



# The Rise in Anti-Asian Racism and Xenophobia in the Time of COVID-19

ARTICLE

MITCHELL ALAN KAPLAN



## ABSTRACT

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a detrimental impact on the health of the American people and those abroad, the social consequences stemming from the spread of the virus have become an international crisis whose effects reach far beyond the medical issues associated with the disease. Racial and xenophobic propaganda about the illness promoted on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter and at campaign rallies by former President Trump has spurred a dramatic increase in anti-immigrant sentiments toward Asian Americans. The polarizing effects of the Administration's anti-Asian rhetoric have become a battle cry that has given renewed justification to the growing number of White Supremacist hate groups stepping up their bias-related attacks against members of a community, which they believe is the primary source of viral transmission.

The present article analyzes the socioeconomic and psychological factors contributing to the increase of COVID-19-related racism and xenophobia in the United States. It reviews the history of sociocultural responses to past epidemics to aid our understanding of society's reaction to the current global epidemic. It also examines specific legislative and grassroots measures that advocacy organizations and the federal government can implement to stem the tide of misinformation about the viral transmission at the heart of the current surge of violence and racial discrimination against the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities.

## CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

**Mitchell Alan Kaplan**

New York City, New York, United States

[drmkaplan@aol.com](mailto:drmkaplan@aol.com)

## KEYWORDS:

COVID-19; racial discrimination; xenophobia; social psychology; epidemics

## TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Kaplan, MA. (2023). The Rise in Anti-Asian Racism and Xenophobia in the Time of COVID-19. *Journal of Hate Studies*, 18(1), 96–112. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33972/jhs.221>

Throughout history, catastrophic periods have significantly altered how humans interact with one another in the social world. The global COVID-19 epidemic represents one of those watershed moments of crisis that has precipitated this historical change. In his groundbreaking book, *Global Catastrophes and Trends-The Next Fifty Years*, Professor Emeritus Vaclav Smil of the University of Manitoba argues that during periods in history beset by environmental disaster, frequent episodes of national and international terrorism, and epidemics of contagious disease, global societies enter into a time of social transition that brings with it changes that affect the way those in the dominant culture view outsiders with racial and ethnic characteristics that set them apart from the rest of society (2012). While global outbreaks of disease caused by viral or bacterial pathogens that infect large segments of human populations are nothing new in the annals of history, the response to the devastating social and economic circumstances linked to these tragic circumstances reflects the systemic racism and xenophobia that is so pervasive throughout American culture as well as in many places overseas (Smil, 2012). This article examines the social, economic, and psychological impact of COVID-19-related racial discrimination and xenophobia on the Asian American community resulting from the worsening global epidemic.

The professional literature contains many fine examples of interdisciplinary inquiry by medical historians, social scientists, and mental health professionals, which have sought to foster an understanding of the complex social behaviors and events that contribute to society's reaction to mass outbreaks of contagious diseases. Recent evidence of this type of scientific inquiry manifests in the pioneering research of noted psychiatrist Dr. Damir Huremovic of North Shore University Hospital in New York. In his eye-opening book *Psychiatry of Pandemics – A Mental Health Response to Infection Outbreak*, Dr. Huremovic critically analyzes the psychological factors that form the foundation of pandemic response throughout history. He argues that from biblical times to the modern era, large-scale epidemics of infectious disease have been followed by sustained periods of a racist and xenophobic uptick in violence focused on those members of society believed to be responsible for the spread of the contagion (Huremovic, 2019). Research by Victor and Ahmed suggests that social reactions to public health crises such as global epidemics are usually guided by cultural norms associated with the disease outbreak (2019). Studies have shown that when world populations are confronted with a public health emergency such as COVID-19, the willingness of those most affected to adopt behaviors designed to control the contagion largely depends on the belief systems and cultural values of the society in which the disease outbreak occurs.

This culture-based perspective of disease management is supported by a recent public health statement released by Professor Richard Horton of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in the British medical journal *The Lancet* in September 2020. In his opening remarks, Professor Horton states that the science driving the nation's reaction to the COVID-19 outbreak is guided by infectious disease models of the past, which tend to associate epidemics with society's social ills—referring to them as socially induced plagues (Horton, 2020). He contends that the conventional wisdom related to the global outbreak fails to account for societal factors that exacerbate the social harm caused by the spread of infection. Dr. Horton bases his theoretical assumption about the social reaction to the present COVID-19 epidemic on the pioneering research of medical anthropologist Dr. Merrill Singer and his colleagues. Professor Singer's analysis led to developing the syndemic public health model in the 1990s, which examines the synergistic relationship between disease clusters and the social environment. Like Dr. Singer, Professor Horton conjectures that the key to eliminating social harm and reducing mortality rates stemming from the transmission of diseases like SARS-CoV2 rests on implementing public health measures capable of incorporating a twofold approach to disease management that lowers the risk of infection (Singer et al., 2017; Hart & Horton, 2017). Dr. Horton posits that COVID-19 is a disease that combines the forces of two interrelated epidemics, one physical and the other social, each with the capability of causing irreparable harm to the most vulnerable people in the United States. Therefore, effective containment requires implementing practical interventions that can systematically address the biological aspects of disease transmission and the psychosocial ramifications of the illness (Horton, 2020).

## HISTORY OF THE RACIALIZATION OF CONTAGIOUS DISEASE OUTBREAKS

Medical historians who analyzed the social fallout of global epidemics of the past, such as swine flu, cholera, Ebola, Zika virus, and HIV/AIDS, have noted that these public health phenomena share one thing in common. Simply put, the spread of infection is usually linked to a specific marginalized subgroup with social and cultural characteristics that cause those in the dominant culture to view them as outsiders. Viral infections such as yellow fever, tuberculosis, bubonic plague, and polio were once believed to be transmitted by newly arrived German, Italian, Chinese, and Jewish immigrants, which subsequently sparked the first waves of anti-immigrant racism and discrimination (Gover et al., 2020).

