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Linked Fate, Linked Hate: Is Solidarity Against Anti-Asian Hate Possible?

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Abstract
The most prominent Pan-Asian racial justice movement to arise during the COVID-19 pandemic, Stop AAPI Hate (SAH), emphasizes solidarity and inter-racial alliances, including with Black Lives Matter (BLM). Yet questions remain about whether this approach resonates among Asian Americans. This study uses original survey data to examine Korean and Chinese American support for SAH and BLM in the wake of heightened anti-Asian hate during the COVID-19 pandemic. We argue that experiences with discrimination affect Asian Americans' sense of "linked fate" with other Asians and with Black Americans, and that both experiences and linked fate shape support for SAH and BLM. We present evidence that linked fate partially mediates and moderates the hate-solidarity connection. This underscores how racialized experiences activate pan-ethnic and inter-racial solidarity. The subgroup differences we document generate practical insights for activists and policymakers seeking to build inclusive coalitions.

Keywords Linked fate · Asian Americans · Racial justice · Solidarity · BLM · SAH · COVID-19

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic led to a surge of anti-Asian hate, with skyrocketing rates of incidents of verbal harassment, physical assaults, and discrimination (Ertorer, 2024). Scholars have documented how political and partisan rhetoric, media framing, and geopolitical tensions have fueled the perception of Asian Americans as foreign threats, further entrenching their marginalization during the pandemic (Chan & Leung, 2024; Chan, Kim, & Leung, 2023; Gover et al., 2020; Kim, 2024; Ralston, 2024; Tessler et al., 2020)—but the raw numbers also speak for themselves. Hate crimes overall decreased by 6% nationally from 2019 to 2020, yet anti-Asian hate crimes increased by 189% (Center for the Study of Hate Crime & Extremism 2021). Comparing 2019 to 2021 instead, hate crimes increased by 38%, while anti-Asian hate crimes increased by a whopping 300% (FBI Crime Data Explorer, 2024).

Xenophobic rhetoric toward Asians is not new, of course. It has deep roots in American history, with flashpoints such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. However, the pandemic created fertile ground for proliferation of anti-Asian sentiment, fueled by political rhetoric and misinformation, with Asians being scapegoated and vilified as carriers of the virus (Ruiz, Edwards, & Ropez, 2021; Sabharwal et al., 2022). All this not only inflicts harm on individuals, but also perpetuates harmful stereotypes and erodes the social fabric (Hall, Giannasi, & Grieve, 2014).

In response, a notable Pan-Asian initiative emerged in 2020: STOP Asian American Pacific Islander Hate (SAH), with the mission of combating racism and racial injustice targeting Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. This initiative frames the AAPI community as a unified group facing

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interconnected forms of oppression rooted in historical, social, and racial marginalization. In addition to addressing anti-AAPI hate, SAH emphasizes inter-racial solidarity, particularly with Black communities, to confront systemic racism (Stop AAPI Hate, 2024). The convergence of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) and SAH movements prompted leaders to underscore the strategic and moral imperative of coalition-building in anti-racist work (Asian & Black Alliance, 2022; Stop AAPI Hate, 2024), drawing attention to a shared history of racial oppression and prior collaboration in civil rights and racial justice efforts.

Do these strategies—both pan-Asian and inter-racial—truly resonate in the Asian American community that SAH seeks to represent, as would be necessary for success? Do Asian Americans see alliances as a good idea at this point in history and which alliances do they think should be prioritized?

There is reason for skepticism. Historically, coalition-building efforts between Asian Americans and other racial minority groups have encountered obstacles stemming from intergroup tensions, divergent immigration trajectories, and the enduring 'model minority' myth—often used to construct a perceived divide between Asian Americans and other communities of color, particularly Black Americans (Abelmann & Lie, 1995; Kim, 1999, 2000; Merseth, 2018; Wu, 2002). Theoretically, Kim (2000) anticipates further reasons for concern, contending that Asian Americans are not simply situated between White and Black Americans, but are instead triangulated: elevated above Black Americans in terms of cultural value, yet simultaneously denied full civic inclusion. This dual positioning functions to reinforce White dominance by discouraging inter-racial solidarity—especially between Asian and Black communities—while sustaining the marginalization of Asian Americans as perpetual outsiders.

On the other hand, there are also reasons for optimism, most notably the concept of *linked fate*, the perception by an individual that their own fate is connected with the fate of the group as a whole (Dawson, 1994). The SAH's pan-Asian strategy would implicitly rely on the existence of this within the context of Asian Americans, even while its relevance to non-Black groups remains contested and relatively understudied. Another reason to expect greater support after the pandemic is that the very rise in hate crimes and bias incidents which spurred the creation of SAH may have changed individual attitudes, with personal experiences of such leading to an increase in linked fate, group solidarity, and/or support for social movements.

Would the optimists or skeptics be right about these alliance strategies of SAH? Is pan-Asian solidarity against anti-Asian hate possible? Is Asian–Black solidarity possible? Have hate crimes increased solidarity and do such effects operate through a sense of linked fate? Given the balance of the theoretical arguments, these become empirical questions that drive this paper.

We analyze these questions using online survey data gathered from 539 individuals who identify as Chinese and Korean Americans. While prior studies have examined Asian American linked fate, hate crime experiences, and support for racial justice movements separately, our study analyzes the intersection of all three—specifically for Chinese and Korean Americans during the COVID-19 pandemic. It advances prior research by treating linked fate as context-dependent and highlighting subgroup variation across ethnicity, nativity, and language. Moreover, our findings set in the COVID-19 pandemic landscape can be compared with those findings from studies primarily based on the pre-pandemic period.

Our study has significant implications for racial justice movements by deepening the understanding of the factors that shape solidarity and support for strategic alliances. This contributes to the development of more effective strategies aimed at combating racism.

The Theory and Empirics of Asian Americans' Linked Fate

Linked Fate–Scope and Variation

Black Americans exhibit higher levels of political engagement than White Americans with comparable levels of educational attainment (Gurin et al., 1989) and often strongly unified. The term "linked fate" originated in Dawson's (1994) answer to *why* Black Americans remain a relatively cohesive political group. He argued that such unity arises from a particularly strong recognition that, given historical and ongoing biases and marginalization, an individual's prospects are closely tied to the welfare and circumstances of Black Americans collectively. This understanding is often accompanied by a deep sense of moral and emotional allegiance to the group, caused by, and in the face of, systemic oppression.

Can the concept of linked fate be extended further? Some scholars suggest otherwise, noting that linked fate may not fully capture the dynamics of other groups (McClain et al., 2009; Sanchez & Vargas, 2016). It may be particularly problematic to extend the concept of linked fate to Asian Americans, for whom various factors are said to limit the development of a cohesive sense of linked fate. Some point to their more fragmented histories in the U.S. and their lack of a unified narrative of exclusion and resistance (Masuoka et al., 2007; Wong et al., 2011; Wu, 2014); others note their internal diversity in national origin, language, and class (Espiritu, 1992).

Still, despite these legitimate points, Asian Americans do face the pervasive stereotype of being *perpetual foreigners* (Sabharwal et al., 2022; Tuan, 1998). This holds true regardless of their immigration or generational status, as Asians undergo a distinct socialization experience regarding race and integration in America (Masuoka et al., 2019; Tuan, 1998; Wu, 2014). Indeed, the concept of *Asian American* has been developed over a long historical period to unite various ethnic groups and advocate for their socio-political interests (Okamoto, 2014). Masuoka (2006) and Junn and Masuoka (2008) found that many Asian Americans do indeed feel a sense of linked fate with other Asian Americans–hereafter referred to as Asian Linked Fate (ALF). However, this sense of ALF varies both within and across national-origin subgroups (Kim et al., 2024; Lien, 2004; Masuoka, 2006; Nicholson & Mei, 2023).

Recent scholarship has invoked the concept of ALF particularly in the context of heightened racialization during the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, Chan et al. (2024) emphasize that ALF is influenced by shared racial experiences and external perceptions, especially under threat. These findings challenge the argument that Asian Americans exhibit a weak sense of linked fate or that this concept is inapplicable to their experiences.

Other studies show that linked fate may be felt not only within a group but with other groups (sometimes called inter-linked fate or minority-linked fate) (Gershon, 2019; Chan & Jasso, 2021; Mejía, 2023). Research on inter-linked fate of Asian Americans with other groups is a limited, but growing body of work. Nicholson et al. (2020) and Merseth (2018) found that group consciousness and linked fate among Asian Americans are positively associated with feelings of closeness or solidarity toward Black Americans. Interestingly, Mejia (2023) finds inter-linked fate among Latinx and Blacks respondents but not between Asian Americans and either Latinx or Black Americans. Although Cho (2020) and Park (2021) do not explicitly study linked fate, their work suggests that the strong ethnic identity and group consciousness (shared identity, awareness of structural inequalities, and a willingness to engage in collective political action, as per Gurin et al., 1980) among Asian Americans may facilitate shared political views with Latinx and Black Americans. Further, some research reports that Korean Americans exhibit higher levels of political affinity with Black Americans and Latinx groups (Wong et al., 2011) and are more likely to report stronger ALF compared to other Asians (Huang, 2021). Research on Asian Americans' inter-linked fate remains sparse, but is gradually expanding.

