

Distinctly Ambiguous: An Exploration of South Asian and Latino Perceptions

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Introduction

- Racial ambiguity work has heavily relied on Biracial Black/White and Asian/White stimuli
- The Latinx and South Asian communities are two rapidly growing and understudied groups within the US that are also seen as racially ambiguous
- To test the generalizability of previous ambiguity work, here we measure perceptions of South Asian and Latino faces

Methods

Participants (N = 149)

Race

- White: 32%
- Black or African American: 11%
- Hispanic or Latino: 6%
- Asian: 31%
- Multiracial: 20%

Gender

Female = 62%, Male = 36%, Non-binary = 1%

Age

M Age = 20, SD Age = 2.6

Procedures

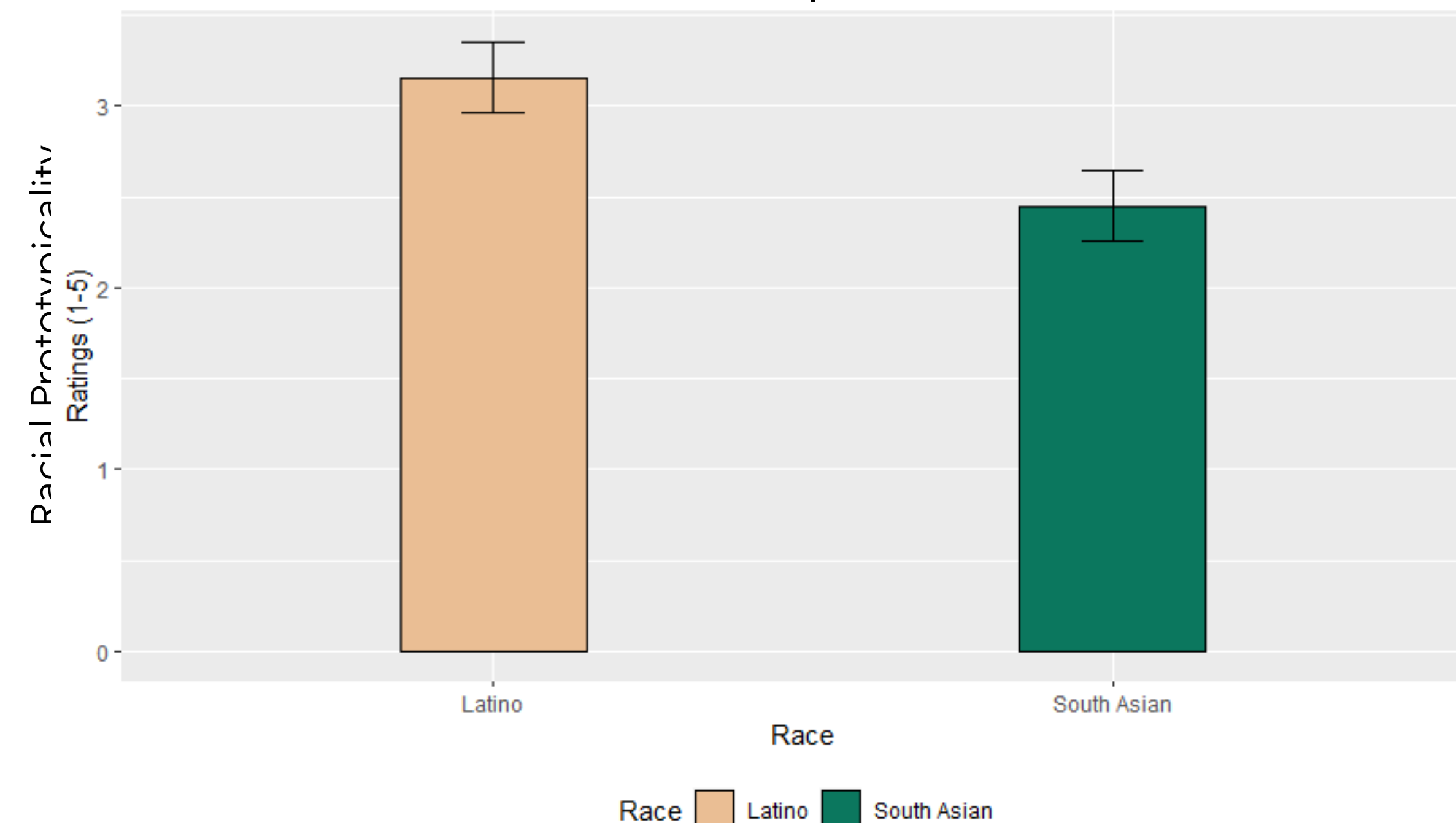
- Participants were asked to rate 83 faces on dimensions of racial prototypicality, sureness, "Americanness", and other norming scales (e.g., 1-5, how American is this face?)