Research supports the widely held contention that global epidemics always occur along social fault lines, exposing the social disparities and injustices against society's most disenfranchised ethnic groups. Historians have observed that the international response to catastrophic events like mass disease outbreaks usually follows a pattern that occurs in a predictable cycle over time. Such events present significant challenges to the global community, which must endeavor to find ways to cope with the social reactions invoked by the spread of contagion. Experts contend that despite the many social and economic hardships posed by national epidemics, significant moments in history like this provide opportunities for positive social change that can restructure the social order (Kraut, 1994; Leavitt, 1996; Rosenberg, 1992 & 2009; Torres, 1999).

In his book *Epidemics and Society*, Professor Frank Snowden of Yale University describes how global epidemics have transformed the development of society's significant cultural institutions, such as medicine, art, literature, religion, and intellectual history, and influenced the economics and politics of global warfare. He argues that over the centuries, disproportionate disease outbreaks of contagious disease have directly affected the development of life-saving medical therapies and public health measures designed to treat and prevent illness. They have also played a critical role in the medical ethics associated with patient care, and the intensity of discriminatory social reactions to individuals in society believed to be the leading carriers of the disease (Snowden, 2019).

Such is the case of COVID-19, an infectious respiratory disease caused by a novel coronavirus that, according to the World Health Organization, originated in the province of Wuhan in the People's Republic of China in 2019. The race-based origin of this disease has prompted many public health experts to categorize it as a significant threat to the health of the general population of the United States and to label the illness as associated with Asian Americans, particularly those who immigrated from China. This race-based linkage promoted by public health officials regarding COVID-19 transmission has increased racial tensions in Asian American communities nationwide, amplifying the social stigmatization and distrust of this minority population. Racialized designations tied to misinformation about the virus have exacerbated the cultural bias to which Asian Americans have been subjected for generations (Snowden, 2019).

Historian Adrian De Leon of the University of Southern California reaches similar conclusions that support Snowden's argument. Professor De Leon makes a direct connection between identity politics and the treatment of immigrants in the United States, particularly during national crises, such as destabilizing political uprisings or a mass outbreak of disease that threatens the health and safety of widespread populations (De Leon, 2020). He posits that social and political factors, which trigger such worldwide events, are linked to the cultural environment and play a pivotal role in guiding society's reaction to these challenging situations (2020). Professor De Leon argues that the long-held stereotype identifying immigrants of Asian and Pacific Islander descent as the *yellow peril* and subsequently labeling them as too unfit, unclean, and unhealthy to become American citizens is a groundless presumption based on a false narrative promoted mainly by the nation's Whites-only immigration policy. Historical accounts demonstrate how this narrative's promotion has influenced restrictive government policies that discriminate against immigrants from Asian and Pacific Island countries. In the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, White nativists spread xenophobic propaganda about the uncleanness of Chinese immigrant populations arriving in San

Francisco. This resulted in the passage of the infamous Chinese Exclusion Act, the first federal law in the United States to prohibit immigration based on race (2020).

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, xenophobic denigration of the native population in the Philippines as unclean and impure by American military personnel and colonial physicians led to unsubstantiated claims that Filipinos were a contaminated race requiring isolation and containment to protect the health of White European colonials. American officials rationalized the perpetuation of this falsehood by arguing that the island's native population presented a dual threat that jeopardized U.S. regional authority in the Philippines. Evidence supporting this bogus assertion is illuminated by the fact that government officials classified Filipinos as political insurgents in rebellion against American rule and as bodily repositories of highly infectious and easily transmissible diseases. Historians recognize that American officials used these racially biased accusations to justify the American colonial rule of the Philippines (De Leon, 2020).

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a similar uptick in anti-Asian discrimination occurred in Toronto at the height of the SARS epidemic in 2003. A narrative detailing Toronto's reaction to the outbreak is documented in a retrospective article published in the Washington Post on February 4, 2020, by Asian blog founder Jenn Fang. In the article, Ms. Fang provides readers with an assessment of the epidemic's devastating impact on retail businesses owned by Toronto's Chinese and Southeast Asian business communities that turned many of the city's busiest shopping centers into ghost towns. She explains how media exploitation of the SARS crisis triggered a surge of racialized discrimination against Toronto's Asian communities. Fang asserts that media misinformation about the unhealthy dietary and cultural practices of Toronto's Asian immigrant population during the epidemic translated into a race-based boycott of small business establishments by White people, causing significant financial harm to the community (Fang, 2020).

The racially charged falsehoods about viral transmission prompted the adoption of restrictive public health codes that limited close contact with people of Asian descent in public spaces such as subways and restaurants. It also precipitated a general consumer ban on Asian products and services by outsiders who formerly did business with the community. Fang also points out that the dissemination of sensationalized media coverage of the SARS crisis increased levels of social anxiety about the disease, resulting in an elevation of online hate messages directed at Asian service organizations in Toronto that blamed the community for spreading the virus (Fang, 2020).

Fang's analysis highlights the detrimental consequences of racial scapegoating that accompanied the SARS crisis in Canada two decades ago. Scientific evidence supporting her narrative is documented in a study of everyday racism against Chinese and Filipino healthcare workers in the years following the start of the epidemic by noted sociologist Dr. Carrienne Leung. The collaborative project called *The Yellow Peril Revisited: The Impact of SARS on Chinese and Southeast Asian Communities* was funded by The Department of Canadian Heritage and implemented by the Chinese Canadian National Council (CCNC), an advocacy organization for Chinese immigrants living in Canada. Researchers used structured interviews to collect data from two groups of respondents with social ties to Canada's Asian immigrant communities. The interview sessions focused on gathering information about community residents' experiences of racial discrimination, social alienation, and racist practices stemming from media reports about SARS transmission.

