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**Are Brenda, Juanita, and Latoya more feminine than Jia and Neha?**

**Gendered Evaluations of Racialized Names**

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### **Abstract**

Names are frequently used in social science research to manipulate identities such as race and gender. However, names may signal unintended identities or downplay intended identities. Three studies ( $N = 1,100$  US participants) examined the gendered evaluations of names from five racial groups: Chinese, Indian, Black, Hispanic, and White. Studies 1 and 2 consistently found that Chinese and Indian female names were perceived as less feminine and more masculine than the three other racialized female names, which contradicts extant findings using Asian female faces. Chinese and Indian male names, on the other hand, were considered more feminine and less masculine than the other racialized male names. Study 3 found that participants expressed greater uncertainty and lower confidence about the gender of Chinese and Indian names compared to other racialized names. This research raises potential methodological concerns regarding the effectiveness of racialized names in signaling the gender of Asian ethnic groups.

*Keywords:* Names, race, gender, meta-science

## **Are Brenda, Juanita, and Latoya more feminine than Jia and Neha?**

### **Gendered Evaluations of Racialized Names**

When we meet someone for the first time, we introduce ourselves by our names immediately. Badges, business cards, and IDs display names for people to recognize and remember. Job applicants hope for the best when they send out their resumés with their names written prominently at the top. Given the ubiquity with which people perceive names in their daily lives and draw all sorts of attributes from these names alone, names have become a popular methodological toolset for researchers to manipulate social identities such as race and gender. The landmark research by Bertrand and Mullainathan (2004) demonstrated that resumés with stereotypically Black names were less likely to receive callbacks than those with stereotypically White names. However, racialized names could signal identities that the researchers may not have intended such as social class (Crabtree et al., 2022; Gaddis, 2019; Simonsohn, 2015), thereby jeopardizing the interpretations and validity of extant findings. This research extends such meta-scientific investigations into the methodological usage of names by examining the gender attributes of racialized names, with a focus on Asian ethnic names.

### **Impacts and Issues of Names**

Names can be easily implemented in controlled lab experiments as well as large-scale audit studies (Crabtree et al., 2023; Gaddis, 2017; Gaddis, 2019), particularly when the attachment of facial photos may be unusual or unfeasible (e.g., resumés typically do not include photos in the United States). Researchers have used names to signal a variety of identities such as gender (Moss-Racusin et al., 2012), race (Kenthirarajah et al., 2023), religion (Lajevardi, 2020), age (Newman et al., 2018), and nationality (Oreopoulos, 2011). When controlling for all other information, manipulation of names powerfully affects job callbacks (Bertrand &

Mullainathan, 2004), email responses (Milkman et al., 2012), student evaluations (Zhao & Biernat, 2017), romantic desirability (Gebauer et al., 2012), harassment (Yan & Bernhard, 2023), criminal sentencing (Kenthirarajah et al., 2023), peer review (Huber et al., 2022), and even dog adoption (Quadlin & Montgomery, 2022).

Despite their ubiquity and usefulness, names are not without methodological challenges. Certain names are perceived as more attractive and youthful, which can (unintentionally) influence research outcomes (Kasof, 1993). Computational tools that draw gender inferences from names have particularly high error rates for Asian names (Lockhart et al., 2023). Importantly for this research, racialized names signal other identities such as social class (Gaddis, 2019; Simonsohn, 2015). Stereotypically Black and Hispanic names are seen as less educated and having lower income relative to Asian and White names (Crabtree et al., 2022).

Joining the call to examine the usage of names critically, this research investigates the perceived gender attributes of racialized names, with a particular focus on Chinese and Indian names. The gender of racialized names in research is often determined by societal norms, census popularity, and pilot testing (e.g., Gaddis, 2019; Milkman et al., 2012). Nevertheless, participants' perceptions may differ from researchers' intentions. This poses a particular challenge when participants may not accurately infer the intended identity of names.

### **Gendered Perceptions of Asians**

In the United States (US), race and gender are highly intertwined to produce intersectional perceptions (for a review, see Lei et al., 2023). Gendered race theory argues that in the US, Asian men are perceived to be more feminine and less masculine than White and Black men while Asian women are hyper-feminized (Galinsky et al., 2013; Hall et al., 2015; Johnson et al., 2012; Schug et al., 2017; Wilkins et al., 2011). Specifically, East Asian male faces are

perceived to be more feminine and less masculine than South Asian male faces as well as Black and White men (Goh & Trofimchuk, 2023). Asian women are seen as highly feminine and they represent the prototype of womanhood (Lei et al., 2022). Although most research in this area used facial photographs, Hall and colleagues (2015) used names and demographic forms to signal race and gender and they found that Asian applicants (regardless of gender) were seen as particularly suited for feminine careers while Black applicants were suited for masculine careers.

If names alone do activate gender stereotypes of Asians, then Asian male and female names would be perceived as more feminine and less masculine than other racialized names in accordance with the gendered race theory (Hall et al., 2015; Johnson et al., 2012). East Asian male faces are perceived to be particularly more feminine than South Asian men (Goh & Trofimchuk, 2023) and it is possible that this engendering could be reflected in the evaluations of names as well (Slepian & Galinsky, 2016).