Sample Stimuli

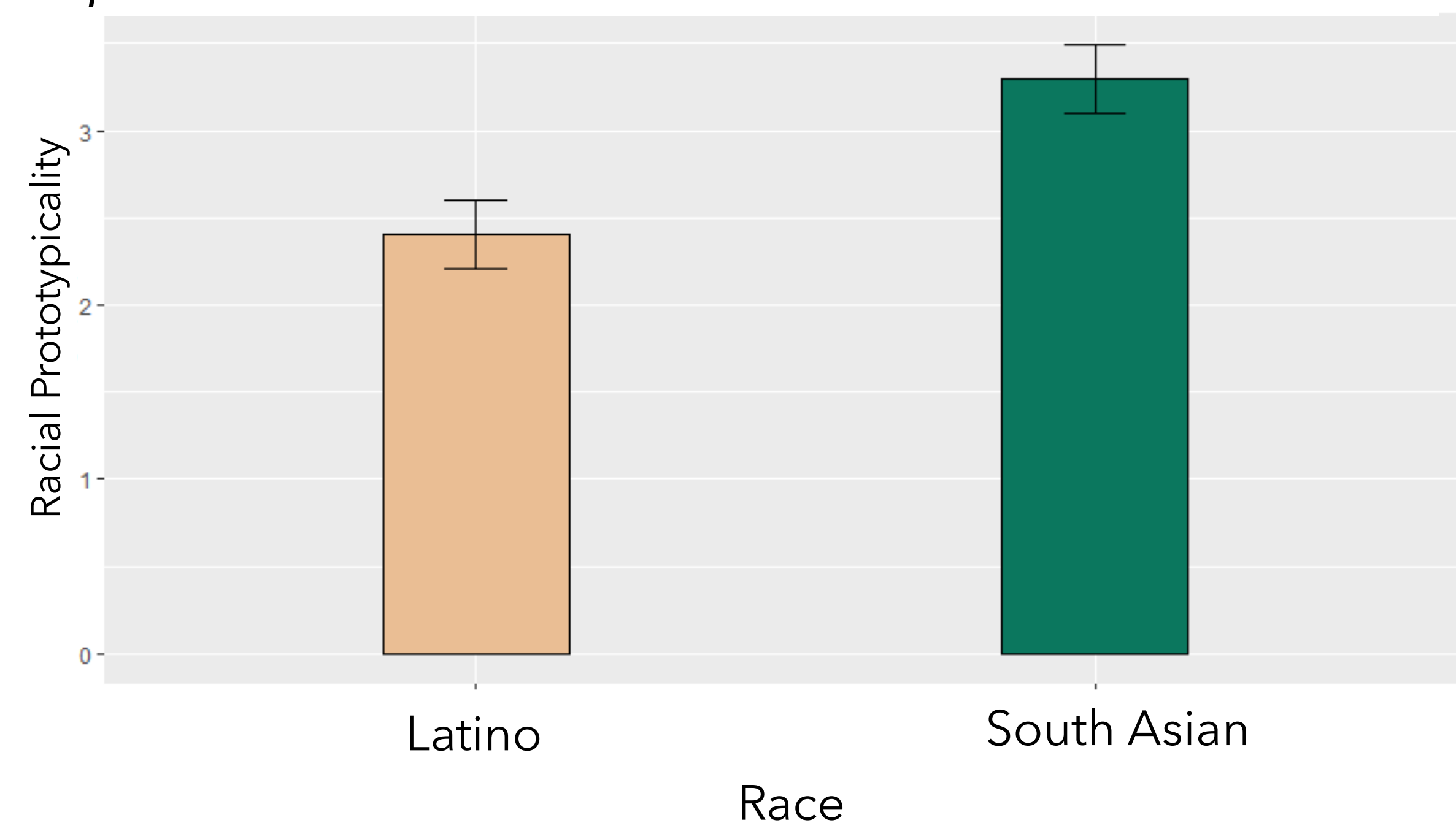


Racial Prototypicality

Latino faces were perceived as prototypically Latino: $t(80.96) = 7.16, p < 0.001$