Qualitative analysis of psychosocial themes drawn from the interviews revealed a significant increase in' racialized feelings of fear, distrust, harassment, and suspicion directed at Canadian immigrants of Chinese and Southeast Asian ancestry during the SARS crisis. Many reported that misinformation about SARS transmission online was the cause of an uptick in racial discrimination by White employers that cost them opportunities for jobs. Others said that they experienced extreme anger and frustration brought on by White people's deliberate avoidance of close contact with them in public spaces like subways and schools, fearing an inadvertent cough or sneeze could cause them to become infected with the SARS virus. Additional information disclosed by service workers at community organizations revealed that during the height of the SARS outbreak,

a substantial number of their Asian clients reported experiencing rising levels of social alienation and isolation related to the epidemic. Results led Dr. Leung to conclude that media exploitation plays a critical role in society's reaction to outbreaks of infectious diseases and that adequate steps must be taken to increase public understanding of the socioeconomic and political consequences of public health crises like the SARS epidemic (Leung, 2008).

Based on these findings, Professor Leung and her colleagues made several practical recommendations for the prevention of racialization of epidemics of contagious diseases, including 1) working with media to eliminate stereotyping that causes scapegoating; 2) increasing government funding to create human rights offices throughout Canada; 3) developing a comprehensive strategy to respond to social stereotyping and racism during epidemics; 4) allocating public funds to cover the financial losses of small business owners and others, including part-time workers, affected by health emergencies; 5) heightening public education efforts to combat racial discrimination; and 6) ensuring the inclusion of racial and ethnic diversity in studies that focus on community health needs.

Historical accounts detailing society's reaction to past epidemics provide significant insight that facilitates understanding of the racialization of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to research conducted by medical historian Dr. Nukhet Varlik at Rutgers University, the COVID-19 epidemic has biological and social characteristics similar to previous disease outbreaks in terms of its origin, worldwide transmission, social response, and projected outcome. Much like contagious diseases that transitioned from animal to human hosts, Varlik emphasizes that social reactions, including public hysteria, racism, xenophobia, misinformation, opportunistic profiteering, business closures, and abandonment of those afflicted, are not unique. Rather, it is a direct remnant of the human response to history's life-threatening epidemics like the Black Death, which wiped out 30 to 50 percent of Europe's population in the mid-fourteenth century. He concludes that social and economic responses to diseases like COVID-19 provide opportunities for turning points on the historical spectrum that dramatically affect how we interact with people from different races and cultures in the social world (Hamit & Zontur, 2021).

Anthropologist Stanley Thangaraj at City College in New York shares a similar view to Professor Varlik regarding racial discrimination in public health. He argues that the pathological connection between coronavirus and Asian American and Pacific Islander communities is not new. Rather, its historical roots lie in the *White Savior Complex*, a race-based ideology stemming from the belief that White people have a moral obligation to medically, spiritually, and racially cleanse the population of countries that are not White to prevent the spread of disease. Dr. Thangaraj acknowledges that this type of biased thinking underlies the legitimation of the slaughter of Native American Indian tribes by European settlers who colonized the Americas and is at the core of much of the White supremacist racism in U.S. culture today. He posits that the White supremacist ideology promoted by former President Trump's racist discourse perpetuates the narrative that Asian Americans are responsible for transmitting the virus that causes COVID-19 illness, making them a dangerous threat to the health of the U.S. population. Professor Thangaraj points out that racial stereotyping targeting the connection between Asian Americans and the coronavirus dehumanizes the community and stigmatizes an entire race. He contends that this unjust stereotyping supports the race-based public health argument that the national body of the U.S. population needs to remain clean and pure, justifying the recent surge of violent attacks against Asian Americans in this country (Thangaraj, 2022). Professor Thangaraj's analysis suggests a significant correlation between the racialization of global epidemics like COVID-19 and its transmission's adverse social and economic outcomes (2022).

## **RACIAL STIGMA, SOCIAL HARM, AND THE COVID-19 EPIDEMIC**

For decades, studies in social science literature have substantiated that being part of a group associated with a stigmatizing illness such as COVID-19 presents considerable challenges to those seeking social acceptance in American society's mainstream culture. A classic example of this

phenomenon is disclosed in Erving Goffman's book *Stigma Notes on the Management of a Spoiled Identity*, in which the author describes the social barriers faced by people with chronic mental illness who attempt to rejoin society's mainstream after years of institutionalization (Goffman, 1963). Goffman's analysis of the social impact of a stigmatized identity on illness is supported by the medical ethics research of Professor Daniel S. Goldberg at the University of Colorado. Goldberg contends that the cultural stigma linked to COVID-19 presents a unique ethical dilemma for public health officials who want to develop interventions that can effectively reduce viral transmission. His research suggests that the cultural stigma of this disease is a significant deterrent to implementing strategic measures to manage the illness. Goldberg believes the best way to introduce preventive measures to counter COVID-19 at the community level is to reduce societal structural factors supporting the proliferation of culture-based misinformation about the disease. He argues that traditional harm reduction methods utilized in other public health emergencies are inadequate to limit the scope of the intensity of the public reaction to a disease that has been so culturally stigmatized. Therefore, government officials and public health professionals must implement a comprehensive package of legal reforms and policy changes designed to reduce the adverse effects of the racial stigma linked to this devastating illness (Goldberg, 2020).

## COVID-19 DISCRIMINATION AND THE MENTAL HEALTH OF THE AAPI COMMUNITY

Research shows that the racialized stigma associated with the nationwide uptick in cases of COVID-19 illness is causing a significant increase in mental health problems among Asian Americans. Findings from a joint study of 1697 Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) college students conducted by a team of researchers at Wayne State University, The University of California Los Angeles, and The University of Southern California Los Angeles suggest a direct connection between COVID-19-related racial discrimination and the recent increase in the incidence of psychiatric disorders in the AAPI community. Analysis of data collected in the *Healthy Minds* study reveals a significant relationship between COVID-19-related racism and the recent uptick in mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, binge drinking,, and non-suicidal self-injury reported by Asian American and Pacific Islander respondents. A low incidence of psychiatric disorders typically characterizes these two groups because of their solid cultural beliefs and strong family values. The researchers used standard evaluation tools such as the Patient Health and Generalized Anxiety Scales to assess how racial discrimination increased students' odds of developing moderate to severe symptoms of psychiatric disorders such as depression and anxiety. Findings show that over one-quarter of AAPI students reported experiencing COVID-19-related racial discrimination and more than two-thirds said they experienced at least one significant mental health symptom that met the criteria of a specific category of psychiatric illness (Zhou et al., 2021).