Lived Experience and Linked Fate.

Research consistently shows that perceptions of racial discrimination among Asian Americans increase the likelihood of feeling ALF (Chan & Jasso, 2023; Kim, 2023; Lien et al., 2004). Major socio-political events—such as anti-Asian and anti-immigrant rhetoric during the 2016 and 2020 elections, the Trump administration's discriminatory policies, and the surge of anti-Asian violence during the COVID-19 pandemic—have fostered greater cohesion and group consciousness among them (Kiang et al., 2022; Le et al., 2020).

The question of how experiences of racial discrimination shape Asian Americans' perceptions of inter-linked fate with *other* marginalized communities has received less empirical attention. Yet, recent scholarship supports the idea that heightened awareness of racial discrimination—whether personally experienced or vicariously witnessed—can foster inter-racial empathy, political alignment, and a stronger sense of inter-linked fate with other communities of color and immigrant groups (Chen & Chan, 2025; Kiang et al., 2022; Merseth, 2018). However, this relationship is not uniform. Studies by Nicholson et al. (2020) and Park (2021) suggest that perceived discrimination alone does not consistently lead to feelings of solidarity with Black or Latinx communities. Instead, factors such as group consciousness, ethnic identity, and intergroup contact appear to be more robust predictors of inter-racial solidarity.

Linked Fate and Support for Racial Justice Movements

When individuals perceive their fates as interconnected with those of their group members, they are more inclined to prioritize collective interests in political decision-making (Dawson, 1994; Tate, 1994). This sense of shared destiny can foster greater engagement in collective action and political mobilization aimed at addressing systemic inequality (Berry & Cornelius, 2019; Wong, 2011). Scholars found that Asian Americans who express ALF and inter-linked fate with other minority communities are found to be more likely to take political actions, including protest, voting, and coalition building (Chan & Jasso, 2021; Chen & Chan, 2025; Lien et al., 2004). However, Mejía (2023) offers a contrasting finding: neither intra nor inter-linked fate predicted political participation among Asian Americans—unlike among Latinx and Black respondents.

Recent studies also show that Asian Americans do not respond uniformly to linked fate appeals. Merseth (2018) offers one of the most comprehensive examinations of this dynamic, demonstrating that Asian Americans who perceive racial discrimination as a systemic issue—and who reject the model minority myth—are significantly more likely to express inter- linked fate and support for the BLM movement. Her concept of "race-ing solidarity" emphasizes that inter-racial solidarity is not automatic but is politically constructed through racial consciousness, structural awareness, and rejection of assimilationist narratives. Building on this, Pérez et al. (2024) cautions that system-justifying

beliefs—the tendency to view existing societal arrangements as fair and legitimate—can dampen support for BLM, even among those who report racial discrimination. These effects are particularly pronounced among conservative subgroups. At the same time, the study finds that when perceptions of anti-Black racism are acknowledged, support for inter-racial solidarity efforts, including BLM, increases.

Methods

Data and Sample

This study draws on original survey data collected between September and December 2023 by Qualtrics for the "Asian Americans'Experience of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Anti-Asian Hate" project. The survey was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of an East Coast higher education institution (IRB Approval ID: 2023–0145-XXXX).[1]

In creating these online panels of potential survey respondents, Qualtrics compiled information from various sources, including website intercept recruitment, social media, and permission-based networks. Only individuals whose identities were verified by third-party services were invited to take surveys through email, portal, or social media with a hyperlink to a survey or survey platform. Completed surveys are compensated with cash or gift cards (Boas et al., 2020; Qualtrics, n.d.). This is a cost-efficient way of recruiting a large number of participants with diverse characteristics in a short period (Chandler et al., 2019).

Respondents are Chinese- or Korean-American adults aged 18 or older. These were self-identified individuals residing in the U.S. (as opposed to a more legalistic definition as American citizens of either full or partial Chinese or Korean descent). These two groups have been among the most salient targets of anti-Asian hate during the COVID-19 pandemic, both in media discourse and in empirical reports (Ruiz, Im, & Tian, 2023).[2] While South Asian Indian Americans have more recently experienced more hate incidents, particularly under the second Trump administration (Stop AAPI Hate, 2024), Chinese Americans were and have remained central in public and political narratives surrounding COVID-related anti-Asian sentiment. These narratives often racialized East Asian phenotypes and explicitly linked the virus to China. Korean Americans, despite national origins unrelated to the virus's emergence, were also targeted due to perceived similarity to Chinese individuals (Cheng et al., 2021).

Importantly, the comparison between Chinese and Korean Americans is also theoretically meaningful because, while they are often racialized similarly by outsiders, they differ in significant ways: migration trajectories, class profiles, political incorporation, religious affiliation, and intergroup perceptions (Hurh, 1998; Sakamoto et al., 2009). These differences offer an opportunity to examine variation in how racialization experiences translate into linked fate perceptions and support for racial justice movements.

Participants had a choice of three ethnic languages (two types of Chinese plus Korean) or English.[3] Initial questionnaire translations were by AI; these were reviewed and revised by bilingual professionals and community members (for meaning as well as cultural and linguistic appropriateness). Recruitment quotas were set by Qualtrics to include at least 40% ethnic language speakers.[4] Questions about their ethnicity and ethnic language abilities twice, using different wording and placements, and requested open-ended responses in their chosen language. About 10% of responses raised suspicions of non-Korean or Chinese origin. We removed these and responses were added until the standards above were met.

Table 1 (columns labeled "Raw") breaks down the sample of 539, with 281 Chinese (75 in traditional Chinese; 74 in simplified Chinese) and 258 Koreans (132 in Korean). Almost half said their primary ethnic identity was Asian; the rest said American (21%) or both (31%). Education levels were high (42% working on or having some post-college

[1] While more representative datasets, such as the 2020 Collaborative Multiracial Post-Election Survey (CMPS), are available, they do not include measures specifically designed to assess perceptions of inter-racial solidarity or responses to anti-Asian hate crimes/bias incidents. Due to the absence of such tailored data, this convenience sample provides valuable insights despite its lack of random representativeness (Lajevardi & Oskooii, 2018). Its limitations, while acknowledged, were practically unavoidable.

[2] Including South Asian or Southeast Asian groups would have provided additional contrast, such breadth would have required additional multilingual capacity and sampling resources. By focusing on two groups with both shared and divergent experiences of racialization, our design allows for a controlled comparison that foregrounds the sociopolitical effects of discrimination without introducing excessive heterogeneity. Future work could go further.

[3] Those speaking ethnic languages often differ from English speakers (Kennedy and Ruiz 2020), and the inclusion of ethnic-language speakers enhances the representativeness of Asians in the U.S. In contrast, online panel surveys usually neglect or exclude ethnic language speakers, including only English speakers in English language questionnaires (Kennedy and Ruiz 2020). The use of ethnic language could prime subjects toward ethnic identity, but so could refusal to use languages other than English prime towards or away from identity.

[4] Questions about their ethnicity and ethnic language abilities were asked twice, using different wording and placements, along with open-ended responses in their chosen language. About 10% of responses raised suspicions of non-Korean or Chinese origin. We removed these and Qualtrics added additional respondents..

Table 1 Survey Respondents and Responses

	Raw	H C E	A L F	L F B	S A H	B L M
Total	100	46	76	60	68	59
Sex						
Male	50	50	81	65	64	60
Female	49	41	70	55	72	58
Other	1	83	83	67	50	67
Marital						
Married	60	48	79	61	67	56
Single	40	44	71	60	70	63
Immig. St						
Perm. res	14	21	88	58	75	66
Native bn	55	60	80	67	70	65
Nat. Cit	29	31	64	57	65	46
Other	3	57	64	36	21	43
Age						
18–25	18	65	77	74	74	77
26–40	49	53	83	64	75	66
41–60	25	28	70	54	54	37
61-up	8	16	47	31	56	42
Educ						
High Sch	11	44	61	54	61	42
College	47	40	75	60	65	55
Advanced	42	52	80	62	72	68
Ethnicity/Language						
Korean	48	58	82	66	73	72
Lang.—Kor	24	63	86	67	81	80
Lang.—Eng	23	52	77	66	65	64
Chinese	52	35	70	55	63	47
Lang.—Chi	28	32	73	54	59	35
Lang.—Eng	24	39	67	55	67	61
Primary Id						
Asian	48	50	87	69	67	63
Both	31	38	68	51	72	54
American	21	48	63	54	64	56
Party						
Democrat	35	49	82	66	79	73
Republican	23	39	67	47	52	40
Other	42	47	82	74	68	58
Income						
0-15 K	6	40	57	63	50	63
15-35 K	12	32	73	60	71	73
35-75 K	25	58	76	55	76	60
75-150 K	33	46	74	58	70	57

Raw respondent demographic percentages, Hate Crime Experience, Asian Linked Fate high, Link Fate with Blacks high, Support for Stop Asian Hate, Support for Black Lives Matter

degree; only 11% with just a high school education). Income was sorted into five levels and age into four levels. The sample was more married than single (3:2) and closely split between male and female. Just under half were between 25 and 40 years old, with 18% aged between 18 and 25 years and 33% over age 40. Independents outnumbered Democrats which outnumbered Republicans in turn.