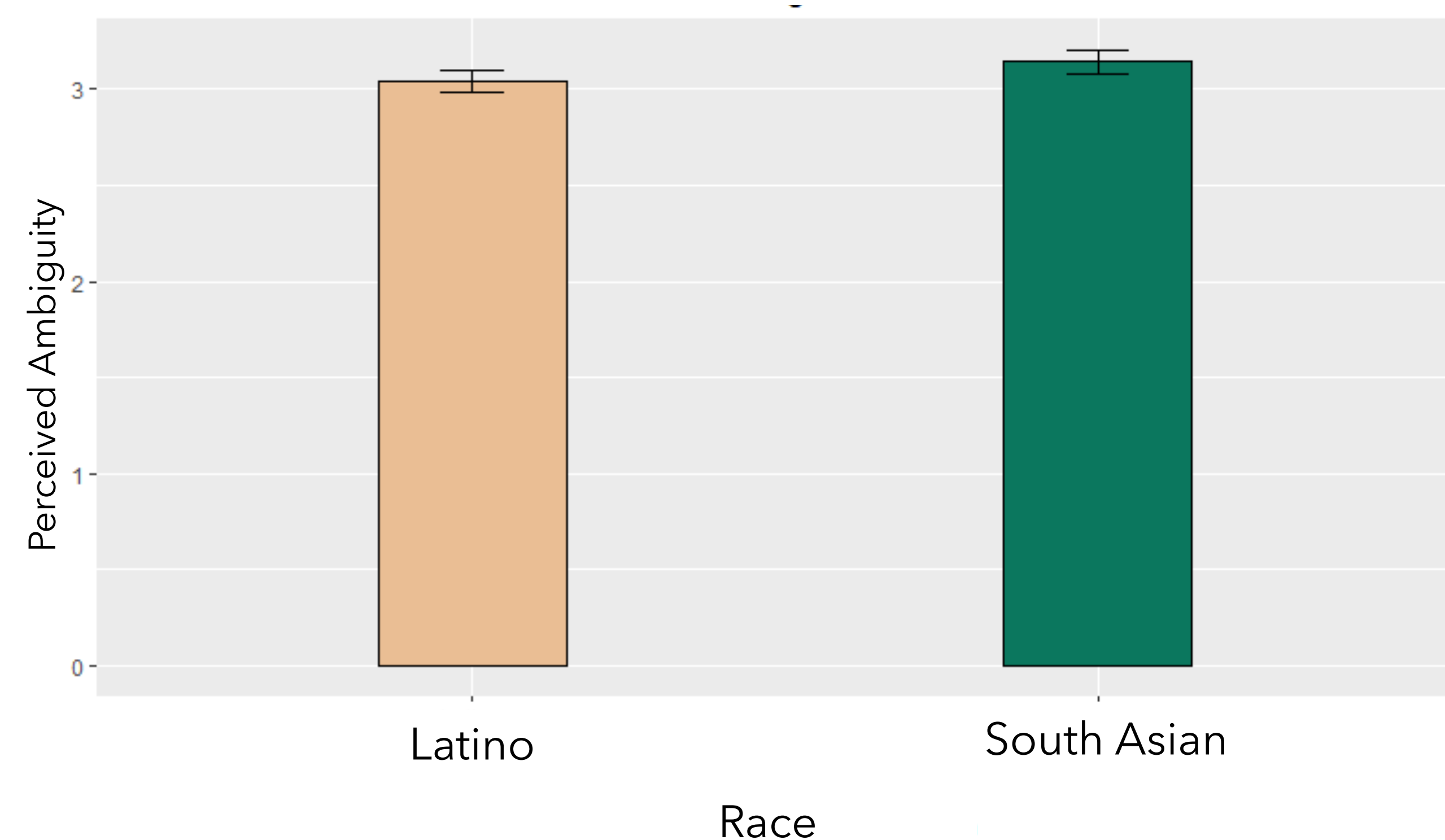


South Asian faces were perceived as prototypically South Asian: $t(75.96) = -8.98, p < 0.001$