Comparable results were documented in a more recent mental health study published in *JAMA Psychiatry* in July 2022. The researchers analyzed health data from the COPE survey, a multilanguage assessment tool distributed online between May and July 2020, to a nationwide sample of 62,651 respondents. The survey was designed to determine the degree of association between COVID-19-related racial discrimination and the onset of moderate to severe symptoms of depression and suicidal ideation among White, Black, Hispanic, and Asian Americans during the early months of the epidemic. Findings reveal that everyday racial discrimination is a significant risk factor for worsening mental health outcomes among Asian Americans experiencing the social backlash of the COVID-19 global epidemic. They also suggest a robust lateral relationship between Asian American self-reports of racial discrimination and the increasing incidence of mild to moderate symptoms of depression, social anxiety, sleep disorders, and suicidal ideation in this population. The results of these studies and others of a similar outcome support the professional contention among psychotherapists that the COVID-19 pandemic has harmed the mental health of Asian Americans (Lee et al., 2022).

## SOCIAL AND POLITICAL FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO ANTI-ASIAN HATE CRIME

The Asian population in the United States is one of the most diverse in the world. Analysis of U.S. census data by the Pew Research Center indicates that more than 20 million people currently live in this country who can trace their ancestry to one of nineteen sub-origin groups in East Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Asian subcontinents of India (Budiman et al., 2019). This demographic data reveals that Asians are among the fastest-growing, most highly educated, upwardly mobile immigrant groups; the poverty rate among Asian Americans is just 12.1 percent, a figure 3 percent lower than the national average of 15.1 percent in the U.S. general population. It also suggests that among some individuals of Asian descent, particularly those from the Indian subcontinents of Malaysia and Mongolia, the higher education attainment rate is more than 50 percent. Most individuals possess a bachelor's degree or higher and have acquired professional-level skills that allow for increased social mobility and the opportunity to assimilate into mainstream American culture (2019). Studies have shown that a strong emphasis on higher education and hard work in the Asian American community for more than a century has made it possible for those who immigrated from nations such as China, Japan, and Thailand to achieve the American Dream (Ryu, 2020).

Corporate surveys of the Asian American community in the United States have provided substantial evidence that Asians outpace other ethnic groups with regard to their economic buying power in the American marketplace (Northwest Asian Weekly, 2018). A 2018 Nielsen survey revealed that Asian Americans have significant consumer influence in the U.S. economy, particularly in online environments. National data shows that Asian Americans are one of the nation's largest consumers of digital technology. Surveys indicate that 66 percent of Asian Americans own a smartwatch, 39 percent own a media player, 18 percent own a gaming console, and 17 percent own a smart T.V. Asian Americans are also among the country's most active consumers of goods and services online. The average Asian American household spends \$1,151 annually on Internet purchases a dollar amount 20 percent higher than their White counterparts (2018).

Clinical psychologist Marie Cohut's research findings highlight that the economic success and social stability that has allowed thousands of Asian American immigrants to assimilate into American society has not come without sacrifice. She contends that racial stereotypes about the superior work ethic, high capacity for cultural adaptability, and strong emphasis on higher education have resulted in the proliferation of a false narrative that Asians are a model minority. Dr. Cohut conjectures that the high standards stemming from the model minority myth have significantly contributed to the cultural anxiety, social insecurity, and self-doubt that many Asian Americans feel when they fail to live up to these unrealistic levels of personal achievement (Cohut, 2020). This popular narrative has been disproven by the present generation of Asian American youth, claiming that it fails to account for the emotional struggles against racial injustice experienced by their parents and grandparents when they immigrated to the United States. But this misguided notion still lingers in the minds of Americans from other cultures, which use it as a rationale to support racist ideas about people of Asian descent (Cohut, 2020; Kamal, 2014).

Despite the many diverse positives that Asian Americans have brought to our nation through the decades, they have faced a backlash of racial discrimination in American culture that has only been made worse by the social and economic ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic. Studies have determined that since the World Health Organization formally announced that the source of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 disease originated in the Wuhan province of China in 2020, there has been a dramatic surge in racially motivated anti-Asian violence across the United States and worldwide (Asian Pacific American Caucus, 2020). Incidence data reported by two Asian American Pacific Islander advocacy organizations provide evidence that the COVID-19 crisis is directly responsible for the surge of anti-Asian racism fast-tracking across the country (2020).

Statistics compiled by the hate tracking website of the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council and Chinese for Affirmative Action, two nonprofit organizations that advocate for the legal rights of Chinese Americans, confirm that during the first three months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the

number of racially motivated attacks against Asian Americans reached a national total of 2,120 reported incidents. Forty percent of these hate-related crimes occurred in California, a state with one of the nation's fastest-growing Asian-American immigrant populations (Donaghue, 2020). Research indicates that violence precipitated by racism takes four fundamental forms: physical aggression, verbal assaults, workplace discrimination, and online harassment. Analysis of national crime data reveals that 81 cases of physical assault and 64 cases of civil rights violations against Asian Americans were reported to law enforcement agencies during the initial stage of the pandemic, suggesting a marked increase in COVID-19-related discrimination based on race (2020).

Evidence of the continued rise in anti-Asian hate crimes associated with the COVID-19 pandemic is highlighted in a study conducted by researchers at the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University-San Bernadino. The study compared the reported incidence of bias-related crime for the first quarter of 2021 with the same period across fifteen major U.S. cities over twelve months. Results show that the rate of hate crimes against Asian Americans fueled by COVID-19-related racism is exploding in urban centers nationwide (Yam, 2021). New York City experienced one of the most transparent spikes in hate crimes targeting Asian Americans since the pandemic began. The average number of reported COVID-19-related hate crimes against Asian Americans rose from 13 to 42 during the first quarter of 2020, representing a 223 percent increase in race-related incidents (2021).