### **Current Research**

Study 1 was conducted with the pre-registered predictions that Asian male names would be seen as more feminine and less masculine than male names of other racial groups. In contrast, Asian female names would be seen as more feminine and less masculine than other racial groups. Unexpectedly, Study 1 found that Chinese and Indian male and female names were considered less gender-stereotypical than all other racial groups. This led to two additional studies to further determine the gendered evaluations of Asian ethnic names. In Studies 1 and 2, participants rated how feminine and masculine they perceived male and female names of five racial groups (i.e., Chinese, Indian, Black, Hispanic, and White). Study 3 asked participants to guess the gender of each name and rate their confidence in knowing the gender. All studies used names from extant research that manipulated the gender of these five races (see Appendix A for all the names).

## Study 1

All data, pre-registrations, and materials for Study 1 are available on OSF:

[https://osf.io/sw4pq/?view\\_only=8083bf30f6f04f9a9989b5c987f3844c](https://osf.io/sw4pq/?view_only=8083bf30f6f04f9a9989b5c987f3844c)

### Method

#### *Participants and Procedure*

Five hundred and one Prolific participants in the US completed the study.<sup>1</sup> We excluded 33 participants who missed an attention check or indicated that they responded randomly. With 468 participants ( $M_{age} = 32.21$ ), 287 identified as women, 160 identified as men, and 21 identified as non-binary or preferred another term. There were 33 Black Americans, 313 White Americans, 26 East Asians, 17 South Asians, 20 Southeast Asians, 26 Hispanic/ Latinx people, 2 Native Hawaiians/ Pacific Islanders, 3 Middle Easterners, 25 multiracial individuals, and 3 indicated otherwise.

#### *Materials*

Participants saw a list of 30 names from audit studies on the housing market (Gaddis & Ghoshal, 2020; Gaddis et al., under review; Lu et al., 2021). There were three female and three male names for each of the five racial-ethnic groups (i.e., Chinese, Indian, White, Black, and Hispanic). Participants rated how feminine and how masculine they perceived each name to be (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). Participants also rated each name on perceived foreignness but this variable was not analyzed.

### Results

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<sup>1</sup> Sample size for all studies were determined by availability of funding but ensured to exceed 80% power using a conservative metric in power calculation ( $N_{required} = 218$  given effect size  $f = 0.1$ ,  $\alpha = .05$ ,  $power = .80$ , 2 groups and 5 measurements, correlation of 0.1 among repeated measures).

Because all interactions are significant, we focused on the simple effects here (see Figure 1). For details on the main effects, see Appendix B. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for each condition. All post-hoc tests used Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons and examined differences in target race at each level of target gender.

### ***Perceived Femininity***

We analyze perceived femininity with a 5 (target race: Chinese, Indian, White, Black, and Hispanic) x 2 (target gender: female vs. male) within-subjects ANOVA. The interaction was significant,  $F(3.11, 1453.71) = 1067.53, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .70.$ <sup>2</sup>

There was a significant effect for female names,  $F(4, 464) = 166.46, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .59$ . Participants rated Chinese female names as the least feminine compared to Indian ( $p < .001, d_z = .44$ ), Black ( $p < .001, d_z = 1.01$ ), Hispanic ( $p < .001, d_z = .93$ ), and White ( $p < .001, d_z = 1.16$ ) names. Indian names also received lower femininity ratings than Black ( $p < .001, d_z = .67$ ), Hispanic ( $p < .001, d_z = .57$ ), and White ( $p < .001, d_z = .82$ ) female names. Black and Hispanic female names did not differ ( $p = .141, d_z = .11$ ), but both Black ( $p < .001, d_z = .31$ ) and Hispanic ( $p < .001, d_z = .34$ ) names were less feminine than White female names.

There was a significant effect for male names,  $F(4, 464) = 560.77, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .83$ . Indian male names received the highest femininity ratings compared to Chinese ( $p < .001, d_z = .45$ ), Black ( $p < .001, d_z = 1.57$ ), Hispanic ( $p < .001, d_z = 1.72$ ), White ( $p < .001, d_z = 1.97$ ) names. Chinese male names were also rated as more feminine than Black ( $p < .001, d_z = 1.19$ ), Hispanic ( $p < .001, d_z = 1.36$ ), and White ( $p < .001, d_z = 1.57$ ) male names. Black male names

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<sup>2</sup> All ANOVA tests with decimal places in the degrees of freedom indicate significant Mauchly's Test of Sphericity and use Greenhouse-Geisser correction.

were considered more feminine than Hispanic ( $p = .018$ ,  $d_z = .15$ ) and White ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = .52$ ) names; Hispanic male names were rated as more feminine than White names ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = .31$ ).

