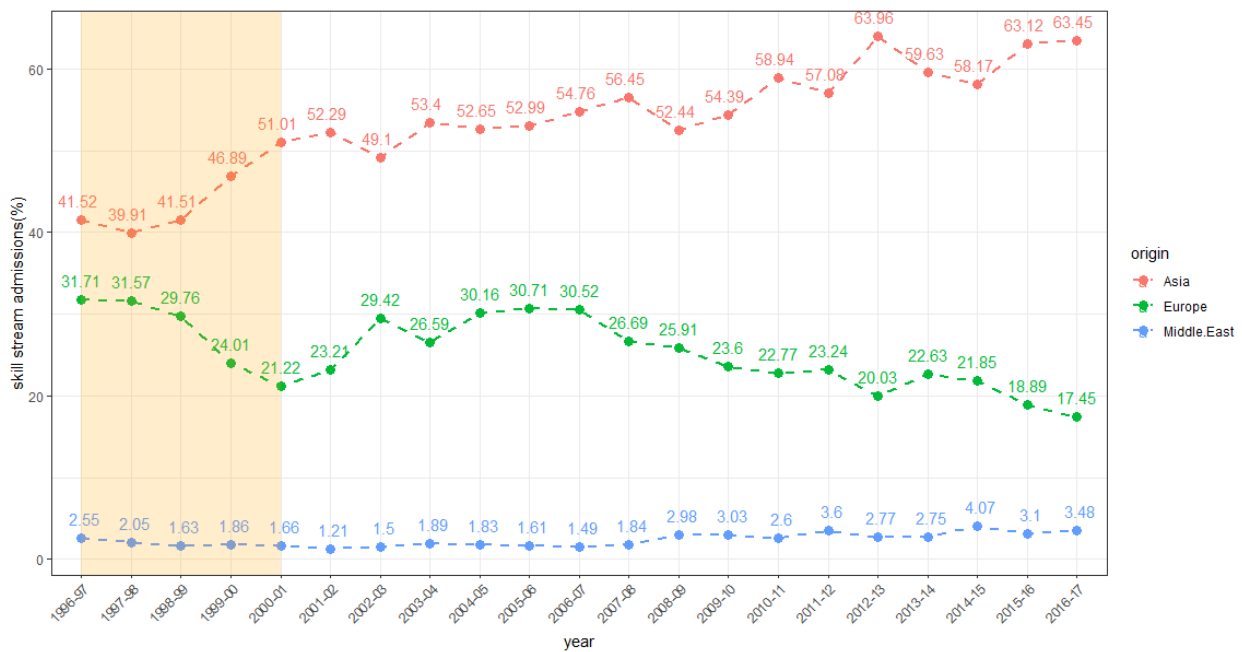


The results reported in Figure 6 suggest only partial support for H1 in the case of Australia. The economic context of newspaper articles discussing Asian immigrants does not necessarily increase during the mid/late 1990s and early 2000s – though the economic context is still higher when compared with the cultural context. Instead of showing a significant increase during the mid/late 1990s and early 2000s, we see that Asian immigrants have constantly been discussed in the context of economy which is different from the case of the U.S.. At the same time, though, the result of sentiment analysis is consistent with my expectation as the sentiment score increases steadily during the period (Figure 7). Taken together, these results suggest that Asian immigrants in Australian newspapers have long been discussed in the context of economy but the tone of coverage became a lot less hostile starting in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Then, why did the context and tone of Australian newspaper articles discussing Asian immigrant change during the period? Again, the mechanism I propose is related to an association between the changes

in the tone and context of news coverage and the size of skilled Asian immigrants during the period, implying the efforts of interest groups and/or government in advocating for the immigration policy program that led to an influx of Asian immigrants to the host country. Figure 8 reports the over-time skill stream admissions of permanent migration outcome in Australia. The skill stream of Australia’s migration program is intended for the high skilled foreigners satisfying specific criteria such as age, education and English language ability.¹⁹

Figure 8. Australia: % Skill Stream Admissions of Permanent Migration Outcome Over Time²⁰



The results shown in Figure 8 lend support to my expectation for the mechanism. Though the data does not provide the statistics prior to 1996-97, the upward trend of the Asian skilled immigrants during the late 1990s and early 2000s is clearly shown. For example, less than 40% of skilled immigrants were from Asian countries in 1997-98 but they make up over 51% in 2000-01. Europeans make up over 31% in 1997-