Ambiguity

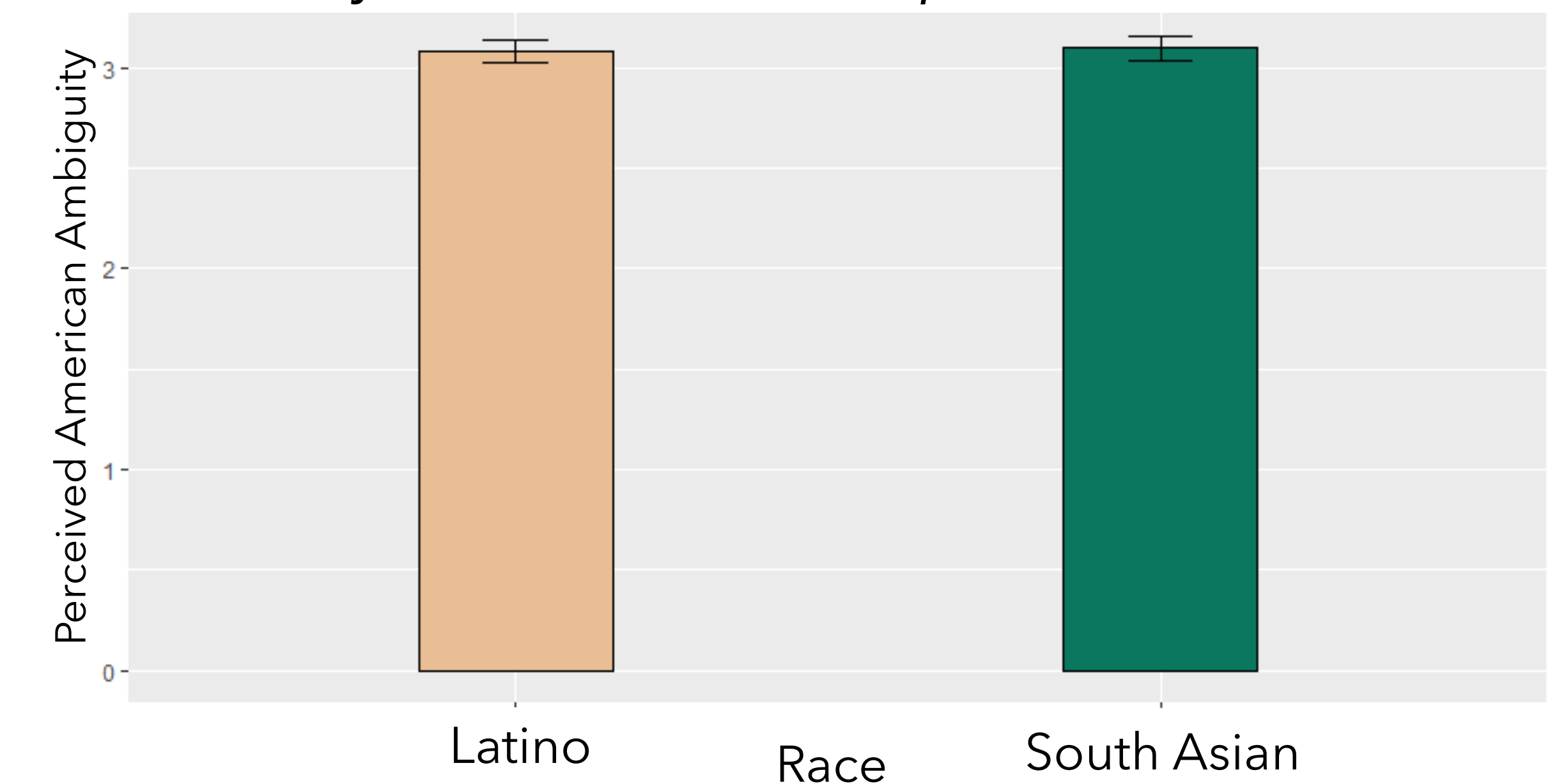
Perceivers were less certain of their Latino categorizations: $t(78.13) = -2.14, p < 0.05$



