

ONLINE APPENDIX A. Identifying Litigants' Headquarters Location

To capture the litigating parties' location, we used a multipronged approach. First, we created a list of all existing patent assignees' location information from USPTO's PatentsView (<https://patentsview.org/>) and subsequently used it to find the geographic location of assignees who became litigants. Second, we wrote and applied the script that automatically opened the first Google search result based on the name of a given party and checked whether that page contained the headquarters' address. Third, we wrote and used another script that automatically searched for headquarters' information after searching for litigating parties' names on Wikipedia. These three steps allowed us to retrieve geographic information for about 86.7% of litigants (i.e., 53,843 unique entities) in our database. Fourth, we looked up the remaining 13.3% (i.e., 8,246) parties' names in Pitchbook, a private capital markets database, to improve our coverage of private companies (mostly start-ups). Fifth, after removing individuals and fictitious defendants (e.g., "Jane Doe," "Does 1–50") from the list, we manually went through court documents—the "PARTIES" section in complaints—to obtain the full addresses of the litigants for which the previous steps failed to yield a consistent location. This step produced addresses for another 2,042 litigants. Last, for the remaining 225 parties lacking valid address information, we undertook an additional round of exhaustive manual internet searches to ascertain their location information. We were able to obtain the location details for all but six litigants in our sample, which accounts for 99.9% of all the parties involved (specifically, 62,083 out of 62,089; removing the six litigants from the sample does not alter the conclusions of our analysis). For non-U.S. firms, we also queried the OpenAI API (gpt-4-turbo) to double-check headquarters information and verify the accuracy of our classification.¹

ONLINE APPENDIX B. Nationality Frequency of Asian Firms (Weighted by Case Count)¹

HQ Country	Frequency	Percent
Japan	3,909	39.52
Taiwan	1,828	18.48
India	1,432	14.48
South Korea	1,236	12.49
Greater China ²	1,177	11.90
Singapore	149	1.51
United Arab Emirates	54	0.55
Malaysia	34	0.34
Thailand	27	0.27
Others ³	48	0.49
Total	9,894	100

Notes:

¹ Countries classified as Asian are based on the United Nations General Assembly Regional Groups and the UN Statistics Division M49 Standard.

² Greater China includes China, Hong Kong, and Macao.

³ Others include the Philippines, Cyprus, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Jordan, Bangladesh, and Vietnam, which collectively account for 0.49% of the sample.

¹ The exact prompt we used was: "What country is [company] headquartered in? If it is a subsidiary, get the hq country of the parent. Please return only the country name. If not sure, say NOT SURE."

ONLINE APPENDIX C. Construction of Court's Conservatism

The variable Court's Conservatism captures the ideological climate of each U.S. federal district court during the 2000–2016 study period. It is based on the Database on Ideology, Money in Politics, and Elections (DIME) (Bonica 2014) and the judicial scaling framework developed by Bonica and Sen (2017). DIME places individuals—including donors, candidates, and legal professionals—on a continuous liberal–conservative scale (CFscore) derived from contributions made to political candidates. Extending this framework, Bonica and Sen (2017) estimate ideology scores for federal judges, enabling direct comparison of judges to other political actors within a common ideological space.

The underlying model assumes that contributors allocate resources to ideologically proximate candidates, thereby revealing latent ideological preferences. These CFscores are standardized to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1, with positive values representing conservative orientation and negative values representing liberal orientation. The measure is highly correlated with alternative measures of ideology in the U.S. context (e.g., $r = 0.92$ with DW-NOMINATE roll-call scores; Bonica 2014).

Not all federal judges have made campaign contributions. For judges lacking contribution data, Bonica and Sen (2017) infer ideological positions using multiple imputation implemented via the Amelia II algorithm (Honaker et al. 2011). The imputation model includes 17 covariates describing each judge's professional background and political context, including observed CFscores (if available), Judicial Common Space (JCS) score, appointing president, divided government, law school, birth year, race/ethnicity, gender, prior professional experience (e.g., prosecutorial or academic service), ABA rating, and the ideology of relevant Senate actors. Imputations are conducted separately for Democratic and Republican appointees. Bonica and Sen (2017, Appendix 4) find high concordance between imputed and observed CFscores.

Using these data, we assign each judge a single, time-invariant ideology score from Bonica and Sen (2017) and then average these values across all judges in a district who presided over at least one patent infringement case during the study period. This produces an annual district-level measure of *Court's Conservatism*. Positive values indicate more conservative courts, negative values more liberal courts, and values near zero ideological centrism. Although each judge's DIME score is static (i.e., time-invariant), the district-level mean varies over time as judges are appointed, retire, or are elevated to appellate courts, reflecting changes in the court's overall ideological composition.