National data also indicates considerable spikes in bias-related crimes against Asian Americans in other cities, such as Boston and Los Angeles, which averaged 60 to 80 percent increases in reported cases of anti-Asian hate crimes associated with the pandemic (Yam, 2021). The study determined that, despite the transparent differences in the initial data analysis phase, the continued surge in hate crime attacks against Asian Americans averaged 169 percent across the intercity spectrum since the pandemic began more than two years ago. Sociology Professor Van Tran at the City University of New York Graduate Center reviewed the study's findings and opines that these results are not surprising given the growing atmosphere of condemnation focused on the Asian American community as scapegoats for transmission of the COVID-19 virus (2021).

A more recent review of inner-city crime data by San Francisco Police Chief Bill Scott corroborates these findings. Internal data revealed that anti-Asian hate crimes increased by 567 percent in 2021. Analysis of police reports indicated that the average number of reported incidents of hate crimes against Asian Americans increased significantly from 8 to 60 between 2019 and 2021 (Chan & Martin, 2022). In response to the spike in pandemic-related anti-Asian bias crimes, the Alliance for Asian American Justice filed a federal hate crimes lawsuit against the District Attorney's Office and the city and county of San Francisco, demanding that public officials take immediate action to implement adequate procedures that safeguard the AAPI community from further harassment and offer equal protection and justice to those victimized under the law. CNN disclosed that the hate crime analysis and the subsequent lawsuit are products of systemic racism that continues to thrive in San Francisco's Asian American community because of the COVID-19 epidemic. Narratives describing physical violence and verbal abuse of older adults in San Francisco's Chinatown district reported to law enforcement authorities document the increase in pandemic-related racial hatred, causing many in the city's Asian American community to fear for their safety (2022).

Crime statistics cited by the New York City Police Department present a similar discouraging picture of the increase in cases of violent assault against Asian Americans associated with the pandemic. Data analysis reveals that bias assaults on Asian Americans increased from 28 to 129 incidents reported between 2020 and 2021. Individual incidents, such as the death of a 62-year-old Asian American man bashed in the head with a bottle in East Harlem in 2021, are just one transparent indicator of the recent backlash of blatant attacks against members of New York's Asian American community. Many residents believe these incidents have been instigated by the racially biased rhetoric of former President Trump (Chan & Martin, 2022).

Although a public address by Trump in March 2020 was considered a plea for non-condemnation and support for the Asian American community because of the COVID-19 health crisis, his subsequent actions have told another story. The former President's repeated encouragement



of White Supremacy and his persistent anti-China rhetoric on social media platforms and at political rallies has proven to be a toxic combination that has stoked the flames of racism and misinformation about this disease and has unleashed a nationwide epidemic of anti-Asian sentiment (O'Kane, 2020; Kai, 2021).

A 2020 comprehensive report by the Human Rights Council of the United Nations found evidence of a robust connection between the former President's comments about COVID-19 and the increase in verbal harassment and violence against people of Asian descent. The information in the report documents how the Trump Administration's racist rhetoric about the Asian American community as the cause of viral transmission contributed to a significant escalation of anti-Asian hate speech online and the surge in violent xenophobic attacks against Asian Americans nationally (Achiume et al., 2020).

Highlights of findings detailed in a joint report by the Congressional Asian Pacific Islander Caucus (CAPIC), the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), and Asian Americans for Advancing Justice (AAJC) further solidify the connection between the former President's anti-Asian remarks on Twitter and the national spike in Asian American violence and racial discrimination. The study analyzed Twitter conversations and related online activities associated with COVID-19 hate speech targeting the Asian American community. Results reveal that twelve hours after the former President's initial announcement on Twitter of his and the First Lady's COVID-19 diagnoses, trackers observed an 85 percent uptick in anti-Asian language and conspiracy theories on social media. They noted that Trump's comments about his illness and his anti-Asian rhetoric during the 2020 campaign precipitated a 41 percent increase in conspiracy theory discussions among his supporters about the coronavirus. These discussions have escalated into a significant rise in anti-Asian racism and xenophobic hate that has remained high on Twitter and other social media platforms since October 2020 (Achiume et al., 2020).

Research findings documented in a Stop AAPI Hate Center report further substantiate the adverse effect of Trump's racially charged tweets about COVID-19 on the increase in violence against the Asian American community. The report underscores national trends in Asian American vulnerability to racist hate and violence associated with the pandemic. Data analysis reveals that Asian Americans participating in the study reported 3,795 pandemic-related incidents of racial discrimination and hate-related violence between March 2020 and February 2021. The results indicated that AAPI respondents experienced five types of pandemic-related discrimination based on race. These include incidents of verbal harassment (68.1 percent), shunning (20.5 percent), physical assault (11.1 percent), and online harassment (6.8 percent). The data further indicated that respondents were subjected to civil rights violations such as workplace discrimination, refusal of services, and exclusion from public transportation, accounting for 8.5 percent of incidents of pandemic-related racist hate. The analysis also examined Asian American Pacific Islanders' vulnerability to pandemic-related racial bias and discrimination by gender, age, ethnicity, and location (Jeung et al., 2021).

National trend data revealed that women were 2.3 times more likely than men to report incidents of pandemic-related racism affected against them. Researchers found that among AAPI respondents under age 18 and over 60, the combined percentage of reported incidents of racial discrimination linked to the pandemic averaged 19 percent. They also noted that ethnic subgroup affiliation and location play a significant role in the rise of incidents of racial bias reported. The national data disclosed that 42.2 percent of Asian Americans reporting incidents of racial discrimination related to the pandemic were Chinese, 14.8 percent were Korean, 8.5 percent were Vietnamese, and 7.9 percent were Filipino. The study also indicated that 35.4 percent of incidents of racial bias tied to the pandemic targeted businesses owned by Asian Americans, 35.1 percent of violent attacks perpetrated against Asian Americans occurred on city streets or in public parks, and 10.8 percent took place online. Based on this analysis, researchers conclude that the pandemic has dramatically exacerbated racial discrimination and violence in the Asian American community, which is still ongoing (Jeung et al., 2021).