Measurement

Primary Identity

This used the Suinn-Lew Asian Self Identity Acculturation Scale (Suinn, et al., 1992): "There are many different ways in which people think of themselves. Which ONE of the following most closely describes how you view yourself? I consider myself… (Please select ONE)." The available answers were a) Basically, an Asian person (e.g., Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese). Even though I live and work in America, I still view myself basically as an Asian person; b) Basically, as an American. Even though I have an Asian background and characteristics, I still view myself basically as an American; c) As both. I have both Asian and American characteristics, and I view myself as a blend of both; d) Prefer not to answer; and e) other (please specify). (Responses d and e were combined into "both.").

Linked Fate

ALF and linked fate with Blacks (hereafter, LFB) were measured using a single-item measure adapted from the National Asian American Survey (NAAS): "How much, if at all, do you think what happens to ['Asians' or 'Blacks'] in the country overall affects what happens in your own life?" Responses were on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = to a great extent, 4 = not at all).[5] The top two levels were scored dichotomously against none or little.

Hate Crime/Bias Incident Experience

The federal legal definition of "hate crimes" is a narrow one for the criminal context ("crimes committed on the basis of the victim's perceived or actual race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability" (U.S. Department of Justice, n.d.). Our broader definition invoked a more subjective understanding of hate crimes (Schweppe, 2021), including 'bias incidents' (see Oregon Department of Justice, n.d.). The specific yes/no hate crime/bias incident experience (hereafter, HCE) measure was, "Have you ever experienced an anti-Asian hate crime/bias incident in the last three years? That is, have you ever been verbally or physically abused, or had your property damaged specifically because of your race/ethnicity?".

Movement Support

Support for SAH and BLM was measured in two steps. Participants were asked, "Have you ever read or heard about the Stop Asian Hate/BLM movement?" Those who responded affirmatively were then asked, "Based on what you've read and heard, how do you feel about the Stop Asian Hate/BLM movement?" The latter responses used a 5-point Likert scale, with options ranging from 1 (Strongly support) to 5 (Strongly oppose). We coded SAH and BLM support dichotomously as explicit support (1 or 2) against other responses or ignorance.

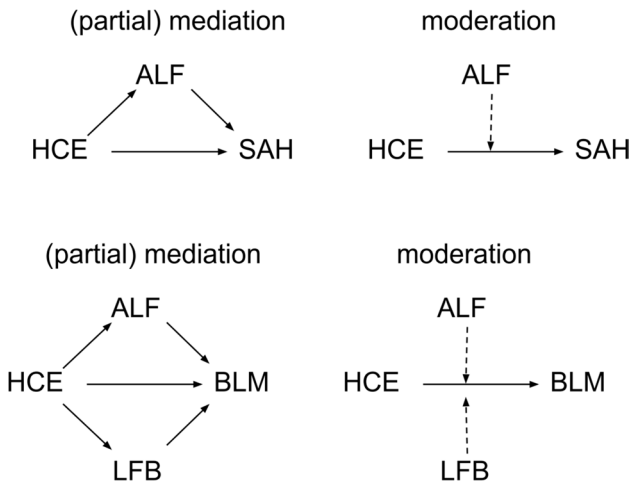

Fig. 1 Possible Relationships between HCE, ALF, SAH, and BLM

The Hate-Fate Connection: Core Hypotheses and Research Plan

Figure 1 shows our main lines of inquiry. Those Asian Americans with HCE might support SAH more. Those who feel ALF might be more supportive. And, if HCE does lead to more ALF and increases in ALF in turn lead to greater support, HCE would have both direct *and* indirect effects on SAH support. In technical terms, ALF could fully or partially mediate the effect of HCE on SAH support. See Fig. 1's top-left panel for a depiction.

The top-right panel shows another possibility, that ALF conditions the effect of HCE on SAH support, such that without this linked fate, negative experiences do not lead to greater support. The bottom panels of Fig. 1 extend this argument to BLM support, with the added complication that both ALF and LFB could mediate or moderate.

We build toward assessing these possibilities, starting simply by documenting patterns of HCE, ALF, LFB, and movement support: Do Asian Americans actually see themselves as facing common threats and sharing common needs with other Asians? Who reports meaningful levels of ALF and LFB? Who supports SAH and/or BLM? Who has experienced HCE? In the subsequent section of the paper, we look at bivariate relationships between HCE and LF, and

[5] We also asked about linked fate with Latinx and Immigrant; results omitted for space, but available upon request.

LF and movement support. Then, in the section following that, we bring *all* the pieces together, to assess whether LF has a role as mediator or moderator or both in explaining movement support.

Results—Descriptive Patterns

Hate Crime/Bias Incidence

Table 1 shows all basic responses: hate crime/bias experience (HCE), linked fate by group (ALF and LFB), and support for social movements (SAH and BLM). A whopping 46% of our sample had HCE (65% of younger respondents). Koreans reported much higher rates than did Chinese. Within Koreans, those who took the survey in the ethnic language had higher rates; the opposite held for Chinese. Native born and other had much higher rates of reported incidents. Partisan and primary identity showed smaller differences. HCE falls off with age but does not vary much with education. It has a noisy relationship with income.

We break this down further and present results graphically in Fig. 2. The top row of graphs shows HCE by age, education, and income groups (across the columns). Within each, we split the sample into Koreans and Chinese. Younger Koreans have over 50% more HCE than their Chinese counterparts, while the gap shrinks with age. Across education levels and especially for middling income levels, Koreans have somewhat larger HCE.

Linked Fate

See Table 1. Overall, ALF (76%) is felt more than LFB (60%), but with a smaller gap than one might expect. The gender gap was about 10 percentage points, with males feeling both ALF and LFB more than females. Marrieds had 8 points more ALF than singles, with a gap of just a point for LFB. Permanent residents had the highest ALF (88%) with native born following (64%). The order of these is flipped for LFB. Koreans reported over 10 points higher levels of both LF than Chinese. Within Koreans, the Korean language respondents had higher levels of ALF but nearly the same LFB. For Chinese, the English respondents had higher levels of ALF and again nearly the same LFB. Democrats showed more LF of both types.

To see age, education, and income differences, turn to Fig. 2 (second and third rows). ALF increases slightly then falls for the older age groups. The education-ALF relationship is positive, with a gap between Chinese and Koreans for the highest group. The income relationship is noisier. LFB patterns are roughly similar, with lower levels overall. We also calculated some results not shown in the tables. Feeling ALF and LFB is the majority category (55%). One-fifth showed neither. Only 5% of responses show LFB but not ALF, and 21% ALF without BLF. To put this another way, of those with ALF, 73% felt LFB. Of those without ALF, only 21% felt LFB. Each form of linked fate is a good predictor for the other.

Racial Justice Movement Support

See Table 1 again. For most categories, support for SAH is higher than that for BLM. The exceptions are the 14 persons in Immigration Status "Other," and the youngest age and lowest income categories. Men and women are split more on SAH than on BLM. Women show relatively greater support for SAH than men, but men are slightly more likely to support BLM than women. Both support SAH more than they do BLM. Support by immigration status is the highest for "both" among permanent residents. Koreans in Korean are more supportive of both, but Chinese in their ethnic languages are less supportive of both. Koreans feel similarly for SAH and BLM (1 point gap, for each subgroup), but there are large differences for Chinese (16 point gap), driven more by the Chinese language respondents (24 points versus 6). For primary identity, those saying "Both" were most likely to support SAH, but least likely to support BLM. Party had predictable patterns with Democrats the most supportive.

Figure 2 (bottom two rows) breaks this down further. Support for both SAH and BLM is lower for the older respondents (if you combine ethnic groups). Among those aged 61 and older, the Chinese group shows higher support for both movements. Support is either positively correlated with education or flat. The relationship to income is non-monotonic. Figure 3 combines ethnic categories again to enable sharper comparisons between support for SAH and BLM. The support levels converge for the lowest age group and the highest education group.