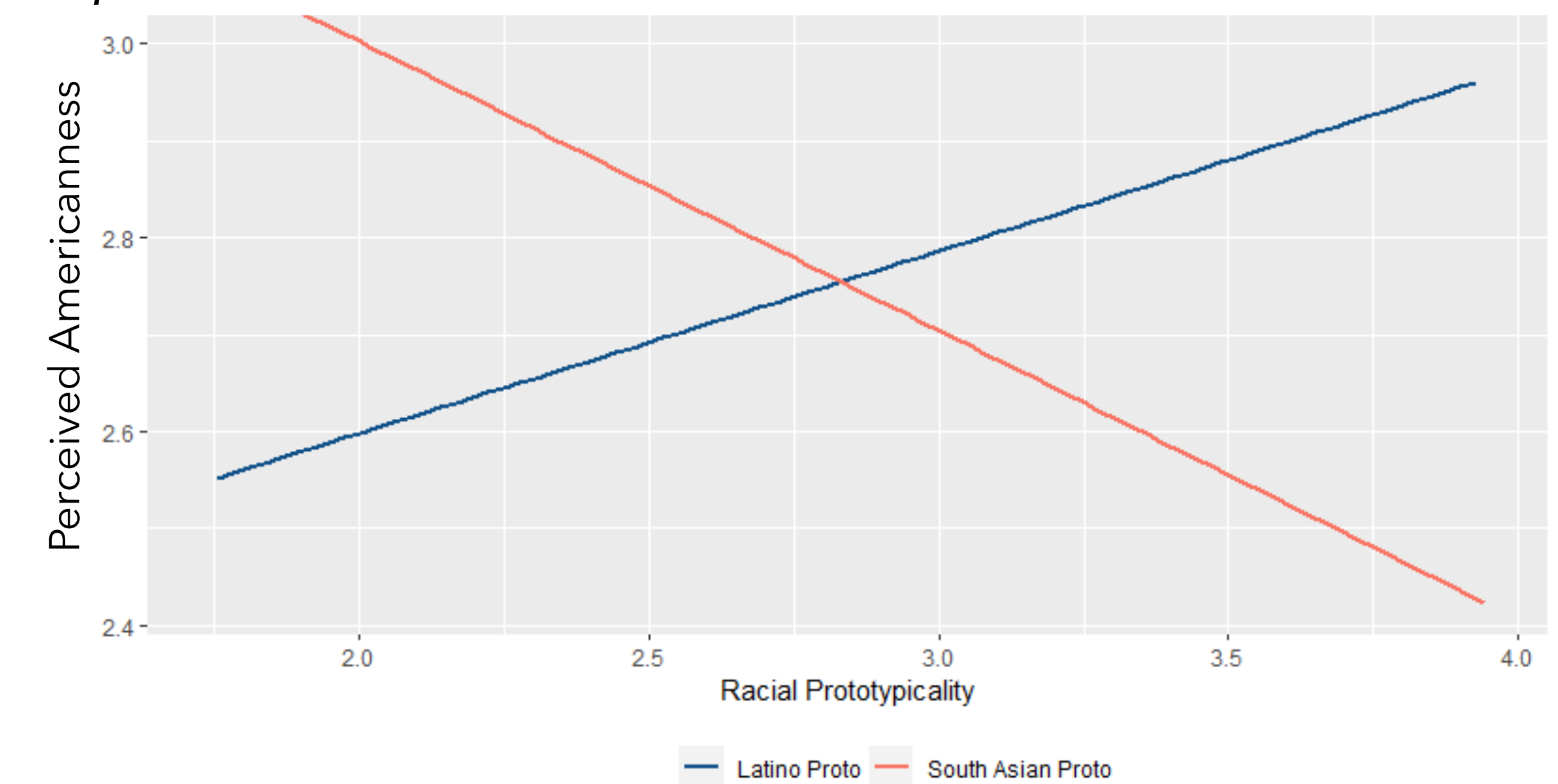
Results

Perceived Americanness

No difference in perceived American certainty, $t(74.96) = -0.53, p = 0.6$



Latino faces and Americanness had a positive relationship ($r(81) = 0.38, p < 0.001$), while South Asian faces had a negative relationship ($r(81) = -0.67, p < 0.001$).



Discussion

- This study expands racial ambiguity research beyond the US centered Black-White binary
- Norming for perceived foreignness may be crucial for other face stimuli
- Future work should explore why being more prototypically South Asian is perceived as less American
- Results suggest the need to expand our understandings of the intersections of ambiguity and other ethnicities

References:

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- Zou, L. X., & Cheryan, S. (2017). Two axes of subordination: A new model of racial position. *Journal of personality and social psychology*.

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