¹⁹ <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/what-we-do/skilled-migration-program>

https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/BN/1011/AustMigration#_Toc274128798

²⁰ Source: Australian Government of Home Affairs (Released January 2020). <https://data.gov.au/data/dataset/historical-migration-statistics/resource/c6e527cf-7827-4000-b1d9-0046e575b6ef> (Last access: 10/21/2020)

98 which is only 8 percentage points lower than Asians but the size decreased to 21% in 2000-01. The two estimates started to apart from each other significantly during the late 1990s. Looking across the trend and green line graphs representing Asians and Europeans, the estimate for Asian skilled immigrants increased by almost 10 percentage points (41.51% to 51.01%) from 1998-99 to 2000-01 whereas the estimate Europeans decreased by over 8 percentage points (29.76% to 21.22%) during the same period. The size of Middle Eastern skilled workers generally stays around 2% but shows a slight decline during the late 1990s and early 2000s (from 1.86% in 1998-99 to 1.21% 2001-02).

To remind the reader, the mechanism I proposed was about the potential association between the news coverage and the size of skilled Asian immigrants during the period, suggesting potential efforts of interest groups and/or government in advocating for the policy program that admitted a large number of Asian immigrants during the period. Taken together, the results of Figures 6, 7, and 8 show support for the mechanism I proposed in an effort to explain the timing of changes in newspaper coverage given that the findings suggest that the changes occurred during the late 1990s and early 2000s.

6. SURVEY ANALYSIS

Having examined whether and how the coverage discussing Asian immigrants has changed over time in its context and tone, I now test Hypothesis 2 predicting that, in the early 2000s, the individuals who are more educated and more conservative about government spending are more likely to prefer Asian immigrants. What are the characteristics of those who prefer Asian immigrants to Latino immigrants or Middle Eastern immigrants in the early 2000s?

The United States

Table 1 provides a test of H2 predicting that the individuals who are more educated as well as conservative about government spending are more likely to prefer Asian immigrants. As previously discussed, I restrict my analysis of ANES to Whites. The dependent variable for all 4 models in Table 1 is the difference scores between Asians and Latinos and it is scaled to run from -1 (preference for Latinos) to

+1 (preference for Asians). Each of the four models is an OLS regression. Models 1 and 3 are the base models. In the above discussion of Hypothesis 2, I expected an interactive effect of more education and more conservative attitudes towards government spending; therefore, I include an interaction term of “Opposing Government Spending” and “Education” to test H2 in Model 2 and 4.

Table 1. The U.S.: Asian-Specific Preference regressed on “Education” and “Opposition to Government spending”²¹²²

DV: Asian-specific preference (Difference Score: Asian-Latino)	Model 1 (1992)	Model 2 (1992)	Model 3 (2000)	Model 4 (2000)
Education	.002 (.003)	.011 (.009)	.010 (.005)	-.014 (.013)
Oppose Govt Spend	-.006 (.003)*	.001 (.008)	-.004 (.004)	-.030 (.013)*
Oppose Govt Spend * Education		-.002 (.002)		.007 (.003)*
Female	.002 (.008)	.002 (.008)	-.009 (.011)	-.009 (.011)
Age	.001 (.000)**	.001 (.000)**	.000 (.000)	.000 (.000)
Income	.001 (.004)	.001 (.004)	-.006 (.006)	-.006 (.006)
Party Identification	.006 (.002)**	.006 (.002)**	.004 (.003)	.003 (.003)
Personal Financial Situation	-.006 (.004)	-.005 (.004)	-.002 (.006)	-.001 (.006)
National Eco Perception	-.009 (.005)	-.009 (.005)	-.000 (.005)	-.001 (.005)
R ²	0.018	0.019	0.015	0.024
Adj. R ²	0.012	0.012	-0.000	0.006
Num. obs.	1345	1345	522	522
RMSE	0.139	0.139	0.119	0.119

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

As predicted, the interaction term in Model 4 (ANES 2000) shows a statistically significant correlation with the dependent variable. The respondents who are more educated and more opposed to government spending in 2000 are 0.7 percent points more likely to show Asian immigrant specific preference when other covariates are held constant. Also consistent with my expectation, the result in Model 2 (ANES 1992) does not show a statistically significant correlation between the interaction term and the dependent variable, suggesting that the interactive effect of more education and opposition to government spending is not linked to the Asian-specific positive attitudes. This result is consistent with my expectation about considering the mid/late 1990s as the time period when the changes in the relative standing of Asian

²¹ The ‘opposing government spending’ variable represents 7-point scale data from interviews conducted face-to-face only. A different question was asked for telephone interviews. This explains why the sample size is relatively small.