ONLINE APPENDIX D. Testing Hypotheses 1 and 2 on Asian vs. U.S. Litigants Split Sample

TABLE D1. OLS Regressions Predicting the Proportion of White (Asian) Lawyers

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	DV: Proportion of White lawyers	DV: Proportion of White lawyers	DV: Proportion of Asian lawyers	DV: Proportion of Asian lawyers
	Asian Litigants	U.S. Litigants	Asian Litigants	U.S. Litigants
All control variables	Included	Included	Included	Included
All fixed effects	Included	Included	Included	Included
Pro-domestic reputation	0.000 (0.993)	-0.004 (0.714)	-0.009 (0.820)	-0.006 (0.508)
Court's conservatism	0.041** (0.002)	0.002 (0.471)	-0.037** (0.001)	-0.003 (0.216)
Constant	0.968** (0.000)	0.950** (0.000)	-0.014 (0.939)	-0.008 (0.792)
Observations	8,850	102,655	8,850	102,655

Notes: P-values are presented in parentheses. + $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

ONLINE APPENDIX E. Local Political Ideology and Media Sentiment toward Asian Firms

To provide additional contextual evidence consistent with firms' anticipation of potential anti-foreignness bias in more conservative environments, we examine whether local political ideology is associated with media sentiment toward Asian firms involved in U.S. legal disputes. Although media outlets are distinct from courts, prior research shows that local news coverage often reflects the ideological orientation of surrounding communities. This supplementary analysis therefore offers contextual evidence regarding whether conservative environments are associated with relatively more negative portrayals of Asian firms in legal settings.

We analyzed media coverage of Asian firms' U.S. legal cases using RavenPack's Composite Sentiment Score (CSS), which captures both the tone of an article (positive vs. negative) and the assessed strength of its content. CSS is widely used in prior research (e.g., Chapman et al. 2019, Bushman and Pinto 2024, Zyung 2025). Prior studies also show that local news outlets tend to mirror the ideological leanings of their surrounding communities. For example, Gentzkow and Shapiro (2010) document that newspapers' ideological slant correlates strongly with local readers' political preferences, and Puglisi and Snyder (2015) find that U.S. newspapers align closely with the median voter in their state.

Building on this work, we examined whether news sentiment toward Asian firms varies with the ideological environment of local media. We collected all RavenPack news stories covering legal disputes involving Asian firms between 2000 and 2016 (our sample window), applying a high relevance filter (>90 out of 100). After removing duplicated entries, news wires, and foreign press, the sample consisted of 21,115 articles published by U.S. local outlets that featured Asian firms' legal cases (using the same definition of Asian countries as in the main analysis). To proxy for the political ideology of local outlets, we drew on DIME data to calculate the average conservatism of political donors in the federal judicial district where each outlet was headquartered, weighted by the number of unique donors. We then analyzed the relationship between this measure and RavenPack's sentiment scores.

As shown in Table E1, even after controlling for country, year, firm, and story fixed effects, outlets headquartered in more conservative areas were associated with more negative sentiment toward Asian firms. In Model 4, we use RavenPack's event_similarity_key—which groups together records referring to the same underlying event or story—as a story fixed effect. This specification allows us to compare sentiment assigned to identical news events across outlets while stripping out case-specific noise. For example, when multiple outlets covered a lawsuit involving Toyota, those based in conservative districts expressed more negative sentiment than outlets based in liberal ones.

TABLE E1. OLS Regressions Predicting RavenPack Composite Sentiment Score

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	DV: RavenPack Composite Sentiment Score			
Local political conservatism	-0.003*	-0.002*	-0.002*	-0.003*
	(0.026)	(0.031)	(0.036)	(0.021)
Constant	-0.012**	-0.012**	-0.012**	-0.012**
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Country FE	NO	YES	YES	YES
Year FE	NO	YES	YES	YES
Firm FE	NO	NO	YES	YES
Story FE	NO	NO	NO	YES
Observations	21,115	21,115	21,115	21,115

Notes: P-values are presented in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

ONLINE APPENDIX F. Addressing Alternative Explanations and Counterarguments

We test two alternative explanations and one counterargument that could plausibly account for our results. First, we test whether the disadvantage Asian firms face in conservative venues reflects a more specific anti-Chinese sentiment. Our study period (2000–2016) predates both the U.S.–China trade war, which began under the Trump administration in 2018, and the COVID-19 pandemic, after which political and public attitudes toward China in the United States became markedly more negative. Thus, the patterns we document are unlikely to be artifacts of these more recent geopolitical developments. To further probe this possibility, we re-estimated our models excluding Chinese firms from the Asian category. The results (Models 1 and 2, Table F1) show that our findings are not driven solely by Chinese firms. Still, it remains plausible that Chinese firms would engage in more pronounced cue alignment of their legal representation in periods of heightened anti-China sentiment. This interpretation builds on the same intuition and is consistent with recent evidence that inventors of Chinese descent increased their workplace effort relative to their Korean- and Japanese-descent counterparts following intensified U.S.–China frictions (Sim and Hong 2025).