**Table 1**

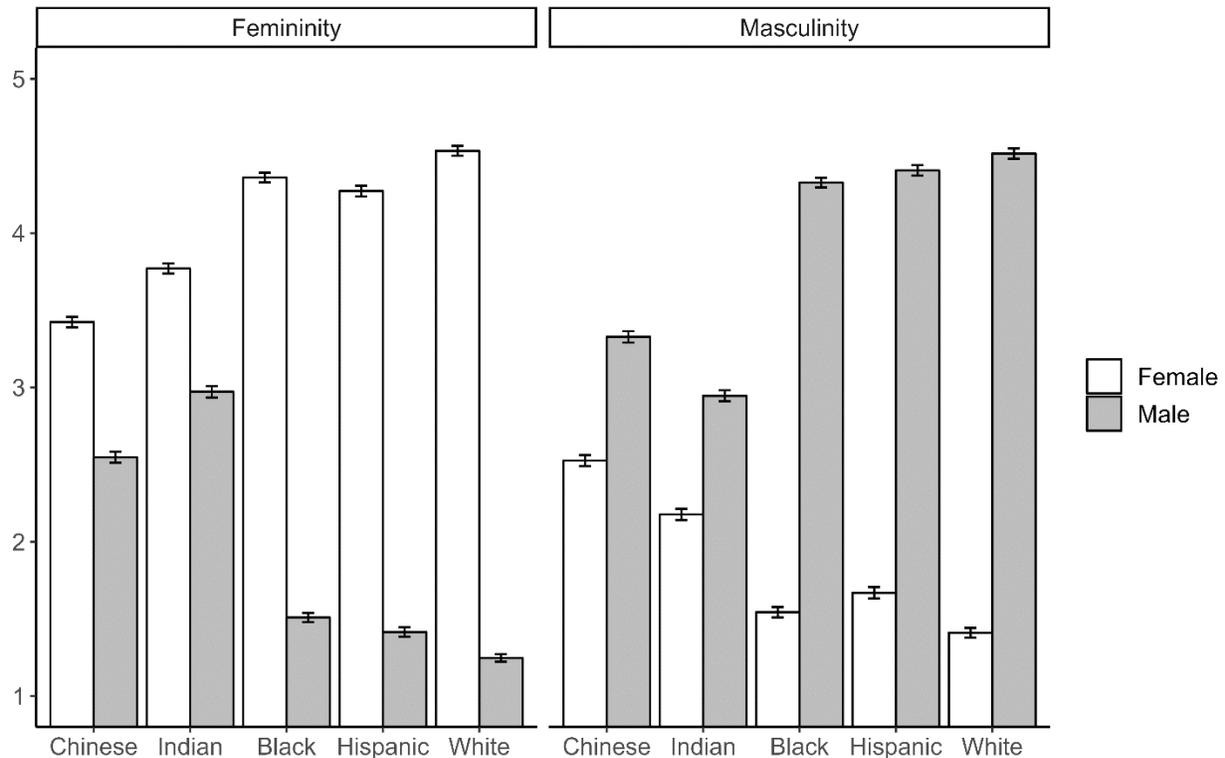
Means (and standard deviations) for perceived femininity and masculinity by each condition in Studies 1 and 2.

Ratings	Female Targets					Male Targets				
	Chinese	Indian	Black	Hispanic	White	Chinese	Indian	Black	Hispanic	White
<b>Study 1</b>										
Femininity	3.42 (.73) <sub>a</sub>	3.77 (.71) <sub>b</sub>	4.36 (.69) <sub>c</sub>	4.27 (.76) <sub>c</sub>	4.53 (.69) <sub>d</sub>	2.55 (.76) <sub>a</sub>	2.97 (.79) <sub>b</sub>	1.51 (.65) <sub>c</sub>	1.42 (.68) <sub>d</sub>	1.25 (.52) <sub>e</sub>
Masculinity	2.53 (.77) <sub>a</sub>	2.18 (.77) <sub>b</sub>	1.54 (.73) <sub>c</sub>	1.67 (.80) <sub>d</sub>	1.41 (.69) <sub>e</sub>	3.33 (.80) <sub>a</sub>	2.95 (.78) <sub>b</sub>	4.33 (.70) <sub>c</sub>	4.41 (.73) <sub>c</sub>	4.52 (.74) <sub>d</sub>
<b>Study 2</b>										
Femininity	3.68 (.82) <sub>a</sub>	3.80 (.77) <sub>a</sub>	4.53 (.78) <sub>c</sub>	4.63 (.75) <sub>d</sub>	4.65 (.71) <sub>d</sub>	2.10 (.82) <sub>a</sub>	1.81 (.83) <sub>b</sub>	1.43 (.81) <sub>c</sub>	1.34 (.83) <sub>d</sub>	1.28 (.76) <sub>e</sub>
Masculinity	2.32 (.84) <sub>a</sub>	2.12 (.75) <sub>b</sub>	1.41 (.76) <sub>c</sub>	1.31 (.69) <sub>d</sub>	1.33 (.71) <sub>cd</sub>	3.73 (.82) <sub>a</sub>	4.00 (.88) <sub>b</sub>	4.57 (.69) <sub>c</sub>	4.65 (.64) <sub>cd</sub>	4.68 (.64) <sub>d</sub>

*Note.* Different letter subscripts indicate significant pairwise differences across each row and within each gender target.

**Figure 1**

Perceived Femininity and Masculinity of Names in Study 1.

***Perceived Masculinity***

There was also a significant interaction for perceived masculinity,  $F(3.19, 1487.43) = 998.69, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .68$ . To explore the interaction for masculinity ratings, simple effects tests were conducted examining the effect of race at each level of gender.

The effect of race was significant for women,  $F(4, 464) = 215.75, p < .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .65$ . Chinese female names received higher masculinity ratings than Indian ( $p < .001, d_z = .43$ ), Black ( $p < .001, d_z = 1.11$ ), Hispanic ( $p < .001, d_z = 1.03$ ), and White ( $p < .001, d_z = 1.32$ ) female names. Indian female names were also rated as more masculine than Black ( $p < .001, d_z = .70$ ), Hispanic ( $p < .001, d_z = .60$ ), and White ( $p < .001, d_z = .85$ ) names. Hispanic female names were

considered more masculine than Black ( $p = .002$ ,  $d_z = .17$ ) and White names ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = .35$ ), while Black female names were rated more masculine than White names ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = .24$ ).