Results—Links

Linking Hate and Fate

Do those with HCE show higher ALF and/or LFB? Of those without HCE, only 66% have ALF and 52% LFB. HCE is associated with jumps of 21 and 18 points, respectively, providing some evidence for the mediation relationships shown back in Fig. 1.[6] Figure 4 shows the HCE

[6] True causal inference would require a research design beyond this sort of data. That said, HCE events are specific incidents that are

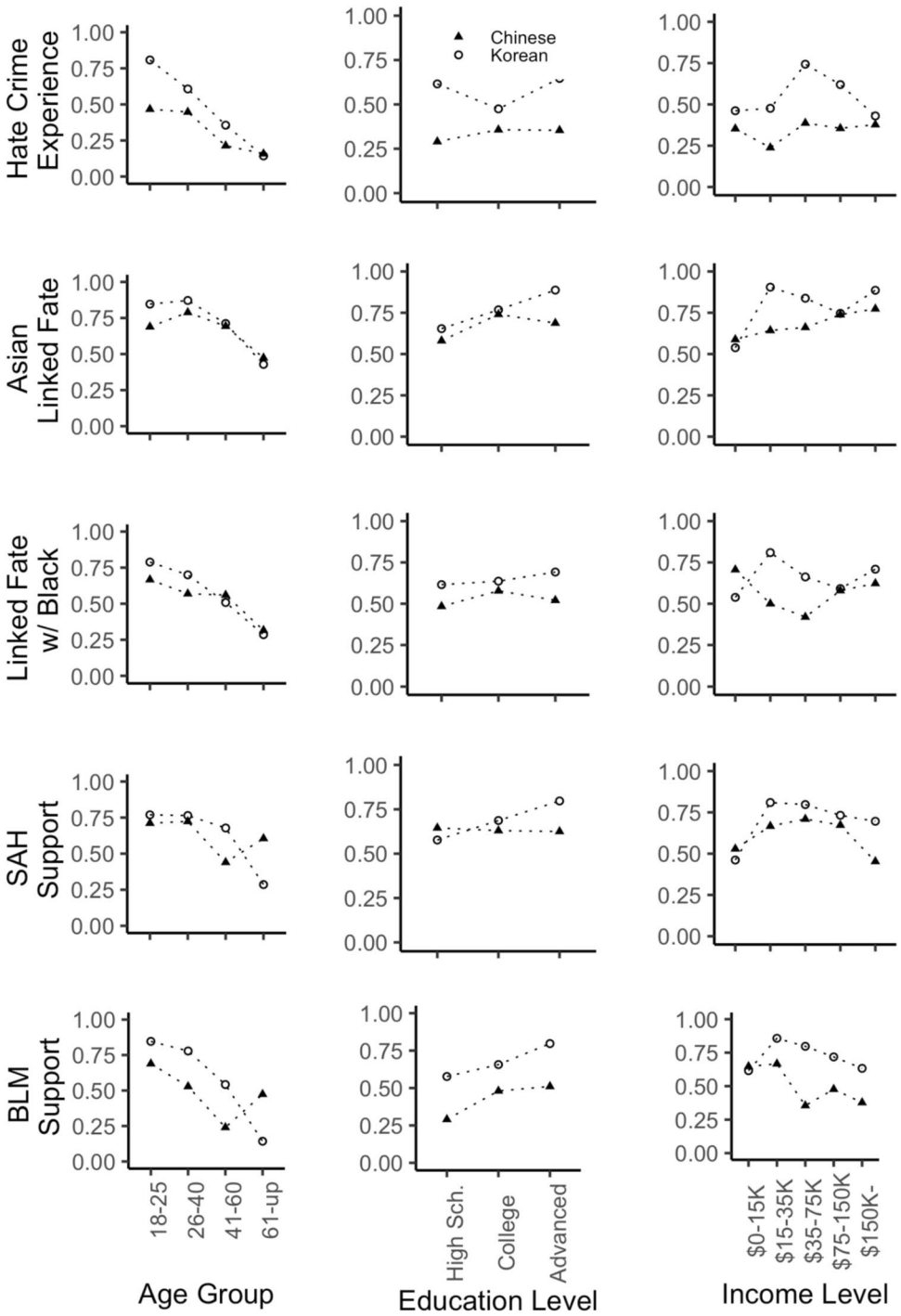

Fig. 2 Linked Fate, Hate Crime Experience, and Movement Support by Demographic Groups

effects on LF for subgroups. While older respondents had lower levels of ALF or LFB, experiencing HCE "made" them equivalent to younger respondents in their views. Those who reported such experience almost always have greater linked fate, with some exceptions for LFB. For example, among people with the highest levels of education or income (or lowest age), those with HCE did not show higher LFB compared to those without.

Does the HCE gap in LF persist under full demographic controls? See Table 2. Given the clustered nature of demographic predictors, we use multilevel regression to improve

Footnote 6 (continued)

more likely to influence attitudes (LF) than pre-existing attitudes influencing the likelihood of experiencing HCE, reducing concerns about reverse causation. The causal mediation interpretation of our findings also rests on the assumption we sufficiently control for confounding using our demographics.

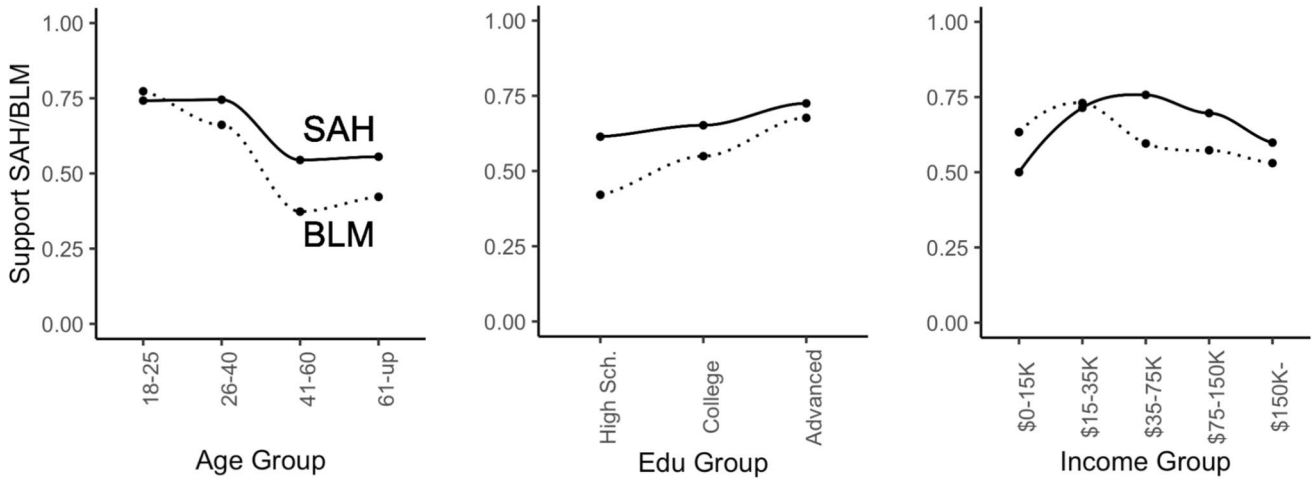

Fig. 3 Comparing Movement Support

modeling efficiency (Gelman & Hill, 2007, p. 244–248).[7] We include varying intercepts within grouped effects, along with linear age and income predictors to capture trends.[8] We show models with and without HCE. Akaike information criterion (AIC) is shown to compare fit across models for the same dependent variable (lower numbers showing superior fit, with the scale relative to the particular data). For ALF, HCE has an effect of up to 29% percentage points for a respondent otherwise marginal in their response. Model fit is much better. For completeness, we also note: Age, in both linear and grouped predictors, has a large and significant association. There is no clear linear income pattern. After adjusting for the assorted covariates, there is the largest variation in intercepts (highest standard deviation thereof) by primary identification and party. In short, the raw differences seen earlier remain after adjusting for further covariates.

The right side of Table 2 shows a similar but smaller effect for HCE on LFB, half as large and only just improving model fit. The key takeaway is that the association of hate to linked fate persists after adjusting for any of these demographics (or others we have tried). While the effect size as measured by raw comparisons was similar (21 points versus 18), the controlled comparison does suggest a lesser impact of HCE on LFB.