²² Data: ANES 1992 and 2000 from cumulative time series data

immigrants in Australia and the U.S. took a place.

Further, the results in Model 3 show that neither education nor opposition to government spending alone is positively and statistically significantly correlated with the dependent variable. It suggests both that the respondents who have higher educational attainment are not necessarily more likely to show Asian-specific preference, and that those who are more opposed to government spending are even less likely to show Asian-specific preference when other covariates are held constant. Taken together, the results presented in table 1 show support for H2 and my argument that, by the early 2000s, those who are more educated and more conservative about government spending are more likely to prefer Asian immigrants.

Australia

Table 2 provides a test of H2 for the case of Australia. National Social Science Survey 1995-6 (Model 1 and 2) and Australian Election Study 2001 (Model 3 and 4) are analyzed. Each of the four models shown in Table 2 is an OLS regression. Models 1 and 3 are the base models. Again, the interaction term of “Opposing Government Spending” and “Education” is included in Model 2 and 4. The dependent variable in each model is the difference scores between Asian immigrants and Middle Eastern immigrants.

Model 3 shows that there is a positive and statistically significant effect of being more opposed to government spending on the dependent variable in 2001. Those who are more opposed to government spending are 5.5 percentage points more likely to have positive feelings towards Asians only. Education is also positively associated with the dependent variable, but its effect is not significant. The effect of opposition to government spending, however, decreases dramatically when the interaction term is added. Model 4 which includes the interaction term shows that those who are more opposed to government spending but not more educated are only 0.5 percentage points more likely to show their preference for Asian immigrants and the effect is not statistically significant.

Table 2. Australia: Asian-Specific Preference regressed on “Education” and “Opposition to Government spending”²³

DV: Asian-specific preference (Difference Score: Asian-Middle Eastern)	Model 1 (1995)	Model 2 (1995)	Model 3 (2001)	Model 4 (2001)
Education	.338 (.300)	.274 (.566)	.006 (.013)	-.054 (.030)
Oppose Govt Spend	.213 (.997)	-.008 (1.933)	.055 (.015) ^{***}	.005 (.027)
Oppose Govt Spend* Education		.137 (1.025)		.019 (.009) [*]
Female	-1.191 (.578) [*]	-1.192 (.579) [*]	-.009 (.041)	-.009 (.041)
Age	.026 (.018)	.026 (.018)	.005 (.001) ^{***}	.005 (.001) ^{***}
Income	.069 (.085)	.069 (.086)	.005 (.005)	.006 (.005)
Party Identification	-.034 (.152)	-.034 (.153)	.039 (.013) ^{**}	.036 (.013) ^{**}
Personal Financial Situation	-.072 (.187)	-.072 (.187)	.017 (.024)	.015 (.024)
National Eco Perception			-.022 (.023)	-.022 (.023)
R ²	0.005	0.005	0.026	0.028
Adj. R ²	0.002	0.002	0.021	0.024
Num. obs.	2191	2191	1848	1848
RMSE	0.126	0.126	0.872	0.871

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

In contrast, the association between the Asian-immigrant specific preference and the interaction term representing both higher educational attainment and strong opposition to government spending is strong. They are 1.9 percent points more likely to prefer Asian immigrants and the effect is statistically significant as shown in Model 4. Also consistent with my expectation, the interactive effect is not strongly linked to the dependent variable in the 1995 survey. Though the interaction term is still positively associated with the dependent variable, the effect is not statistically significant as indicated in Model 2.

