

Xu, Jun, and Jennifer Lee. 2013. "The Marginalized 'Model' Minority: An Empirical Examination of the Racial Triangulation of Asian Americans." *Social Forces* 91:1363-97.

PRIMARY ARGUMENT: The authors argue that the racial position of Asian Americans is distinct from other minority groups because they are simultaneously viewed as a model minority (and valorized) and a perpetual foreigner (and ostracized).

IMPORTANT DEFINED CONCEPTS:

- Racial Triangulation Theory: A race (in this case Asian) is put between Blacks and Whites on a scale to gauge how racialized the race is based on their position between the other two races.
- Civic Ostracism: when the dominant race or races block others from fully fitting in or assimilating into a community or society; they are forever foreigners rather than insiders
- Racial Valorization: To valorize, or rank higher, a racial group A when comparing them to some racial group B by third racial group C. Racial triangulation reveals patterns in this.

PRIMARY FINDINGS:

1. The Black-White difference in perceptions of Asians show that Whites are more likely to valorize Asians for many traits than Blacks are. This difference could stem from the history of Asians and Blacks being pitted against each other to achieve white favorability, with Asians winning model minority status.
2. Asian Americans are a marginalized minority group, despite their portrayal as the “model minority.” The stereotype erases their diversity, experiences of discrimination, and unique obstacles such as language barriers and cultural adjustment new immigrants face.
3. While many people may have imagined that Hispanics could be considered insiders alongside Blacks and Whites within the United States, it was actually found that the foreigner image was pervasive with regards to Hispanics alongside Asians within the United States.
4. With regards to civic ostracism, Blacks and Whites were most likely to rate all groups equal, followed by most likely to rank Asians low, indicating that the viewing of Asians as foreigners, despite their success in terms of employment, education, and wealth, continues to be prevalent.
5. Attitudes about Asian Americans aren’t just a function of race. Age matters (old people see Asians as intelligent and nonviolent) and gender matters (men rate Asians as hard workers).

KEY QUOTE: “Our results, however, suggest that prejudice, stereotypes and racism could well be multifaceted, and that the attainment of a high socioeconomic level might not be the end of a struggle for racial inequality, but rather a new beginning” (1385).

QUESTION: Why is the idea that Asians – and Hispanics – are foreigners so damaging and threatening to Blacks and Whites alike? Is there a way to reframe this narrative into a more positive perspective?