There was a significant effect for male names,  $F(4, 464) = 368.17$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .76$ . Indian male names were rated as the least masculine, compared to Chinese ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = .42$ ), Black ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = 1.39$ ), Hispanic ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = 1.62$ ), and White ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = 1.53$ ) male names. Chinese male names were similarly rated as less masculine compared to Black ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = 1.00$ ), Hispanic ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = 1.18$ ), and White ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = 1.16$ ) male names. Black and Hispanic male names did not differ ( $p = .130$ ,  $d_z = .12$ ). White male names were rated as more masculine than Black ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = .34$ ) and Hispanic ( $p = .010$ ,  $d_z = .15$ ) male names.

## Discussion

Despite the multiple comparisons, a clear trend emerged. Both Chinese and Indian names were considered less stereotypically gendered than other racialized names, hovering near the mid-points for perceived femininity and masculinity. Chinese and Indian female names were perceived as less feminine and more masculine than Black, Hispanic, and White female names. This was contrary to the pre-registered predictions that Asian female names would be rated as more feminine given what the gendered race theory would predict (Lei et al., 2023). Asian male names showed the reverse pattern as they were seen as more feminine and less masculine than male names from other racial groups. Although there are some differences between Chinese and Indian names as well as differences among Black, Hispanic, and White names, these differences are fairly small relative to the medium and large effect sizes observed in the comparisons between Asian names against Black, Hispanic, and White names for both men and women. The results could be due to the specific set of names used in this study, so a second set of names was selected to further examine the perceived femininity-masculinity of Asian names.

## Study 2

Because Study 1 found an unexpected pattern for Asian female names, a second study was conducted using a different set of names. Study 2 had the same pre-registered predictions that Asian male and female names would be seen as more feminine and more masculine than other racialized names. All data, pre-registrations, and materials for Study 2 are on OSF:

[https://osf.io/tjrnq/?view\\_only=49994f1af28e460e9e803544a9f93b33](https://osf.io/tjrnq/?view_only=49994f1af28e460e9e803544a9f93b33)

### Method

#### *Participants*

Study 2 recruited 300 Prolific participants in the US and excluded 14 who missed an attention check or said they responded randomly. Of the 286 remaining participants ( $M_{age} = 31.83$ ), 147 identified as women, 134 identified as men, and 5 identified as non-binary or preferred another term. There were 32 Black Americans, 176 White Americans, 21 East Asians, 9 South Asians, 11 Southeast Asians, 20 Hispanic/ Latinx people, 3 Native Hawaiians/ Pacific Islanders, 1 Middle Easterner, and 13 multiracial individuals.

#### *Materials and Procedure*

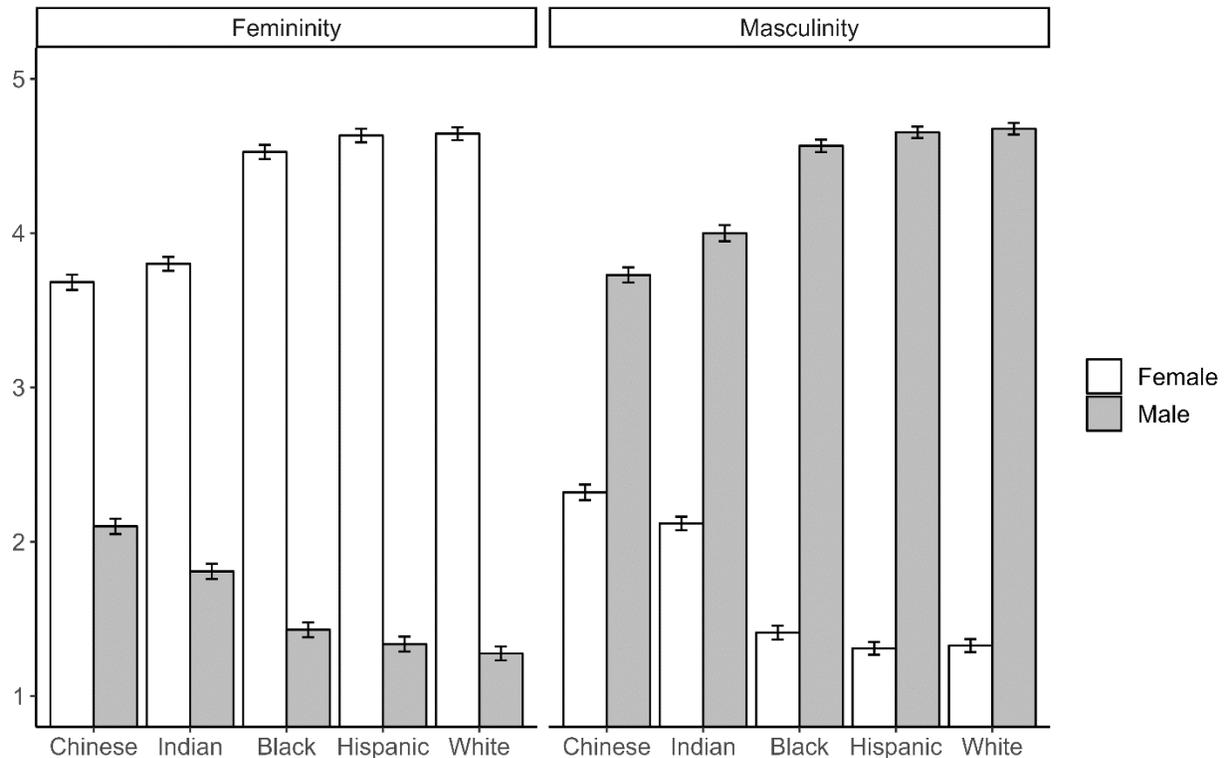
Study 2 used 20 names from Milkman et al. (2012, 2015). There were two male and two female names for each of the five racial groups (i.e., Chinese, Indian, Black, Hispanic, and White). Participants rated the perceived femininity and masculinity of each name (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). See Appendix A for all the names.