Linking Fate and Movement Support

The next step is to connect linked fate to movement support. Are they related? See Fig. 5, showing the increase in movement support for the associated type of linked fate, across demographic categories. There is a positive gap for most subgroups. Overall, of those without ALF, only 46% support SAH, but 75% of those with ALF do. Of those without LFB, only 44% support BLM, but 69% of those with LFB do. Or, we can look at the gap between support for SAH and BLM (the former minus the latter). For those without ALF, the gap in support is 12 points, which shrinks to 8 points for those with ALF. The effect of LFB is more striking: for those without LFB, the gap in support is 21 points, which is cut to less than a point for those that feel LFB—Asians that feel LFB support SAH and BLM at almost exactly the same rate.[9]

[7] Multilevel modeling is generally an improvement over classical regression—the latter is indeed equivalent to a special case of multilevel models in which the degree to which data are pooled across subgroups is at the extreme of complete pooling or no pooling arbitrarily. Instead of these extremes, multilevel modeling is an endogenous "compromise between pooled and unpooled estimates, with the relative weights determined by the sample size in the group and the variation within and between groups" (Gelman & Hill 2007, 254–258). A multilevel model pools group-level parameters towards their mean, with greater pooling when group-level variance is small and more smoothing for less populated groups. There is a lengthy theoretical literature in statistics showing that multilevel models reduce mean squared errors when the number of groups is three or more (e.g., Efron and Morris 1975; James and Stein 1960). Group-level predictors (such as our linear age or income level variables) can be directly of interest but also reduce any unexplained group-level variation, meaning more precise estimation (Gelman & Hill 2007, 271).

[8] For model convergence, we interact ethnicity and language into four and sex and marriage into five combinations.

[9] While LFB is associated with 25 additional points of support for BLM, it is associated with only 5 additional points of support for SAH (this serves akin to a placebo test, in that it should not be associated with the latter).

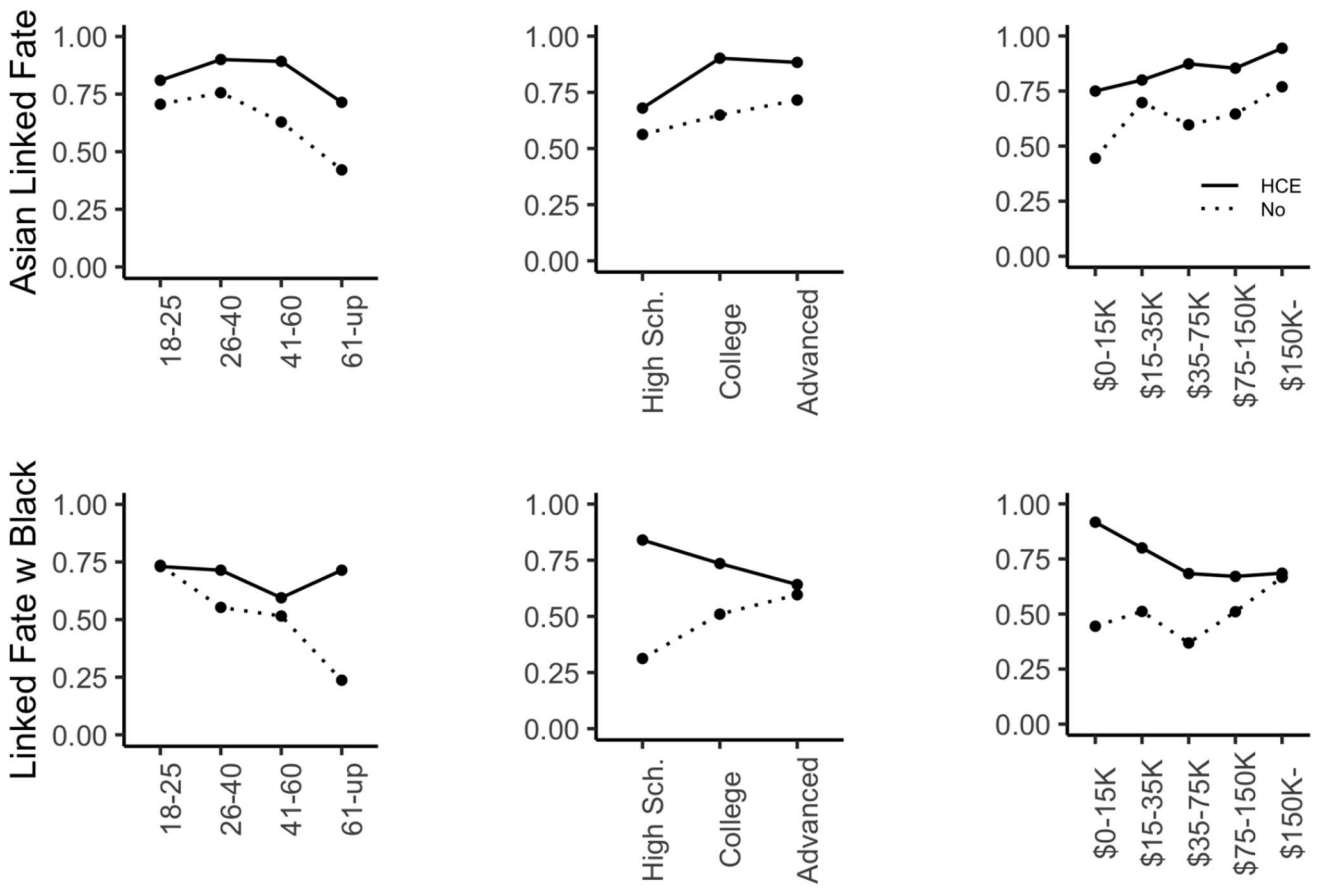

Fig. 4 Connecting Hate to Fate

Table 2 Models of ALF and LFB

	Asian Linked Fate (ALF)				Linked Fate with Blacks (LFB)			
	Coef	SE	Coef	SE	Coef	SE	Coef	SE
Intercept	1.20	.99	.64	1.25	.31	.97	.07	1.06
Hate (HCE)			1.14*	.28			.58*	.23
Age (decades)	-.90*	.35	-.71	.39	-.91*	.30	-.81*	.31
Income level	.40	.38	.41	.40	-.10	.30	-.15	.32
Grouped Intercepts	Std. Dev		Std. Dev		Std. Dev		Std. Dev	
Ethnicity/lang	.39		.31		.34		.34	
Age	.35		.44		.27		.28	
Income	.35		.39		.24		.27	
Sex/marital	.59		.57		.55		.52	
Primary id	1.08		1.24		.94		.60	
Education	.46		.71		.35		1.03	
Immig	.59		1.22		.86		.90	
Party	.80		.89		.86		.90	
AIC	564		554		698		697	

We rescale continuous predictors of age and income level, centering at zero and dividing by two standard deviations, to improve interpretation and convergence. * $p < .05$

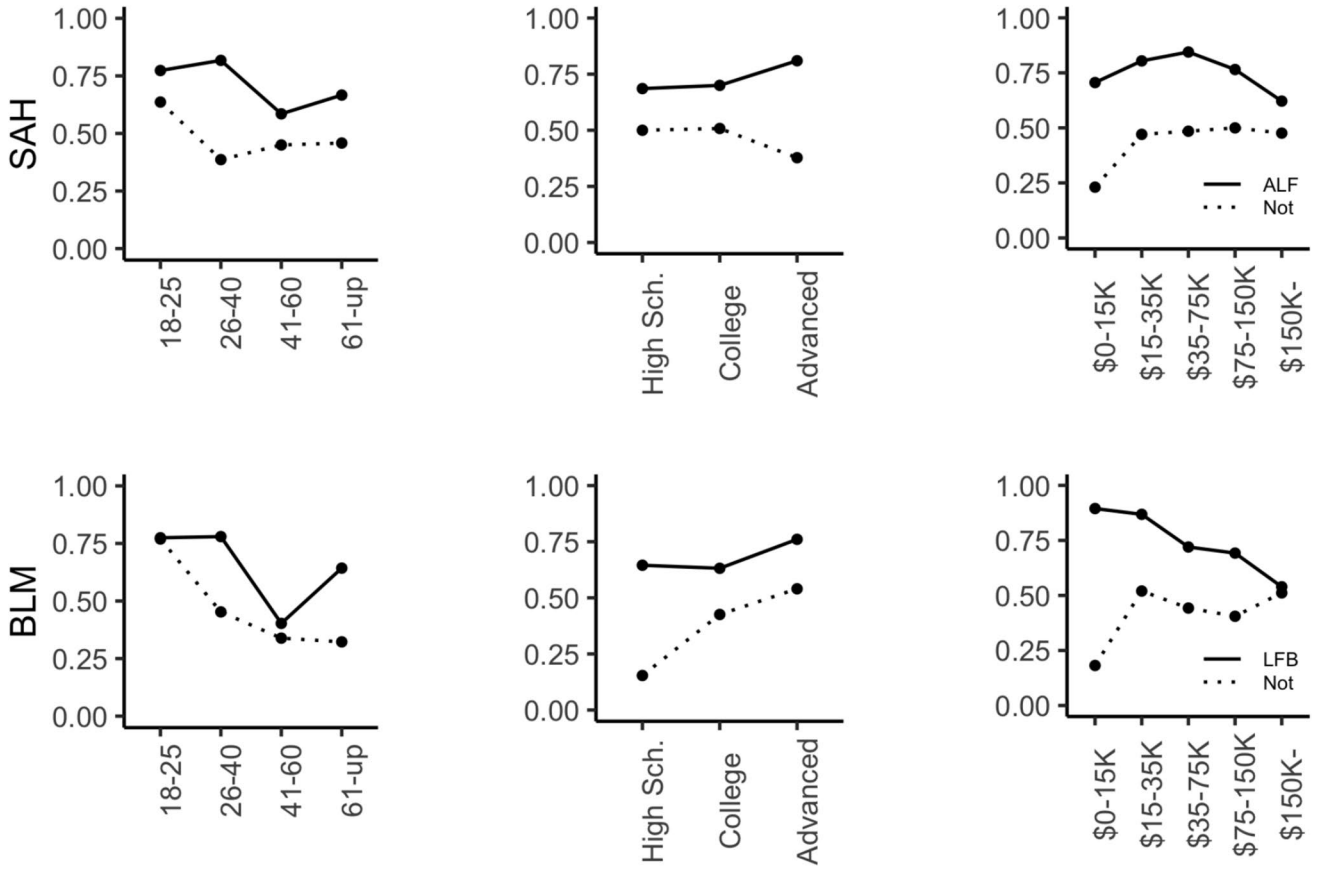

Fig. 5 Connecting Fate to Movement Support

The final step is to tie all three parts together, to evaluate mediation and moderation.