Second, we consider a competing interpretation that Asian firms respond to courts' pro-business reputation rather than their pro-domestic orientation. Conservatives with pro-business orientations may, in some cases, view foreign firms favorably for their economic contributions. Indeed, conservatives sometimes encourage foreign companies to invest domestically, emphasizing job creation (Jud and Reiter 2023). Yet at the same time, foreign firms may place local business owners at a competitive disadvantage and generate adverse effects in host markets (e.g., Haupt 2010, Cohle and Ortega 2022). Because we already include pro-business reputation as a control variable, our main results account for this dimension. We further tested whether pro-business reputation moderates the effect of political ideology. In both the Asian subsample and the full sample (Models 3 and 4 in Table F1, respectively), we find no empirical support for this interaction. One possibility is that the salience of pro-business cues may be stronger in firm–government disputes than in the firm–firm disputes that comprise our dataset.

Third, we consider whether the hiring of Asian lawyers instead reflects Asian litigants' efforts to appeal specifically to judges of Asian descent rather than to courts' political ideology. Although Asian American judges remain underrepresented in federal courts (2.6% as of 2020), litigants might plausibly adjust their hiring practices in districts with Asian judges, anticipating the possibility of being assigned to an Asian presiding judge and receiving more favorable outcomes. While the random assignment of cases within a given court makes such judge-shopping strategies less effective (Federal Judicial Center 2016), the distribution of Asian judges across courts is not itself random. Moreover, because the presence of Asian judges is correlated with more liberal political ideology at the court level, Asian litigants might interpret courts' ideology as a proxy for the odds of being assigned an Asian judge. We therefore tested whether Asian firms reduce the proportion of White lawyers—or increase the proportion of Asian lawyers—when appearing in courts with Asian judges. Results in Models 5 and 6 in Table F1 do not support this prediction. In additional models where we also switched the dependent variable to the proportion of Asian lawyers, neither the two-way interaction term in the Asian subsample ($b = 0.001, p = .949$) nor the three-way interaction term in the full sample ($b = 0.002, p = .735$) was statistically significant.

Taken together, these analyses indicate that neither the two alternative explanations nor the counterargument materially alter the patterns reported in the main text.

TABLE F1. OLS Regressions Predicting the Proportion of White Lawyers

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	DV: Proportion of White lawyers		DV: Proportion of White lawyers		DV: Proportion of White lawyers	
	Plausible explanation: Anti-Chinese sentiment		Plausible explanation: Pro- business reputation		Plausible explanation: Presence of Asian judges	
	Asian firms excluding China	Full sample excluding China	Asian	All	Asian	All
All control variables	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included
All fixed effects	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included
# of Asian judges	0.004 (0.297)	0.001 (0.395)	0.002 (0.610)	0.001 (0.462)	-0.001 (0.796)	0.002 (0.149)
Pro-business reputation	-0.013 (0.773)	0.009 (0.320)	-0.000 (0.994)	0.012 (0.197)	0.001 (0.986)	0.008 (0.371)
Conservatism	0.041** (0.002)	0.001 (0.626)	0.012 (0.821)	-0.009 (0.509)	0.045** (0.001)	-0.000 (0.874)
Conservatism $\times$ Asian firm		0.017* (0.034)				
Conservatism $\times$ Pro-business reputation			0.050 (0.563)	0.016 (0.454)		
Asian firm $\times$ Conservatism				0.078* (0.028)		0.023** (0.007)
Asian firm $\times$ Pro-business reputation				-0.050+ (0.065)		
Asian firm $\times$ Conservatism $\times$ Pro-business reputation				-0.080 (0.190)		
Conservatism $\times$ Number of Asian judges					-0.007 (0.493)	0.004 (0.192)
Asian firm $\times$ Number of Asian judges						0.001 (0.759)
Asian firm $\times$ Conservatism $\times$ Number of Asian judges						-0.002 (0.806)
Constant	0.872** (0.000)	0.946** (0.000)	0.987** (0.000)	0.952** (0.000)	1.006** (0.000)	0.939** (0.000)
Observations	7,847	124,669	8,850	125,672	8,850	125,672

Notes: P-values are presented in parentheses.

+ $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES FOR SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

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