### Results

All interactions were significant and only the simple effects were described here (see Figure 2). See Appendix B for the main effects. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for each condition. All post-hoc tests used Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons.

**Figure 2**

Perceived Femininity and Masculinity of Names in Study 2.

***Perceived Femininity***

Study 2 used a separate list of names, analyzed with a 5 (target race: Chinese, Indian, Black, Hispanic, and White) x 2 (target gender: female vs. male) within-subjects ANOVA. The interaction was significant,  $F(2.49, 708.69) = 308.32, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .52$ .

There was a significant effect for female names,  $F(4, 282) = 102.78, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .59$ . Chinese and Indian female names did not differ ( $p = .172, d_z = .14$ ). Chinese female names were rated as less feminine compared to Black ( $p < .001, d_z = .87$ ), Hispanic ( $p < .001, d_z = .99$ ), and White ( $p < .001, d_z = 1.05$ ) names. Indian female names also received lower femininity ratings than Black ( $p < .001, d_z = .84$ ), Hispanic ( $p < .001, d_z = .98$ ), and White ( $p < .001, d_z = 1.02$ ) names. Black female names were considered less feminine than Hispanic ( $p = .001, d_z =$

.23) and White ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = .25$ ) female names, while Hispanic and White female names did not differ ( $p > .999$ ,  $d_z = .03$ ).

The effect of race differed significantly for male names,  $F(4, 282) = 89.66$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .56$ . Chinese names were considered the most feminine compared to Indian ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = .34$ ), Black ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = .78$ ), Hispanic ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = .91$ ), and White ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = 1.05$ ) male names. Likewise, Indian male names were more feminine than Black ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = .50$ ), Hispanic ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = .63$ ), and White ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = .74$ ) names. Black male names received higher femininity ratings than Hispanic ( $p = .002$ ,  $d_z = .22$ ) and White ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = .32$ ) names. Hispanic names were rated as more feminine than White male names ( $p = .015$ ,  $d_z = .19$ ).

### ***Perceived Masculinity***

There was a significant interaction for perceived masculinity,  $F(2.75, 784.58) = 385.22$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .58$ . The simple effect of race was significant for female names ( $F(4, 282) = 108.483$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .61$ ) and male names ( $F(4, 282) = 105.65$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .60$ ).

Chinese female names were rated as the most masculine compared to Indian ( $p = .001$ ,  $d_z = .23$ ), Black ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = .97$ ), Hispanic ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = 1.12$ ), and White ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = 1.08$ ) female names. Indian female names were seen as more masculine than Black ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = .79$ ), Hispanic ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = .96$ ), and White ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = .90$ ) female names. Black female names were also more masculine than Hispanic names ( $p = .002$ ,  $d_z = .22$ ), while not significantly different from White names ( $p = .057$ ,  $d_z = .17$ ). Hispanic and White female names did not differ significantly ( $p > .999$ ,  $d_z = .04$ ).

Chinese male names were rated as the least masculine compared to Indian ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = .31$ ), Black ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = .91$ ), Hispanic ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = 1.09$ ), and White ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = 1.10$ )

male names. Indian male names were considered less masculine compared to Black ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = .64$ ), Hispanic ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = .83$ ), and White ( $p < .001$ ,  $d_z = .81$ ) male names. Black male names were perceived as less masculine than White ( $p = .001$ ,  $d_z = .23$ ) male names, and somewhat less masculine than Hispanic ( $p = .051$ ,  $d_z = .17$ ) male names. White and Hispanic male names did not differ ( $p > .999$ ,  $d_z = .05$ ).

## Discussion

Study 2 replicated Study 1 in demonstrating that Chinese and Indian female names were consistently perceived as more masculine and less feminine than female names of other racial groups (i.e., White, Black, and Hispanic female names). Chinese and Indian male names were considered less masculine and more feminine than the other three racial groups. Stripped of facial cues, names alone seemingly de-gender Asian women and men and render them gender-ambiguous. The consistent patterns observed for both Studies 1 and 2 may reflect participants' unfamiliarity with Asian names, which was investigated in the next study.