In sum, contrary to previous studies arguing more educated individuals tend to be more tolerant of immigration and racial/ethnic diversity, I expected that those who are more educated are better at differentiating racial/ethnic groups on associated traits and that they are likely to exhibit higher levels of tolerance and positive attitudes towards an economically beneficial group but not towards other immigrant groups if they are particularly concerned about government spending. While I agree that more educated

²³ Data: NSSS 1995-6, AES 2001

individuals are more likely to exhibit higher levels of ethnic/racial tolerance and pro-immigration attitudes towards immigrants in general as well as towards Asian immigrants, I considered that those of higher educational attainment can still be intolerant of immigrants if they are strongly opposed to government spending thus selectively welcome a certain immigrant group that appears to be beneficial for the host economy.

The results shown above lend support to my argument and H2. Those of higher educational attainment and stronger opposition to government spending in the early 2000s are likely to show Asian-specific preference. Those of same social characteristics in the early/mid 1990s were not more likely to favor Asian immigrants. As predicted, whereas the interaction term of being strongly opposed to government spending and having higher educational attainment is strongly linked to the Asian-specific preference in 2000, neither of the two variables exerts statistically significant effect in the baseline models, highlighting the interactive effect of the two characteristics of respondents on their attitudes towards Asian immigrants and Latino/Middle Eastern immigrants.

7. CONCLUSION

While Asians are relatively more welcomed as immigrants in the U.S. and Australia, this is a drastic change from how they were once viewed. Not to mention that the extremely negative opinions in the late 19th and early 20th centuries leading to the exclusion of Asian immigrants in the U.S. and Australia, numerous surveys and polls show that attitudes towards this group was still negative until the early/mid 1990s. Since then, the attitudes improved dramatically, with a majority of Americans and Australians supporting their immigration. Why have we seen this change in attitudes for Asian immigrants, but not for other immigrant groups? I argued that the change comes from the way Americans and Australians see Asian immigrants. No longer are Asian immigrants low-skill workers who can be burden to the host economies. Now, they are high-skill workers who help grow the economy.

To understand how this change in views occurred, I examined both the rhetoric about Asian

immigrants and individual attitudes towards Asian immigrants. Using newspaper text datasets and numerous national surveys, I found that the newspaper coverage discusses Asian immigrants more often in the context of economy and the tone of those economic discourses gets more positive during the mid/late 1990s for the U.S. and the late/1990s-early 2000s for Australia. I found that respondents who are more educated and more conservative about government spending are more likely to prefer Asian immigrants in the early 2000s. Those of same social characteristics in the early/mid 1990s were not more likely to exhibit Asian-specific preference. The findings show support to my main argument about economic consideration overriding a sense of cultural threat. Asian immigrants after the late 1990s and early 2000s have been welcomed because they are viewed economically beneficial, which in turn may also suggest the precarious status of Asian immigrants.

This article sheds light on political economy, immigration policy, and racial attitudes more generally. Overall, the results are consistent with previous studies emphasizing public sensitivity to fiscal burdens that immigrants may bring to the host nation. In particular, the finding that the interactive effect of higher educational attainment and stronger opposition to government spending on Asian-specific preference increases scholarly understanding of those political economic explanations examining the link between education and anti-immigrant sentiment. While more educated respondents are more likely to exhibit higher levels of ethnic/racial tolerance, I find, they are more likely to exhibit Asian-specific preference if they are more concerned about government spending. Those who are highly educated and strongly opposed to government spending are more likely to exhibit positive attitudes towards Asian immigrants but not Latino or Middle Eastern immigrants.

This article also increases scholarly understanding of ethnocentrism and group-specific attitude hypothesis. My findings are in line with the group-specific attitude hypothesis showing that attitudes towards immigrants vary depending on the origin of the immigrant, rather than on general ethnocentrism. Having examined how the relative standing of a particular immigrant group has changed over time and the

changes in tone and context of newspaper coverage, this article suggests a mechanism that can explain why the attitudes toward immigrant groups differ, and why and how the attitudes can change over time.

To my knowledge, this article is among the first to analyze the attitudes towards Asian immigrants and to attempt to weave together the nexus between public opinion over time, the role of education in pro/anti-immigration sentiment, and group-specific attitudes. It suggests that the opinion about a group of immigrants may be a function of media portrayals and it can change if the group is portrayed and perceived as an economically beneficial group to the host countries. Moreover, this work suggests that it may not be always the case that more educated individuals exhibit stronger preference for diversity and immigration. If they have stronger opposition to increased government spending, they may have stronger motivation to believe in the messages from media and prefer a certain group of immigrants that appears to be economically beneficially only.

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