Results—Mediation and/or Moderation?

Connecting Movement Support to Linked Fate and Hate

We start with a graphical presentation of the interaction effects of having HCE or linked fate. See Fig. 6, which shows simple subgroup means for each combination (statistical significance will be covered in the regression analysis). The left panel invokes ALF and HCE in their combined impact on support for SAH (solid dots). For those without ALF (the first two solid dots), moving from neither hate nor fate to having HCE does not increase SAH support (a drop in fact). For those with ALF (the other two solid dots in the left panel), there is a 19-point jump in SAH support from HCE. This is potential evidence of a moderating (conditional) effect of linked fate—without linked fate, hate does not have the effect on support. Next, flip the comparison. Comparing the first and third points, we hold constant having no HCE: ALF increases SAH support by 19 points. Comparing the second and fourth, we hold constant having HCE: adding ALF increases SAH

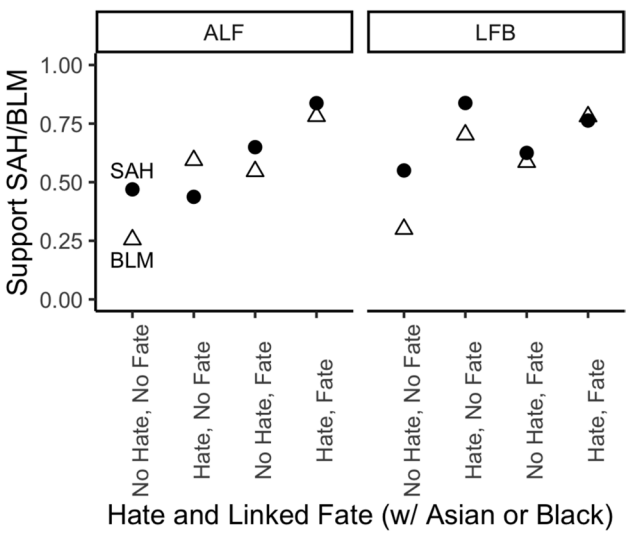

Fig. 6 Connecting Hate, Fate, and Racial Justice Movement Support

support SAH by 40 points. This is evidence of an interaction effect between HCE and ALF, to be explored further in mediation/moderation analysis.

This panel can also be used to compare differences in the combined effects of HCE and ALF on BLM support (open triangles). For those without ALF (first two triangles), the effect of HCE is 33 points of additional support for BLM. We continue to examine support for BLM in the right panel, which invokes LFB: for those without LFB, the increase from HCE is 40 points of BLM support (first and second triangles); for those with LFB, the increase from HCE is 19 points of BLM support (third and fourth triangles). In sharp contrast to the results for SAH and ALF above, there is a difference from HCE regardless of whether LF exists or not (though the size does vary). The interaction effect can be seen in comparing the effect of LFB for those without HCE (29 points) to the effect of LFB for those with HCE (8 points) (statistical significance is discussed in the regression models below).

Mediation

Since HCE is associated with higher linked fate, HCE can also have an indirect effect through linked fate, even in addition to any direct effect. We present structural equation models of mediation and partial mediation in Fig. 7 (using the SEM package in R). We show three such models for SAH (SAH1, SAH2, SAH3), following a baseline set of separate models (SAH0). (Table 3 shows fit statistics and standard

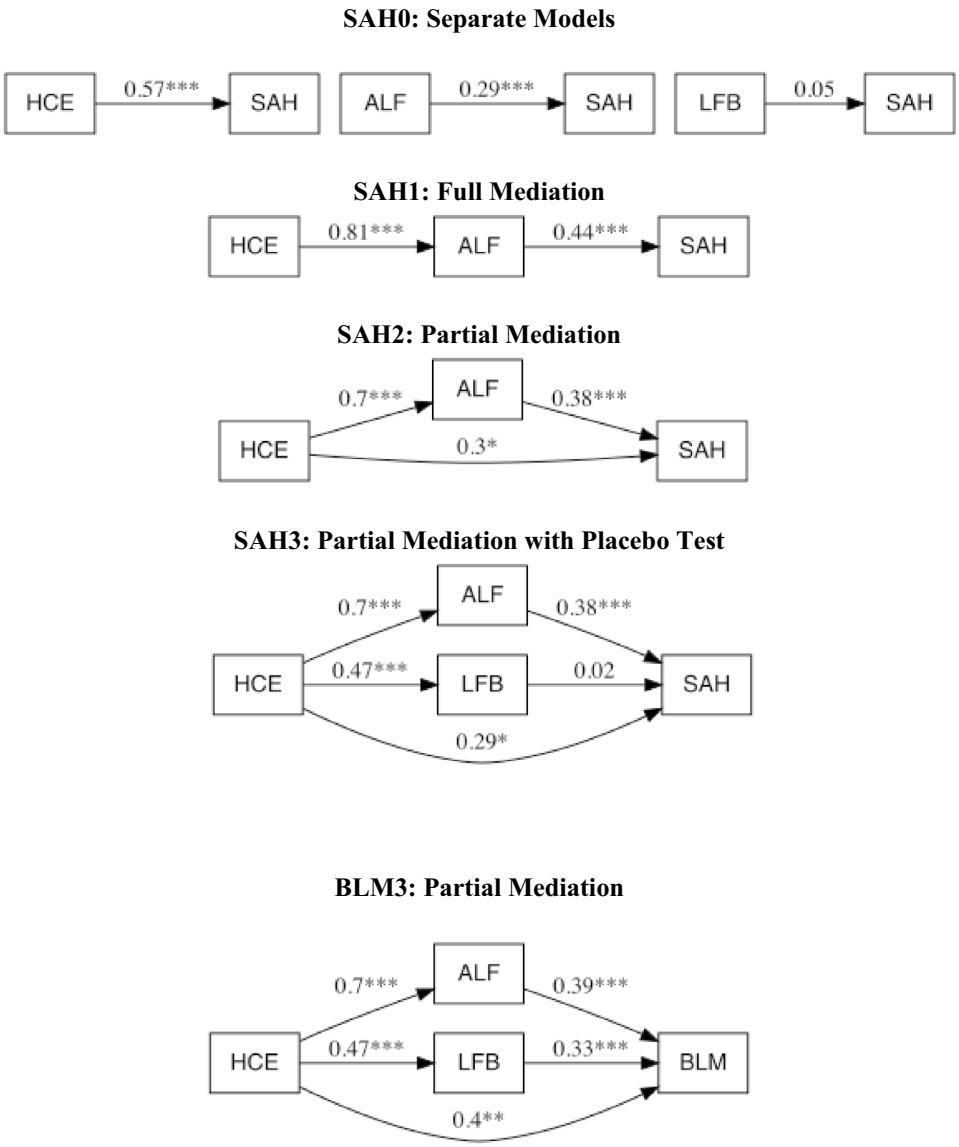

Fig. 7 ALF as Mediators or Partial Mediators of HCE to SAH/BLM. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 3 Mediation Models of Movement Support

	Fit	Paths
SAH0 Separate Models	saturated, fit statistics NA	HCE → SAH: B = 0.57, SE = 0.12*** ALF → SAH: B = 0.29, SE = 0.05*** LFB → SAH: B = 0.05, SE = 0.04
SAH1 Full Mediation	$\chi^2(1) = 5.66$, p = .017; CFI = .85; RMSEA = .09; SRMR = .03	HCE → ALF: B = 0.81, SE = 0.13*** ALF → SAH: B = 0.44, SE = 0.06***
SAH2 Partial Mediation	saturated, fit statistics NA	HCE → ALF: B = 0.70, SE = 0.13*** ALF → SAH: B = 0.38, SE = 0.07*** HCE → SAH: B = 0.30, SE = 0.12*
SAH3 Partial Mediation + Placebo	$\chi^2(1) = 195.22$, p < .001; CFI = .03; RMSEA = .60; SRMR = .25	HCE → ALF: B = 0.70, SE = 0.13*** HCE → LFB: B = 0.474, SE = 0.112*** ALF → SAH: B = 0.38, SE = 0.07*** LFB → SAH: B = 0.02, SE = 0.07 HCE → SAH: B = 0.29, SE = 0.13*
BLM3 Partial Mediation	$\chi^2(1) = 195.22$, p < .001; CFI = .16; RMSEA = .60; SRMR = .25	HCE → ALF: B = 0.70, SE = 0.13*** HCE → LFB: B = 0.47, SE = 0.11*** ALF → BLM: B = 0.39, SE = 0.07*** LFB → BLM: B = 0.33, SE = 0.07*** HCE → BLM: B = 0.40, SE = 0.14**

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

errors where possible.). In the baselines shown, respectively, if we only looked at independent "effects," HCE would seem to have the strongest significant effect on SAH; ALF has half that size effect (also significant); while LFB as a placebo effect has nearly no effect.[10] (That is, we do not expect LFB to drive support for SAH.).