## Study 3

Studies 1 and 2 reliably found that Chinese and Indian names were considered less gender-stereotypical than names from other racial groups. The effects were consistent for both male and female names. One possibility might be due to participants' unfamiliarity with Chinese and Indian names. Study 3 asked participants to guess the gender of each name (with an "Unsure" option) and rate their confidence in their guesses. It is predicted that participants would be more likely to select the "Unsure" option and expressed lower confidence for Chinese and Indian names than Black, Hispanic, and White names (for both male and female names). See OSF for data, pre-registrations, and materials from Study 3:

[https://osf.io/gm7su/?view\\_only=f22263906ca74029b284e9eb71c3cf07](https://osf.io/gm7su/?view_only=f22263906ca74029b284e9eb71c3cf07)

## **Method**

### ***Participants***

Study 3 recruited 349 US participants through the CloudResearch Connect platform. Three participants were excluded for missing an attention check or said they responded randomly. Of the 346 remaining participants ( $M_{age} = 41.10$ ), 171 identified as women, 173 identified as men, and 2 identified as non-binary or preferred another term. There were 26 Black Americans, 267 White Americans, 16 East Asians, 4 South Asians, 4 Southeast Asians, 16 Hispanic/ Latinx people, 3 Native Americans/ Indigenous people, 2 Middle Easterners/ North Africans, 7 multiracial people, and 1 identified with a category that was not listed.

### ***Materials and Procedure***

Participants saw a list of 50 names, combining the names from Studies 1 and 2. Within each of the five racial groups, there were five male and five female names. Participants first guessed the gender of each name with one of three options: Male, Female, and Unsure. Afterward, participants rated how confident they were in knowing the gender of each name (1 = Not confident at all; 5 = Extremely confident).

## **Results**

### ***Guessing the Gender of Names***

As shown in Table 2, participants indicated greater uncertainty (i.e., selecting “Unsure”) for Chinese and Indian names as well as selecting another gender than the intended gender of the names (e.g., guessing a male name as female). Using Chi-Square goodness-of-fit for female names, the observed frequency of “Unsure” responses across the five racial groups differed significantly from the expected value (based on the total “Unsure” responses of 542 for female names, divided by five),  $\chi^2 = 611.40, p < .001$ . The observed frequency for male names was also

significantly different compared to the expected value (based on the total “Unsure” responses of 425 for male names, divided by five),  $\chi^2 = 521.84$ ,  $p < .001$ .

### ***Confidence Ratings***

To examine confidence in knowing the gender of each name, we ran a 5 (target race: Chinese, Indian, Black, Hispanic, and White) x 2 (target gender: female vs. male) within-subjects ANOVA. The interaction was significant,  $F(3.22, 1111.49) = 55.36$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .14$ . There was a significant simple effect of race for female names ( $F(4, 342) = 247.78$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .74$ ) and for male names ( $F(4, 342) = 252.46$ ,  $p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .75$ ). See Table 2 for descriptive statistics. See Appendix B for the main effects.

Decomposing by gender, the only non-significant pairwise comparison for female names was between the two Asian groups ( $p = .057$ ). Participants felt less confident about the gender of both Chinese and Indian female names relative to Hispanic, Black, and White female names. The latter three groups differed significantly and rated from least to most confident in the same order.

For male names, all racial groups differed significantly (all pairwise  $ps < .001$ ). In the order from least to most confident, participants were least confident about the gender of Chinese names, followed by Indian, Black, Hispanic, and then White male names.

### **Discussion**

When offered the option to select “Unsure” in identifying the gender of racialized names, participants expressed greater uncertainty regarding Chinese and Indian names. Participants also felt less confident about the gender of Chinese and Indian names relative to other racialized names. These patterns were observed for male and female names. Study 3 built on the previous two studies to suggest that American perceivers may be less familiar with the (researcher-intended) gender of Asian ethnic names.

**Table 2**

Percentage in Guessing the Gender (as Female, Male, or Unsure) and Confidence Level in Study 3

Race of Names	Female Names				Male Names			
	Female	Male	Unsure	Confidence	Female	Male	Unsure	Confidence
	%	%	%	<i>M (SD)</i>	%	%	%	<i>M (SD)</i>
Chinese	63.35	21.62	15.03	2.73 (1.09)	13.76	72.37	13.87	2.73 (1.08)
Indian	77.34	8.90	13.76	2.84 (1.09)	25.32	66.07	8.61	3.27 (0.99)
Black	95.78	3.53	0.69	4.48 (0.62)	2.72	96.01	1.27	4.43 (0.60)
Hispanic	91.97	6.65	1.39	4.37 (0.60)	1.21	97.98	0.81	4.58 (0.52)
White	95.14	4.39	0.46	4.67 (0.51)	0.58	99.42	0.00	4.74 (0.47)

### General Discussion

Names are commonly used in social science research to examine racial and gender discrimination (e.g., Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Moss-Racusin et al., 2012; Zhao & Biernat, 2017). Due to the intersecting nature of racial stereotypes, racialized names may evoke more than one identity such as socioeconomic status, which the researchers may not intend (Crabtree et al., 2022). However, names may also downplay the identities that the researchers intended. Three studies examined the gendered evaluations of Chinese, Indian, Black, Hispanic, and White names. Consistently, Chinese and Indian names were considered less gender-stereotypical than Black, Hispanic, and White names. Contrary to the gendered race theory that predominantly used faces, Chinese and Indian female names were perceived to be less feminine and more masculine than Black, Hispanic, and White female names. Chinese and Indian male names were considered more feminine and less masculine than male names from all other racial groups. Participants also expressed greater uncertainty and lower confidence about the gender of Chinese and Indian names. Taken together, these studies suggest that the intended gender of Asian ethnic names may be unintentionally downplayed, which raises methodological concerns.