The murders of six Asian American sex workers at three massage parlors in Atlanta, Georgia committed, by Robert Aaron Long, a 21-year-old Trump-supporting White Nationalist radicalized online by the former President's racial slurs induced the Pew Research Center to survey 5,109 adults from multiracial backgrounds, including over 300 Asian Americans, to determine the relationship between the former President's racist comments and the recent surge of pandemic-related anti-Asian violence. The investigators used structured interviews in English and Spanish to collect the data from respondents in April 2021. Data analysis indicated that 32 percent of Asian adults reported experiencing a heightened fear of the threat of physical attack or threat since the pandemic began, compared to 21 percent of Black, 16 percent of Hispanic, and 8 percent of White adults who reported the same concern. Among the 352 Asian adults surveyed, 81 percent said that they believe the pandemic is responsible for the upswing in violence against them. This contrasted with the general population, where only 56 percent of adults held the same belief (Ruiz et al., 2021). Survey results further disclosed that 20 percent of Asian American adults believe the former President's consistent association of the COVID-19 virus with their community is the most likely reason for the nationwide rise in anti-Asian racism and discrimination against them (Chen, 2021; Daniller, 2021). An analysis of self-reported reasons for racial bias against Asian Americans related to the pandemic is shown in Tables 1 and 2, Appendices A and B.

## THE IMPACT OF COVID-19-RELATED ANTI-ASIAN RACISM ON THE LABOR MARKET

The racial discrimination and xenophobic hate emanating from the COVID-19 pandemic have contributed to the economic disparity that has harmed the financial health and social stability of the Asian American business community. In a study by the Center for Neighborhood Knowledge and the Center for Asian American Studies at UCLA, researchers collaborated with ONG and Associates to compare labor market data in California and New York to assess the degree of COVID-19-related economic disruption experienced by AAPI business owners during the initial phase of the pandemic between March and May 2020. Findings reveal that when small businesses closed due to public apprehension about the risk of infection, Asian Americans accounted for 19 percent of first-time claims for unemployment insurance in California and 14 percent in New York. The study also disclosed that by May 2020, long-term unemployment and jobless rates for Asian and White Americans differed significantly. Analysis of labor market data from cities in California and New York indicated that the average unemployment rates for Asian Americans at the height of the pandemic were between 15 and 21 percent, in contrast to rates of unemployment and joblessness for White Americans between 12 and 16 percent (Mar & Ong, 2020).

The investigation further notes that one of the primary factors driving the higher-than-average jobless rates among Asian Americans is the fact that one in four works in small businesses that involve contacts with the public, such as hair-cutting salons, laundries, restaurants, retail stores, and hotels, all sectors of the U.S. economy that witnessed a considerable decline in patronage because of racialized fears about the pandemic promoted on social media. Labor market statistics indicate that 233,000 small businesses owned and operated by Asian Americans closed in the early months of the pandemic because of racialized misinformation about how the coronavirus is transmitted, representing a 28 percent decrease in businesses run by the Asian American community. This contrasts with a less extreme economic disruption among White Americans, who witnessed a 17 percent decrease in small business operations related to the COVID-19 health crisis (Mar & Ong, 2020). An article on CNN.com provides national data from the U.S. Department of Labor that substantiates these findings. Data analysis indicates that the pandemic precipitated a more than 450 percent national spike in Asian American unemployment. Results show that between February and June 2020, jobless rates among Asian Americans rose from 2.5 percent to 13.8 percent, one of the most significant increases in unemployment for this minority group in decades (Walker, 2020).

Two similar studies corroborate earlier findings about the impact of COVID-19-related racism and xenophobic discrimination on the AAPI business community. The studies highlight the financial

challenges confronting family-owned Asian American businesses attempting to reopen at the height of the economic downturn caused by the pandemic. Results show that the most significant challenge facing business owners in the Asian American community was keeping their workers employed since most did not qualify for financial assistance from the paycheck protection program to keep their staff engaged (Knowles & Bellware, 2020). As a result, many Asian Americans owning small businesses such as restaurants saw a 50 to 75 percent decline in indoor dining due to race-based fears about virus transmission. This downturn substantially disrupted cash flow, severely jeopardizing the economic strength of these businesses and forcing many into financial insolvency (Jones, 2020).

## COUNTERING ASIAN AMERICAN RACISM THROUGH GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY ACTION

The research findings thus far provide empirical evidence documenting the growing backlash of racism and xenophobia toward the Asian American community amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic. A joint statement issued by Dr. Chuyan Echo Song, Professor of Sociology at California State University, and Dr. Russell Jeung, Chairman of the Department of Asian American Studies at San Francisco State University, declares that one of the most effective methods of countering COVID-19-related racial discrimination against Asian Americans caused by the social fallout of misinformation about COVID-19 disease is through organized community action focusing on changing public perceptions about the illness through education. Since the pandemic started more than two years ago, several grassroots community-based organizations have formed coalitions that provide educational resources and online tools to help those affected by racism and xenophobic discrimination connect with the services they need to remain healthy and safe during these uncertain times (McCarthy, n.d.).

As part of their ongoing effort to foster community support for Asian Americans affected by the COVID-19 crisis, these coalitions created a hate-tracking website called STOP AAPI HATE. The platform provides a safe space where Asian Americans can report first-hand accounts of racial discrimination perpetrated against them related to the pandemic. The website is a resource for community organizations to share ideas about implementing specific measures in schools and workplaces to increase understanding of coronavirus transmission and upend the xenophobia associated with it. It also functions as a sounding board for government officials at the federal and local levels who want to post information about how law enforcement agencies can effectively respond to the anti-Asian violence and discrimination associated with the pandemic (Yancey-Bragg, 2021).