The first combined model, Model SAH1, allows only the full mediation path of HCE to ALF to SAH support. We can use coefficients to calculate shares of effect. If we ruled out a direct effect of HCE, we would find that about 19% of ALF's influence on SAH support is independent of HCE. The majority—81%—is indirectly attributable to HCE. Model SAH2 (the key model for our arguments), allows partial mediation. About 48% of the total effect of HCE (.56 = .3 + .7 ⨯ .38) on support for SAH is actually indirect, mediated through ALF; the remaining 52% is direct. About 70% of the influence of ALF on SAH support is traceable to HCE → ALF. The remaining 30% reflects ALF variation that stems from factors other than HCE. Model SAH3, allows for a placebo test, in that we also allow for a pathway through LFB to SAH—which we would not theoretically expect. Less than 1% of the full effect of HCE (.57) on SAH operates through the LFB pathway (compared to 48% through ALF and 51% directly).

The final model, BLM3, matches the predictors of SAH3. Here, we do expect that both LF paths could lead to BLM support. In this model, 48% of the total HCE effect (.83) on BLM support is direct; the indirect effect is split 33% through the ALF path and 19% the LFB effect. Note the total HCE effect on BLM is about 50% larger here than for SAH.

Moderation

We also explore the possibility that the HCE effect is instead moderated by linked fate, in that it is conditional upon linked fate being felt (as in the right-hand side of Fig. 1). We do so first using structural equation modeling (using *sem* and *lavaan in R*), to ease comparisons to the effect sizes above. We then formally test moderation effects in full logistic regression models. Initial results are shown in Fig. 8. The effect of HCE on SAH is large and significant *if* there is ALF, and is insignificant and negative if not. There is clear evidence of moderation (testing the differences between constrained and unconstrained models at $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 5.42$, $p = .02$). The effect of HCE on SAH support differs depending on ALF status.

We can also test this more directly using an interaction term (Table 4). See the final column, Model 4S (a structural equation model). HCE has no meaningful effect without ALF. With ALF, the effect of HCE is significant substantively and statistically, with a significant interaction term. Models 4 M and 4L show multilevel and logistic regression models of similar structure, for robustness. Simpler models are also shown (1 M-3 M), to demonstrate improved model fit by adding the combination of terms and the interaction (fit statistics are not always available from *sem*). The alternate (not structural equation) models make it easier to calculate substantive effects (since the

[10] Coefficients represent changes in the underlying continuous (latent) response associated with a one-unit change in the predictor, as estimated using DWLS for ordinal indicators.

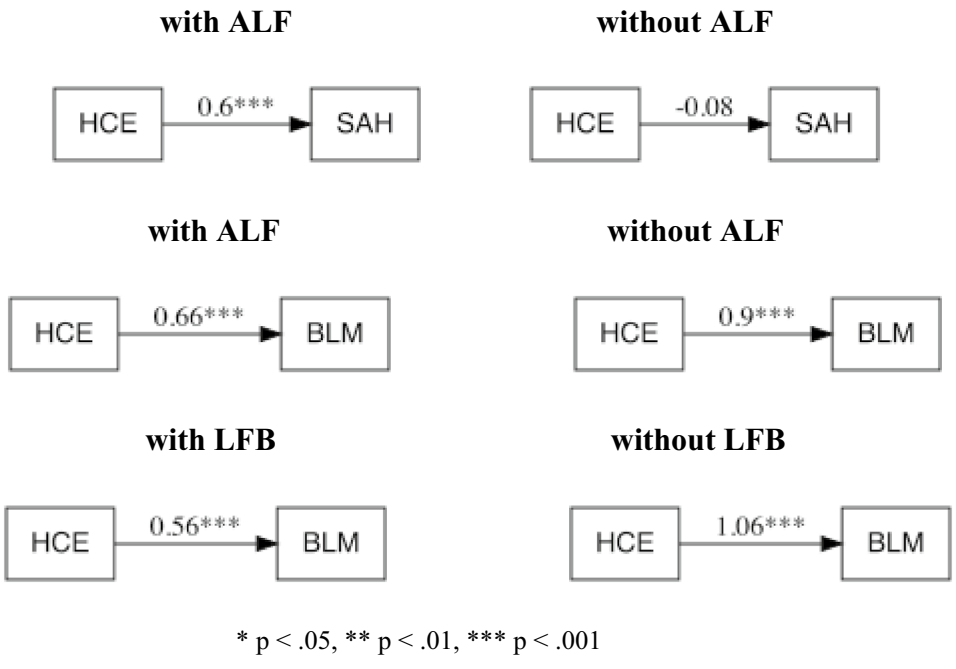

Fig. 8 ALF and LFB as Moderators. * $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$

Table 4 Moderation Models of Support for SAH and BLM

SAH	Models											
	1 M		2 M		3 M		4 M		4L		4S	
	Coef	SE	Coef	SE	Coef	SE	Coef	SE	Coef	SE	Coef	SE
HCE	.96*	.25			.76*	.26	-.48	.48	-.09	.39	-.08	.26
ALF			1.40*	.26	.76*	.26	.79*	.30	.74*	.25	.46*	.16
HCE ⨯ ALF							1.65*	.54	1.09*	.45	.68*	.29
AIC	656		641		635		628		–		–	
Demog	✓		✓		✓		✓		–		–	
BLM	Models											
	5 M		6 M		7 M		8 M		7S		6S	
	Coef	SE	Coef	SE	Coef	SE	Coef	SE	Coef	SE	Coef	
HCE	.98 *	.25	1.30*	.38	.87	.50	.75	.54	.90*	.26	1.06*	.19
ALF	.98*	.29			1.18*	.32	.82*	.37	.78*	.16		
LFB	.64*	.25	1.07*	.30			.73*	.34			.74*	.15
HCE ⨯ ALF					.16	.55	.42	.58	-.24	.29		
HCE ⨯ LFB			-.33	.47			-.16	.50			-.50*	.24
AIC	622		633		629		626				-	
Demog	✓		✓		✓		✓		-		-	

Models 1 M-8 M are multilevel logistic regressions including, but not showing, the same demographic groupings as in Table 2 (with sex and marriage as separate groups to enable convergence). Model 4L is a bayesian logit model (bayesglm in R), without multilevel modeling or demographics, parallel to 4 M. Models 4S, 7S, and 8S are structural equation models (using the sem function in R, lavaan package). * $p<.05$

effects are not on the latent probability scale of the structural equation models). With ALF, the effect of HCE on SAH is up to 29 points (Model 4 M; 25 points in Model 4L). Moving from someone who has neither HCE nor ALF to someone who has both means an increase of up to 49 points (Model 4 M; 44 points in 4L).

Next, we look at possible moderating effects of LFB and ALF on the HCE → BLM relationship. Figure 8 shows models of HCE effects with and without LFB, and with and without ALF. A test of difference shows improved fit for allowing HCE effects to vary by LFB ($\chi^2(1)=4.3$, $p=.04$)—but the difference for varying ALF is *not* significant ($\chi^2(1)=0.64$,

$p = .42$). Again, we next run regression models with controls for robustness checks and ease interpretation (Table 4). The first four models (5 M-8 M) are multilevel models. The one with best fit is without interaction terms, which are insignificant and often negative in the models in which they appear. From these alone, we would see little evidence of moderation, given full demographic controls. It is only *sem* models (6S and 7S) that show any statistically significant interactions and those are in the wrong dimension. This suggests that mediation is the more convincing model for BLM.