Research using facial photographs has consistently demonstrated that (East) Asian women are seen as particularly feminine and they embody the prototype of womanhood (Lei et al., 2022; 2023). However, Asian female names alone cannot elicit such gendered stereotyping (Bailey et al., 2024), suggesting that intersectional stereotyping of Asian women may require the processing of facial cues and/or more elaborate verbal cues such as in combination with a demographic form (Hall et al., 2015). Although Asian male names may be consistent with the gendered race theory by showing that both Chinese and Indian male names were seen as effeminate, it is more likely the case that Asian male names were considered less gender-

stereotypical and more gender-ambiguous than other racialized male names. In both Studies 1 and 2, Chinese and Indian names scored near the mid-points (for both male and female names). Study 3 found that participants were more uncertain and less confident about the (researcher-intended) gender of Chinese and Indian names. This may be driven by American participants' unfamiliarity with Asian ethnic names. It is possible that clarifying the gender of these Asian names may trigger gendered stereotyping consistent with facial cues.

Gendered evaluations of racialized names are likely anchored on prototypically White, Anglicized names. White female names were seen as the most feminine and least masculine while White male names were seen as the most masculine and least feminine. White Americans are seen as the prototypical American (Devos & Banaji, 2005; Zou & Cheryan, 2017) and Whiteness is the default racial assumption in the US (Purdie-Vaughns & Eibach, 2008; Thomas et al., 2014). As such, evaluations tend to be anchored around White Americans. East Asian men are seen as effeminate and Black men are considered hyper-masculine because they are judged in relation to White men who are considered to embody the ideal American manhood (Lei et al., 2023). Unfamiliarity with Asian ethnic names is likewise driven by greater familiarity and popularity of Anglicized White names that are deemed more normative and acceptable.

Racial minorities are often denied human attributes (Kteily & Landry, 2022), and Asians specifically face mechanistic dehumanization such that they are perceived to be soulless machines (Bai & Zhao, 2024). Given that gendering is an important process by which people humanize others (Martin & Mason, 2022; Martin & Mason, 2023; Martin & Slepian, 2021), recognizing the gender of racialized names as well as ascribing gender to such racialized names holds implications to the dehumanization and stereotyping of Asian targets.

### **Cautions and Recommendations**

These findings raise potential methodological concerns and considerations for researchers who wish to signal gender with Asian ethnic names. Unlike previous research that has found simultaneous signaling of multiple identities (Crabtree et al., 2022), this research found that gender is attenuated for Asian ethnic names. However, the perceived gender-ambiguity of Asian names may reflect ecologically accurate real-world perceptions. The concern lies in whether researchers would wish to disambiguate the gender of these names or not, which ultimately rests on the research question.

Because Chinese and Indian names are considered gender-ambiguous, researchers may be tempted to use Anglicized first names to signal gender more clearly (e.g., using Bruce Lee instead of Jun Lee). Asian Americans and Asian international students in the US often adopt Anglicized names (Fang & Fine, 2020; Zhao & Biernat, 2018), and Asian job applicants also engage in “White-washing” of their resumés by adopting such Anglicized name (Kang et al., 2016). Anglicizing Asian names increases response rates and generates more favorable evaluations (Zhao & Biernat, 2017). Although such method may distinguish gender more clearly, they may again signal other identities such as assumptions of immigrational status and English proficiency (Gaddis & Ghoshal, 2020). Furthermore, there may be ethnic differences among Asian Americans in the adoption of Anglicized names as evidence suggests that South Asians prefer using ethnic names over Anglicized names (Cila et al., 2020).

Another method of cueing gender clearly may be through the addition of gender pronouns (e.g., “she/ her/ hers”) placed in conjunction with an Asian name, which is an increasingly common practice in email signatures, websites, and resumés (Kennedy, 2020). Gender pronouns could offer a stronger signal of gender identities for Asian ethnic names, but they may signal other identities again. Gender pronouns on company websites offer signals of

inclusivity for LGBTQ+ members (Johnson et al., 2021), but pronouns have also become a point of contention in an increasingly polarized climate in the US (Izaguirre, 2023). As such, the inclusion of gender pronouns on a resumé may signal progressive political orientation or Democratic Party affiliation, introducing yet another element of evaluation.

Nevertheless, race is bundled and intersectional (Sen & Wasow, 2016). It may be difficult and perhaps even misguided to try to isolate race from other related identities (Crabtree et al., 2022). Signals may never be entirely clear even if we use stimuli like facial photos, which could be affected by myriad other factors such as skin tone, facial hair, and hairstyle. Ultimately, researchers should be aware that names, like most methods, carry potential confounds.

## **Conclusion**

Researchers regularly use names to signal identities such as race and gender, but these names do not always reflect what the researchers intend (Crabtree et al., 2022; Gaddis, 2019). Using names from large-scale audit studies, three studies found that people perceived Indian and Chinese names (both male and female names) to be less gender-stereotypical than Black, White, and Hispanic names likely because participants expressed greater uncertainty about the gender of Asian names. Names may activate identities that researchers may not intend and they may also attenuate the identities that researchers intend. Despite such methodological concerns, this research does not advocate for the retirement of names from our methodological toolkit. It is a valuable and effective method that is easy to implement. Rather, greater consideration should be made in the study design and caution should be exercised in the data interpretation.