Professor Jeung contends that since its inception in March 2020, STOP AAPI HATE has received more than 2,808 posts from users containing self-reports of incidents of anti-Asian discrimination nationwide. Similar results have been disclosed by other Asian American organizations that utilize online screening tools to track anti-Asian bias. For example, the California-based organization Asian Americans Advancing Justice followed over 3,000 self-reports of COVID-19-related anti-Asian violence and discrimination incidents registered on their platform by users. Advocates contend that the significant rise in violence and discrimination reported online indicates how transparently the pandemic has influenced our nation's attitudes toward and beliefs about Asian Americans (Yancey-Bragg, 2021).

In addition to self-reporting tools, community leaders such as Amanda Nguyen, co-founder of the sexual assault advocacy organization in Oakland, have used online resources to raise public awareness of the safety concerns of the Asian American community associated with the pandemic by creating a series of videos on Instagram that depict multiple instances of racial discrimination and violence. These videos have been used as evidence in prosecutions of offenders accused of launching racially motivated attacks against the Asian American community related to the pandemic (Yancey-Bragg, 2021).

On January 26, 2021, President Biden signed a memorandum containing the federal government's response to the surge in xenophobia and hate-based violence against people of Asian descent associated with the pandemic. The memo condemned the anti-Asian attacks by calling them un-American and proposed comprehensive legislative reforms to promote racial equity. Biden instructed the United States Department of Justice to immediately strengthen its partnership with the AAPI community and develop a strategic approach to preventing COVID-19-related hate crimes. He further requested that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services adopt a best practices model for combating xenophobia as part of the national response to the COVID-19 crisis. In his statement, President Biden also criticized the previous Administration's role in encouraging racial discrimination through its unrelenting political rhetoric that made Asian Americans the scapegoats for spreading the virus that causes COVID-19 (Sohrabj, 2021).

The Biden-Harris administration's plan to prioritize a national strategy to identify and fight against anti-Asian hate and xenophobic discrimination has received nationwide support and considerable praise from Asian American advocacy organizations. Several of these community-based organizations have publicly stated that the Biden-Harris proposal to ramp up the federal response to anti-Asian hate and racial discrimination precipitated by the COVID-19 crisis is a symbol of their national commitment to finding practical solutions to the problems of social injustice and racial inequality that have plagued our country for decades (Sohrabj, 2021).

Even though community organizations and the federal government have sought to end the harm caused by racial discrimination against Asian American communities in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, an analysis of national data from the FBI suggests the worst is not over. Instead, cases of violence mitigated by racism linked to the pandemic continue to escalate. FBI statistics document a 77 percent increase in hate crimes against Asian Americans in the U.S. between March 2019 and June 2021. More than 9,000 of these cases were self-reported to advocacy groups like STOP AAPI HATE at the height of the pandemic (Yellow Horse et al., 2021). Data analysis suggests that these incidents are vastly underreported, creating a knowledge gap that hinders public understanding of the racial injustice affecting Asian American communities (U.S. Department of Justice, 2022).

A Harvard University School of Public Health study supports the FBI's findings. The research evaluated the results of twelve national public opinion polls to determine how pandemic-related racial bias has affected respondents' mental health. Data were collected from a nationwide sample of 1,973 Asian American adults aged 18 and older. Key findings reveal that respondents reported that the after-effects of COVID-19-related anti-Asian violence and racism jeopardized their mental health significantly. Statistical analysis of polling data from March 2020 to March 2021 shows that more than 35 percent of Asian Americans surveyed had reported a decline in their mental health in the last twelve months as a direct result of the social backlash of the pandemic. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents also stated that their experiences of violence and racism were the primary cause of one or more symptoms of psychological distress (Morning Consult, March 2021). Asian Americans surveyed also attributed much of the pandemic-related violence and racial discrimination they experienced to public perceptions of them as *perpetual foreigners*, even though their community has made substantial contributions to the American way of life that have transformed our culture (Findling et al., 2022). A summary of these results is shown in Table 3 Appendix C.

Based on the outcome of these studies, AAPI community service organizations contend that a comprehensive national plan is needed to reduce the racial discrimination and violence associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The organizations conjecture that successfully implementing such a plan requires dramatic changes to the routine operation of the social institutions that deliver law enforcement, health care, and educational services to the Asian American community. They understand that federal law enforcement agencies must step up their efforts to enforce the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act provisions that allow for the equitable distribution of Department of Justice resources at the state and local levels to enhance hate crime reporting, response, and prevention. AAPI community service organizations recognize that adequate allocation of resources improves the capacity of Asian Americans victimized by COVID-19-related bias crimes

to accurately identify and report these incidents to special hate units established by the police department (Findling et al., 2022).

Law enforcement officials acknowledge that most Asian Americans lack confidence that the authorities will respond adequately when hate crimes victimize them. Data analysis from a national tracking poll conducted in June 2021 corroborates this claim. Polling data indicates that only 24 percent of Asian Americans are confident that law enforcement officers will treat them courteously and respectfully when they report hate crimes committed against them. The data also shows that 73 percent of Asian Americans support establishing special training programs for police officers to teach them how to identify offenses motivated by racial bias. In contrast, just 22 percent of Asian American survey respondents favored a decrease in public funding for special police training programs that would upgrade a response to hate crimes in their communities (Morning Consult, June 2021).

Although national polling data shows most Asian Americans desire higher police protection in their communities to combat hate crimes motivated by the racial discrimination of the COVID-19 pandemic, demographic data reveals a substantial underrepresentation of AAPI officers on local police forces. Statistics show that only 2 percent of police officers joining local departments nationwide are Asian American. The pandemic amplified this shortfall significantly, making it more challenging for officers to adequately investigate reported racial discrimination and violence incidents in the AAPI community (Contreras & Chen, 2021).