Summary

For SAH support, we find evidence that ALF both mediates (partially) and moderates the effect of HCE. For BLM support, both ALF and LFB appear to mediate the effect of HCE, but only LFB shows evidence of being a moderator. It is possible that both processes are at work. It is also possible that the apparent moderation effects are capturing underlying mediation. Future research with larger samples and improved measurement might disentangle these processes.[11]

Discussion and Conclusion

This study examines how experiences of hate crimes or bias (HCE), linked fate, and support for racial justice movements interrelate among Chinese and Korean Americans during the COVID-19 pandemic. We contribute to the growing literature on Asian American political behavior by offering a dynamic, context-sensitive understanding of linked fate. Prior research has examined this as a contextually emergent phenomenon in response to racialization and political mobilization (e.g., Junn & Masuoka, 2008; Masuoka, 2006). We extend this by empirically demonstrating how specific experiences activate linked fate and movement support. Our findings show that linked fate is not solely a product of long-term socialization or ethnic solidarity, but can also be catalyzed by immediate discriminatory experiences.

We further expand the scope of analysis by showing how HCE influences support for both intra-group (SAH) and inter-group (BLM) racial justice movements, revealing both direct and mediated pathways through linked fate. Specifically, we find that HCE not only affects individual support for these two movements, but does so through distinct processes depending on subgroup characteristics. Disaggregating these data allows an intersectional view of Asian American political identity, with important variation in how linked fate forms and racial solidarity emerges. This provides new insight into how experiencing discrimination can foster both intra-Asian cohesion and intergroup coalitions with Black Americans.

The hate-fate connection aligns with prior research suggesting that anti-Asian sentiment, discrimination, and crisis events can catalyze pan-Asian solidarity, political cooperation, and collective action (Espiritu, 1992; Kurashige, 2000; Kim, 2023; Chan, et al., 2024). For example, Kurashige (2000) applies Espiritu's concept of *reactive solidarity* to show how Asian Americans United mobilized panethnic unity among Southeast Asian immigrants in response to racialized scapegoating, framing anti-Asian violence as a structural, not isolated, issue. Our findings also reinforce Kim's (2023) argument that shared marginalization fosters political cohesion among Asian Americans and strengthens solidarity with other marginalized groups. Yet, our results suggest a more nuanced picture, revealing complex and multifaceted relationships among HCE, linked fate, and support for racial justice movements. Future work should continue the complex task of disentangling these dynamics.

We find that while HCE generally increases the probability of support for both SAH and BLM movements, its impact varies by subgroup. Our results also reveal a possible tension between the moderation and mediation findings. Taking the former first, treating ALF as exogenous: For those respondents with ALF, HCE leads to greater support for SAH. This does not hold for those without ALF. This challenges the argument that rising anti-Asian hate will lead to greater solidarity and support for social movements based on alliances and cooperation. Respondents who remain separated from other Asian ethnic groups show no increase in support for pan-Asian movements. The effect was concentrated among those connected through ALF… yet that status is NOT exogenous.

In other words, this simpler moderation story would hold *if* we were sure HCE did not affect linked fate itself, but we *do* find that HCE affects linked fate, and that increased linked fate in turn increases support for SAH. HCE has an effect operating through linked fate and a further direct effect of its own on support for SAH. It is likely that all these processes operate in tandem: that HCE amplifies support when linked fate is already present (exogenously or due to HCE) and HCE also has direct effects even when it does not induce linked fate.

Specifically, in our subgroup analysis, some Korean respondents, as well as younger, lower-income, and less-educated respondents in general, were more likely to report both increased linked fate and greater support for SAH following HCEs. These patterns highlight that the pathway

[11] Given sample size (and thus multicollinearity problems with the interaction terms), we were unable to simultaneously estimate moderation and partial mediation models, even when restoring full ordinal scales.

from HCE to solidarity may be conditional, as other subgroups do not seem to show the same pattern. The exact mix of direct and indirect effects likely varies by subgroup, an issue beyond our sample size and space limitations.[12] While prior studies have used varying terms—such as racial group consciousness, panethnic identity, or Asian linked fate—the underlying theoretical logic aligns with our results. Scholars have consistently argued that Asian American group identity is not inherent but contingent on contextual factors like perceived discrimination, language use, nativity, and political environment (Masuoka, 2006; Junn & Masuoka, 2008). Recent studies (Author, 2025; Chan et al., 2024) further demonstrate that anti-Asian hate during the COVID-19 pandemic can activate linked fate and increase political engagement. Chan et al. (2024) found the effects were stronger among subgroups such as foreign-born, non-English-speaking, younger, and economically vulnerable Asian Americans. Our study confirms these findings and extends them by providing evidence from a multilingual, comparative sample of Korean and Chinese Americans.

Turning to BLM, HCE more consistently increases support, even without the condition of linked fate. The mediated hate-to-linked-fate pathway remains important. Remember that HCE effects on LFB were non-existent for some subgroups (Fig. 4), which means this pathway to movement support will not happen for those subgroups, leaving possible only direct effects of HCE. Our findings stand in contrast with the conclusions of Yellow Horse et al. (2021), that foreign-born Asian Americans show limited support for BLM due to weaker feelings of belonging in the U.S. and lower acknowledgment of anti-Black racism. Our results suggest that these patterns are less fixed. Foreign-born respondents with HCE—particularly Korean-language speakers and permanent residents—showed increased support for BLM, operating in part but not only through linked fate.

Similarly, our analysis of LFB adds nuance to Kim's (2000) racial triangulation theory and implies temporal variation in its application. Kim argues that the triangulated status of Asian Americans reinforces anti-Black sentiment within Asian communities and serves as a structural barrier to Asian-Black solidarity, noting "this triangulation pattern has proven remarkably robust over time" (p. 129). However, our findings suggest emerging cracks in this pattern. For one, the levels of LFB and BLM support were certainly not negligible. The observed increase in LFB which leads to greater support for BLM—especially among some subgroups who had HCEs during the pandemic—points to emerging shifts rooted in shared experiences of racialization and a growing potential for Asian-Black solidarity. This challenges assertions that the concept of linked fate should be exclusively applied to the Black population.

One might be surprised by the moderate difference observed in average support for SAH (68%) and BLM (59%). Notably, HCE significantly increased LFB, not only ALF. To be sure, such experience could lead to greater sympathy for Black Americans, more awareness of the pervasiveness of discrimination, and increased recognition of shared vulnerability. On the other hand, such experiences could just as plausibly have caused more insular feelings, including distancing from or even blaming Blacks for anti-Asian discrimination.

The differences between Koreans and Chinese in our findings align with previous research showing that Koreans exhibit the highest levels of ALF and political affinity with Black Americans. Within each group, Chinese or Koreans, those surveyed in their ethnic languages exhibited stronger senses of ALF (6 points higher than those surveyed in English, for both groups). This within-group language difference did not exist for LFB. Thus, mother language seems connected to the development of ALF, likely because it shapes how individuals engage with ethnic history, cultural narratives, and collective memory, all of which inform ethnic identity, belonging, and solidarity (Francis, 2014; Oh & Fuligni, 2010; Norton, 1997).

Before concluding, we highlight some limitations. The use of a convenience sample of moderate size limits generalizability. Participants with reliable internet access, higher levels of digital literacy, or greater willingness to complete online surveys are likely overrepresented due to the mode of data collection. Second, our sample is limited to Chinese and Korean Americans. While this focus enables an analytically meaningful comparison between two groups that are similarly racialized but differ in migration trajectories, civic infrastructures, and community networks, it does not reflect the full diversity of the Asian American population. We might expect but cannot know whether we would find the same mediation pathways from hate crimes to solidarity in other Asian groups. And, of course, observational survey data, even if the best evidence available, is far from the gold standard of modern causal inference.

This study provides important implications for policy. For those seeking to build constructively on the damage done by the COVID-19 crisis, this means paying attention to subgroup differences and the multiple pathways by which support is built, especially in the aftermath of negative experiences. Strengthening Asian linked fate could be one way forward. At the same time, these sentiments are not universal. Efforts might focus on engaging older adults, who typically exhibit lower levels of linked fate (both inter- and intra-), as well as individuals with lower educational attainment, to foster a sense of linked fate. While education generally

[12] That said, we demonstrate sample comparisons in Appendix Tables 7A1 and 7A2, showing no clear difference between ethnic subgroups in the mediation effect, but clear differences between education subgroups in such.

enhances all forms of linked fate, targeted adult and community educational initiatives could increase knowledge of shared experiences of racial oppression and challenges faced by Asian and other ethnic communities. This could bolster support for anti-racist efforts like Stop Asian Hate (SAH).

Supplementary Information The online version contains supplementary material available at https://doi.org/10.1007/s12552-025-09451-3.

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Declarations

Competing Interest Authors are required to disclose financial or non-financial interests that are directly or indirectly related to the work submitted for publication. Please refer to "Competing Interests and Funding" below for more information on how to complete this section.

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