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**Appendix A**

	Female Names	Male Names
Chinese	1 Mei Zhang	Mao Zhang
	2 Jia Chang	Jin Chang
	3 Jian Chen	Peng Chen
	4 Mei Chen	Chang Huang
	5 Ling Wong	Dong Lin
Indian	1 Anjali Patel	Aditya Patel
	2 Neha Shah	Sanjay Shah
	3 Riya Patel	Avi Patel
	4 Sonali Desai	Raj Singh
	5 Indira Shah	Deepak Patel
Black	1 Ebony Washington	Errol Washington
	2 Tyra Booker	Tyrone Booker
	3 Shanice Jackson	D'Andre Jackson
	4 Keisha Thomas	Lamar Washington
	5 Latoya Brown	Terrell Jones
Hispanic	1 Jimena Garcia	Jesus Garcia
	2 Alejandra Macias	Alejandro Macias
	3 Esmeralda Hernandez	Esteban Hernandez
	4 Gabriella Rodriguez	Carlos Lopez
	5 Juanita Martinez	Juan Gonzalez
White	1 Brenda Olson	Brent Olson
	2 Joan Peterson	John Peterson
	3 Heidi Wood	Harvey Wood
	4 Meredith Roberts	Brad Anderson
	5 Claire Smith	Steven Smith

Note. Names 1-3 were from Lu et al. (2021) and Gaddis et al. (under review). Names 4-5 were from Milkman et al. (2012, 2015).

## Appendix B

### Main Effects from Studies 1 to 3

#### Study 1: Perceived Femininity

There was a significant main effect of gender,  $F(1, 467) = 4057.69, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .90$ . Female names ( $M = 4.07, SE = .02$ ) were perceived to be more feminine than male names ( $M = 1.94, SE = .02$ ).

There was a significant main effect of race,  $F(3.29, 1536.47) = 114.25, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .20$ . Indian names ( $M = 3.37, SE = .03$ ) were more feminine than all other racialized names, all  $ps < .001$ . Chinese ( $M = 2.99, SE = .03$ ) names were less feminine than Indian names,  $p < .001$ . Chinese names did not differ from Black names ( $M = 2.94, SE = .02$ ),  $p > .999$ . Chinese names were more feminine than Hispanic ( $M = 2.84, SE = .02; p < .001$ ) and White names ( $M = 2.89, SE = .02, p = .018$ ). White names did not differ from Black ( $p = .129$ ) and Hispanic names ( $p = .438$ ). Black names were considered more feminine than Hispanic names ( $p = .004$ ).

#### Study 1: Perceived Masculinity

There was a significant main effect of gender,  $F(1, 467) = 2974.44, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .86$ . Female names ( $M = 1.87, SE = .03$ ) were perceived as less masculine than male names ( $M = 3.91, SE = .02$ ).

There was a significant main effect of race,  $F(3.04, 1417.12) = 78.74, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .14$ . Chinese ( $M = 2.93, SE = .03$ ) names were more masculine than Indian ( $M = 2.56, SE = .03$ ) names,  $p < .001$ . Chinese names did not differ from Black names ( $M = 2.94, SE = .02; p > .999$ ) and White names ( $M = 2.96, SE = .02; p > .999$ ). Chinese names were less masculine than Hispanic ( $M = 3.04, SE = .02; p = .001$ ). Indian names were less masculine than all other racialized names, all  $ps < .001$ . Black names were considered less masculine than Hispanic

names ( $p < .001$ ) but not different from White names ( $p > .999$ ). Hispanic names were more masculine than White names ( $p = .034$ ).

### **Study 2: Perceived Femininity**

There was a significant main effect of gender,  $F(1, 285) = 1694.53, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .86$ . Female names ( $M = 4.26, SE = .03$ ) were rated as more feminine than male names ( $M = 1.59, SE = .04$ ).

There was a significant main effect of race,  $F(2.69, 766.29) = 13.66, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .05$ . Chinese names ( $M = 2.89, SE = .04$ ) did not differ significantly from Indian ( $M = 2.81, SE = .03; p = .157$ ), Black ( $M = 2.98, SE = .02; p = .188$ ), Hispanic ( $M = 2.99, SE = .02; p = .086$ ), or White ( $M = 2.96, SE = .02; p = .366$ ) names. Indian names were considered less feminine than Black, Hispanic, and White names, all  $ps < .001$ . Black, Hispanic, and White names all did not differ significantly from one another,  $ps > .999$ .

### **Study 2: Perceived Masculinity**

There was a significant main effect of gender,  $F(1, 285) = 2266.80, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .89$ . Female names ( $M = 1.70, SE = .03$ ) were rated as less masculine than male names ( $M = 4.33, SE = .03$ ). There was not a significant main effect of race,  $F(2.69, 766.35) = 1.92, p = .132$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .01$ .

### **Study 3: Confidence**

There was a significant main effect of gender,  $F(1, 345) = 91.21, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .21$ . Participants were less confident about female names ( $M = 3.82, SE = .03$ ) than male names ( $M = 3.95, SE = .03$ ).

There was a significant main effect of race,  $F(1.66, 572.11) = 793.35, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .70$ . Participants were the least confident about the gender of Chinese names ( $M = 2.73, SE =$

.06) compared to Indian ( $M = 3.06$ ,  $SE = .05$ ), Black ( $M = 4.45$ ,  $SE = .03$ ), Hispanic ( $M = 4.48$ ,  $SE = .03$ ), or White names ( $M = 4.70$ ,  $SE = .03$ ), all  $ps < .001$ . There was less confidence for Indian names than Black, Hispanic, and White names, all  $ps < .001$ . Black and Hispanic names did not differ in confidence level,  $p > .999$ . Participants were more confident about White names than Black and Hispanic names, all  $ps < .001$ .