Ideological Differences between Asians and Asian Americans

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Introduction

Do Asian Americans and Asians differ on their ideologies about societies and their experiences with discrimination?

Asians and Asian Americans are born and raised in different environments and exposure; hence, hold different ideas. For example, Asian Americans who are often questioned "Where are you really from?" (Cheryan & Monin, 2005) will have different reactions compared to Asians who are asked the same question.

We examined the degree of differences between Asians and Asian Americans on status legitimizing beliefs, as well as their experiences with racial discrimination.

Status Legitimizing Beliefs (SLBs) are a set of beliefs in which individuals internalize ideologies about existing hierarchy that one's position within the hierarchy is earned and can change based on hard work (Wellman, Liu, & Wilkins, 2015).

Perceived Racial Discrimination (PRD) measures the extent to which racial minorities believe that they experience discriminations.

Methods

Conducted meta-analyses across 14 quarters, from Fall 2014 until Spring 2019.

Out of 4,651 participants, 2,024 identified as Asian Americans and 2,627 identified as Asians.

Methods (cont.)

Participants indicated whether they were born in the U.S. (Asian Americans) or not (Asians).

Participants rated the SLBs (average of Belief in System Legitimacy, Protestant Work Ethic, and Perceived System Permeability) and PRD scales.

Example Items:
- Differences in status between groups in American society are fair (Belief in System Legitimacy).
- If people work hard, they almost always get what they want (Protestant Work Ethic).
- America is an open society where all individuals can achieve higher status (Perceived System Permeability).
- I experience discrimination because of my race/ethnicity (Perceived Racial Discrimination).

Results

Status Legitimizing Beliefs among Asian Americans and Asians

Results (cont.)

Asians have higher status legitimizing beliefs than Asian Americans ($d = .57$, $p < .001$).

Asians perceive less racial discrimination than Asian Americans ($d = .25$, $p < .001$).

For both Asians and Asian Americans, the more they believe in status legitimizing beliefs, the less they perceive that they are discriminated against ($r_{Asian American} = -.27$, $p < .001$; $r_{Asian} = -.28$, $p < .001$).

Discussion

Asians have higher status legitimizing belief and perceive lower racial discrimination than Asian Americans.
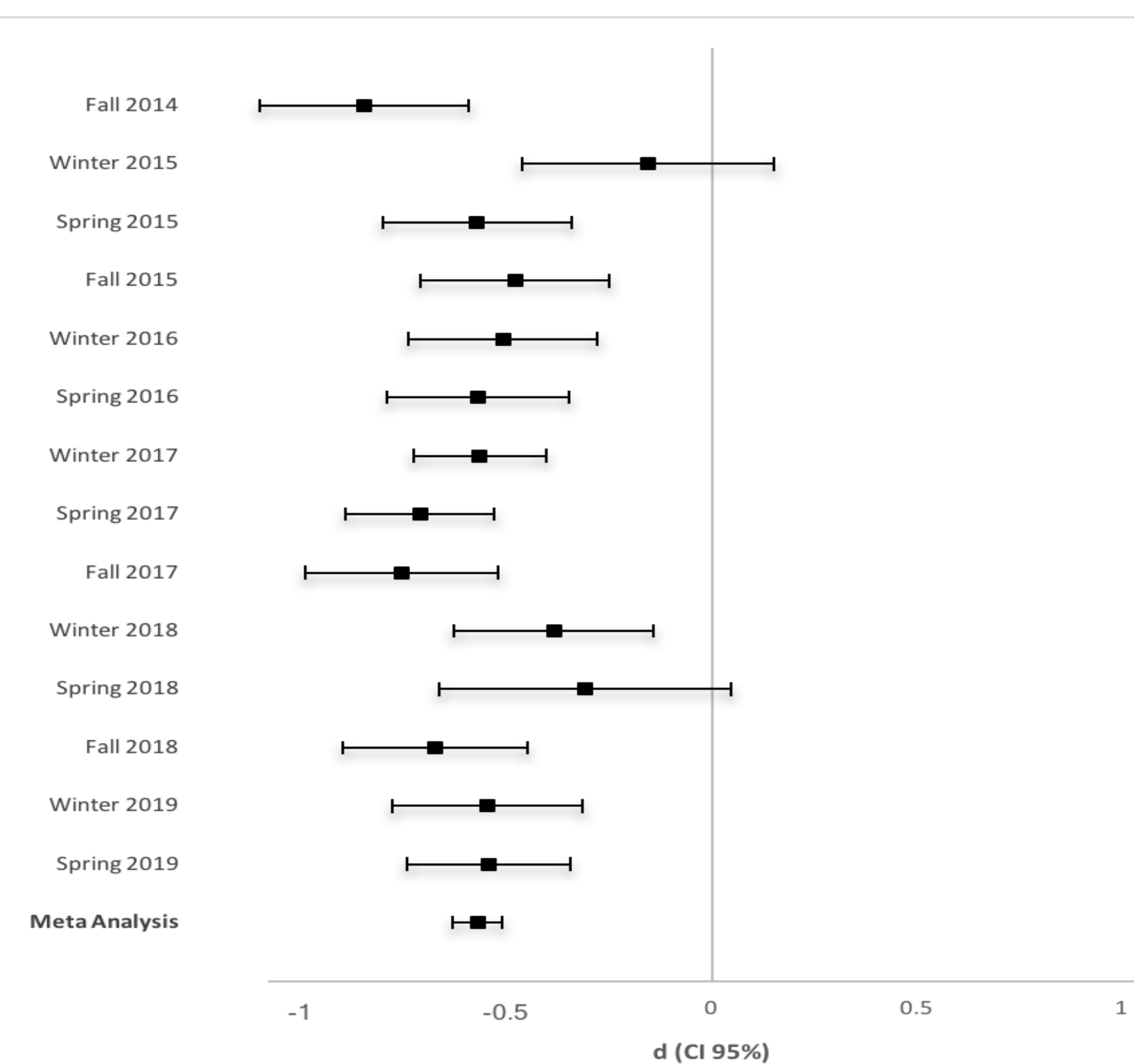
Results are consistent with past literature, that Asians and Asian Americans possess different perceptions due to their differences in cultural values and social identities. However, this research includes a new variable – SLBs, which further emphasize the differences in perceptions of ideologies of the two groups.

SLBs can lead us to interpret the events in a way that justify the existing hierarchy, such as high-status groups blaming low-status groups for not working harder and holding them responsible for their lower status (Cozzarelli, Wilkinson, & Tagler, 2001). In this case, Asians are more likely to justify for the existing hierarchy than Asian Americans. This can explain potential implications of cultural differences and understanding of current social issues (i.e., affirmative action).

Researchers should take this into consideration when running new studies and categorizing their demographic populations.

Future research can look into the differences between U.S-born Asian Americans and overseas-born Asian Americans (those who were born in another country but later immigrate to the U.S.).