

# ***The Formation and Causes of Asian Teenagers' Implicit Racial Attitude between White and Black People***

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**Abstract:** From the former investigation, the racial attitudes form at a very young age. Children can distinguish people from other races, and give their preference on appearance and behavior. When people are teenagers, their attitudes are firstly form, and that will accompany with them for a long time. I notice that different people have different extent of racial attitudes. Some of them have a strong preference toward a particular group of people, and some of them have slightly preference to them. That shows the racial implicit attitudes are not congenital, and there must be some factors in their lives which influence people's attitudes. In this investigation, I use IAT test and interview to investigate the reason of the formation of implicit racial attitudes of the teenagers. In conclusion, we find that personal experience, facial phenotypes and skin tone, relative social class between own race and target one are three main reasons to the formation of implicit racial attitudes.

## **1. Introduction**

In 2020, the news like "as coronavirus fades in China, Nationalism and Xenophobia in China flare", or "Africans in Guangzhou are on the edge, after many are left homeless amid rising xenophobia as China's fighting the new wave of coronavirus." In Chinese people's mind, the phrase "racial bias" appears in the United States, or in the countries of middle east. They do not have think about the racial bias also appears among Chinese people. For thousands of years, China is mostly consisted with Asian people only. Some minority are still Asian people, so they are not exposed to the multi-race society. In this way, we can suppose that all the people have racial bias, but sometimes it does not show. During the covid-time, those racial bias completely appears with a strong extent.

When the covid-19 is coming, in Guangzhou, China, black people incurred heavy discrimination from Asian Chinese people. Black people were forbidden to enter some shops and restaurants because they might be infected the virus. Obviously, the virus on the black people were magnified. In this case Chinese people show both of their explicit and implicit racial attitudes. Previous investigation (Baron & Banaji, 2006; Dunham, Baron, & Banaji, 2006, 2007; Dunham, Chen, & Banaji, 2013; Nosek, Banaji, & Greenwald, 2002) has concluded that children as the age of 6 have already form their racial implicit attitudes which will keep all along with them. When they get older, they show more and more equally on explicit attitudes, but the implicit one is still there. [1-4] I think it is quite clear about the relationship between people's age and their implicit attitude. Previous scientists have

already found the critical age of that attitude. In this case, I am more interested into the reason the implicit attitudes are formed.

A person's implicit racial attitudes may not actually toward the race, but the countries that person image at the first time they heard about the name. then they will show their attitudes according to their previous interpretation. For example, when an Asian person is thinking about white people, the first country or area come up in their mind may be Europe and the United States. In his mind, he regards these places as rich area. He might not know there are still huge amounts of vagrants in those countries, or there are some countries mostly wholly in poor. However, in that person's mind, Europe and the United States are wealthy places, wealthier than the places he is living now. In contrast they will imagine Africa when they are thinking about the black people. In their mind, African countries means poverty, disease, undeveloped, uncivilized, and that sort of words. In my point of view, this person's implicit attitudes can not be regarded as racial one, but an attitude of social class. People worship Barack Obama as the president of the United States, a successful man, but no one cares about what he did before he became a president. That is not because of his color, but because he was not on that position, holding that power. In my mind, people always respect wealth and power.

People have different extent of implicit attitude toward different races. In the IAT (Implicit Association Test) tests, some of the Chinese participants show a strong preference to white people that black people, but there are still some Chinese participants showing a moderate, or slight preference [6]. They are both from the same race, so why they have different extents of attitudes. therefore, in this research, I will interview several participants around 16 years old to get some clues and inspiration.

## **2. Methods**

In this research, we will use qualitative method to investigate that problem. We will interview some participants with some related question (presented in the bottom of the proposal). I will record the important information, included the basic information of the participant, their answers for my questions, also some non-verbal behavior, special words, facial expressions, or tones when they are talking about a particular object or issue. After collecting the investigating record, I will analyze the similarities and difference to get a general conclusion. For each participant, their special points are also important which help me understand their attitudes in a more precise extent. Besides, special points are useful to show the personality of that participant which might be useful to my research. Anyway, I can give some feedback to my participants. People will form their attitudes in their own, from the ideas from their parents and social media.

## **3. Interview records**

### **3.1. Interview 1, female, 16, high school students.**

This participant shows a moderate preference to European American in previous IAT test. She has the experience of travelling abroad, and has contacted with both of black people and white people. She felt fear talking with black people. When I asked her why, she was very certain that it is because of the facial phenotype, and body structure. The physical appearance of black people gives her a sense of oppressing. On the other hand, she prefers white people's facial phenotype more, like a high nose, wavy hair, light skin tone. When she was talking to white people, she feels same as talking to Asian people. When she is talking about the facial phenotype, she says a lot of stories to me. That means she recalls more details by thinking about the facial phenotype. In her family, racial problem is not a talking topic, so most of the attitudes are formed by herself. When I ask which country comes up in your mind when I mentioned white people. Her answer is Britain, or some European countries, absolutely not the United States. European countries have higher GDP per capita than China. She

thought about Sub-Saharan countries when I mentioned black people. In the talking, she mentioned more than once about the disease and uncivilization in Africa.

### **3.2. Interview 2, Male, 17 years old, high school**

This participant shows a slightly preference to the European American in the previous IAT test. When I ask him about the experience, he has contacted to white people before, talking with them, but no experience to the black people. Therefore, I can only talk about the experience with white people. He says the experience was quite common, without any special feelings. He does not tell me any stories about that. His parents also do not talk about the black people. On the second question, about the facial phenotypes, he does not think that black or white have a better appearance. To some degrees, the black people have a better body shape; their legs seem longer, and thinner. But when we talking about the skin tones, he says lighter looks better. When he thinks about the white people, the first answer was the United States, but immediately, he changes his answer to Britain. Then he confirms that it was Britain rather than United States. When I mentioned Black people, he answers Africa, the whole Africa rather than any specific country. In the process, there is not any negative comments to the black people. In the end of the interview, he tells me the black people is warmer than the white people, while the white people is arrogant.

## **4. Analysis to the interviews**

### **4.1. Interview1**

She has a moderate preference to the European American. In my point of view, she concerns more about the facial phenotype because of her urge to talk about it. black people's appearance makes her feel nervous, but that was not caused by her personal experience. She does not agree that black people always act a bad person in movies, and her family do to talk about this either. I suppose she form the preference based on the appearances, and the appearance influences the feeling when she is talking and contacting with black or white people.

In her implicit mind, she also does not agree that the United States is a representative country for white people, because when I ask what country come up in your mind when I mention white people. The first country is Britain, then European countries, but never America. She thinks the United States is as immigrant country, because they have a lot of race, and mixed race, and American people are not pure white people.

### **4.2. Interview2**

I really doubt the IAT test result, because he shows no preference to European at all, or maybe he has a different explicit attitude and implicit attitude. The most attractive point should be his final comments that the black people are warmer and white people are arrogant. In my previous knowledge of him, from our daily contact, he is kind hearted, and concerns about other people's feeling. He hates the people who bully other people. In his mind, white people represent a role to bully other people. They created encomienda and slavery; they conquer the world, and built colonies; they create the social class and hierarchy of people. What he says was exactly what Spanish and British people did four hundred years ago, and he also answers Britain when I mentioned white people. Under this logic, he should have a preference to African American, but the data in IAT never lies. Here we have an interesting point that why he does not like white people, he also feel normal when they are talking, and shows preference to European American in the IAT test. It could be analyzed as the difference between explicit and implicit attitudes.

Looking at those two interviews together, both of them do not regard the United States as a representative of white country, but the Europeans. What impressed me is the answer about the second interviewer, whose opinion toward the racial attitude does not match their IAT test. That may be caused by the logic in people's brain. If one's brain tells that you should feel like this way because this consists with the ethic and logic, then that person could say something following the logic rather than their first feelings.

## 5. Conclusions

Facial phenotypes really influence people's implicit racial attitudes. Skin tones' preference is pervasive in my interview. Both two participants prefer a lighter skin tone, but they have different extent of preference to facial phenotypes. The first participant strongly prefers white people's features, and the second one does not show a clearly preference to that. From my interview, I know that the appearance of people will apply people different feelings, some of them are positive, and some of them are negative. That feeling gives people the first impression which is very important to the formation of racial attitudes, because the facial phenotypes and skin tones are the most obvious trait of a person. The same mechanism also occurs in children's judgement about other race. According to the previous essays, children show their racial attitudes when they are at the age of 6, preferring their own race. Then the facial phenotype might lead the racial attitudes to different directions. For example, though they may dislike the people from other races, the first impression might increase that dislike or reduce it.

People will form their attitudes to different areas, and when people are talking about the races, they will fit those races into these areas based on their previous knowledge. People always admire the people in the wealthy places, and dislike people in poor places. I notice that they do not regard the United States as a country of white people, but a country of immigrants. In their mind, the European countries the traditional representation of white people. They seem the African countries are the representation of black people. The first participant has an impression of uncivilized and poor of Africa. That may relate with the TV programs and movies. When we are talking about the African people, they always describe the clans and ancient religious rituals, which give people a sense of uncivilized and poor. The Europe is different from that because they finish the industrial revolution as first, and they have a very high GDP per capita. For example, in my first interview, the first participant prefers the European countries because of the admiration of good living condition.

Whether the social classes should be included as a factor influencing to people's racial attitudes? Are not the conflicts of social classes are parallel with the conflicts of racial problems. In history, people started a war just for both racial problems, and most of the war was based on racial problems. People from different races fight for the scarce resource in the world, like lands, population, raw material, or purely racial privilege. The world war is an example. Also, people fight in order to overturn the control of other social classes. The October Revolution was an example of that. However, the war between different social class could be regarded as a "civil war". After the USSR was founded, Lenin decided to invade Poland, in order to wake up the polish communism party and overturn the regime in Poland at that time. Lenin also thought that the proletariats all around the world would word together and overturn the capitalistic regime. However, that was too much idealized. This kind of war could happen only because the conflict between different social classes has exceeded the racial conflict. In this way, the racial conflicts and social classes conflicts seem to be two independent system.

The unfair treatments to the black people are more likely to be a kind of abreaction to their bad emotion. During the quarantine time, people are incurring a recession in the economy which cause their wages go down. Also, they are bored to be staying at home, so all the bad emotions accumulate in their mind. The black people are thought to the foreign people to the Asian native Chinese people,

no matter whether those black people are immigrants or not. In this way, the nationalism in people's heart will be increasingly exaggerate and form the discrimination. But it does not mean that the covid-19 make people have the discrimination, the covid-19 in a direct reason rather than a primary cause.

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## Appendix

Questions of the interviews:

- have you ever been contacted with black people/ white people?
- how do you feel in those experiences?
- how your parents say about black/white people?
- How do you think those black people/white people are depicted in TV and movies?
- I will record the detailed stories.
- I will show the interviewers some images about white people and black people.
- What is your ideal appearance cheek, thickness of lips, noses, eyes socket, hair, curly hair, straight hair, wavy hair.
- Which country come up to your mind when I mentioned white people/black?
- I will measure the social class by GDP per capita difference.
- What is the stereotype of black people and white people?