Community leaders contend that the national underrepresentation of Asian Americans within the ranks of local law enforcement agencies represents a shortage that needs substantial remediation, particularly in cities with high Asian American immigrant populations. AAPI service organizations urge the implementation of proactive steps to close the Asian American staffing gap in local law enforcement departments. These organizations have also pushed for state funding to establish dedicated COVID-19 hotlines to improve police response to acts of Asian American hate and discrimination resulting from the pandemic. For example, in March 2020, New York State Attorney General Letitia James allocated money to fund the establishment of a New York City hotline to combat coronavirus hate crimes and xenophobic rhetoric stemming from the racial bias of the pandemic. Attorney General James collaborated with the New York City Commission on Human Rights to organize a COVID-19 response team to improve the tracking of reported AAPI harassment and discrimination (James, 2020).

Besides demands for essential improvements in law enforcement's response to pandemic-related racial discrimination and violence, service organizations that advocate for the rights of the AAPI community intend for healthcare facilities to become better equipped to respond effectively to the trauma-associated needs of Asian Americans touched by the coronavirus outbreak. They contend that facilities must provide cultural awareness and sensitivity training programs for physicians and other allied professionals to allow them to deliver culturally competent, linguistically appropriate services to patients of Asian descent experiencing physical trauma and psychological stress due to racial bias.

Advocates have suggested that Asian American clinicians affected by COVID-19 increase their professional efforts to reach out to the AAPI community to offer social support services that will improve the level of trust of those suffering from the social anxiety and financial trauma of the racial bias linked to the pandemic. Mental health experts recommend that healthcare facilities adopt a recruitment strategy focused on increasing the diversity of their professional staff. They surmise that a more culturally diverse workforce, which includes Asian American psychotherapists, is one of the most effective ways of removing the cultural barriers that prevent people in the AAPI community from seeking treatment to address the psychological stress-related symptoms of the pandemic. To this end, The National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association, in partnership with The Asian Mental Health Project and The Asian Mental Health Collective, has set up online resources to connect Asian Americans with culturally competent service providers (Kim, 2021).

Experts contend that the incidence of psychological disorders in the Asian American population related to the COVID-19 pandemic has been understudied significantly. Therefore, it is recommended that the National Institutes of Health expand its annual budget by allocating funding for research that will solidify understanding of the unique healthcare needs of Asian Americans during periods of health crises like the COVID-19 pandemic (Đoàn et al., 2019). Mental health professionals further endorse using U.S. Departments of Justice and Education resources to help Asian American students cope with COVID-19-related discrimination and harassment in the public school system. They maintain that officials must identify Asian American students targeted for racial bullying because of the pandemic and implement appropriate measures to address anti-AAPI bias in the classroom setting. Asian American advocacy groups believe school-based intervention improves learning by eliminating hate speech, discrimination, and racism associated with COVID-19 (U.S. Departments of Justice and Education, 2021).

Advocacy groups have also worked closely with President Biden and Vice President Harris to develop an effective initiative to end racism, xenophobia, and intolerance against Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders in public health reporting. In May 2021, the President signed an executive order to create the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders. One of the key provisions of the AANHPI initiative was to help organize a comprehensive federal response to COVID-19-related anti-Asian bias and violent acts. Co-Chaired by Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra and U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai, the initiative has three stated objectives: 1) to coordinate national efforts to address bullying and racial discrimination, 2) to address the lack of disaggregated federal information on AANHPI communities through improved methods of statistical analysis and quality, and 3) to expand available access to federal language assistance programs that provide translation services to multi-generational AANHPI households (White House Fact Sheet, 2021). The President and his Administration believe implementing these three objectives is the first step in addressing the national harm of anti-Asian racism and xenophobia caused by the pandemic.

## CONCLUSIONS

The descriptive review of findings from research presented in this paper documents the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Asian American communities across the United States. Data analysis from published studies discussed highlights the significance of the relationship between the pandemic and the social fallout of racial discrimination and xenophobia that has had such a devastating effect on the lives and livelihoods of members of this ethnic group. Although the Biden administration has taken initial steps to implement federal legislation designed to eliminate the social harm caused by the political rhetoric associated with the transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19 disease, experts agree that more needs to be done so that our institutions receive adequate preparation that will enable them to cope with the racialized challenges of global epidemics like COVID-19.

## ADDITIONAL FILE

The additional file for this article can be found as follows:

- **Appendix.** Appendices A, B and C. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33972/jhs.221.s1>

## COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has no competing interests to declare.

## AUTHOR AFFILIATION

**Mitchell Alan Kaplan**  
New York City, New York, United States

- Achieme, E. T., Morales, F. G., & Broderick, E.** (2020, August 12). *Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; The Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants; and The Working Group on discrimination against women and girls*. United Nations Council on Human Rights. <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=25476>
- Asian Pacific American Caucus.** (2020). *CPAC: New ADL report ties spike in Anti-Asian bigotry to Trump*. <https://capac-chu.house.gov/press-release/capac-new-adl-report-ties-spike-anti-asian-bigotry-trump>
- Budiman, A., Cilluffo, A., & Ruiz, N.G.** (2019). *Key facts about groups of Asian origin in the U.S.* Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/05/22/key-facts-about-asian-origin-groups-in-the-u-s/>
- Chan, S., & Martin, A.** (2022, January 27). *Anti-Asian hate crimes increased 567% in San Francisco as lawsuit accuses DA of not doing enough*. CNN. <https://www.cnn.com/2022/01/27/us/anti-asian-hate-crimes-san-francisco-lawsuit/index.html>
- Chen, M.** (2021, March 17). *6 Asian women confirmed dead after Atlanta mass shooting, new details reveal*. Nextshark. <https://nextshark.com/6-asian-women-dead-atlanta-shooting>
- Contreras, R., & Chen, S.** (2021, March 26). *Asian Americans are underrepresented in law enforcement*. Axios. <https://www.axios.com/2021/03/26/asian-americans-are-underrepresented-in-law-enforcement>
- Cohut, M.** (2020, July 31). *The Model Minority myth: Its impact on well-being and mental health*. *Medical News Today*. <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/the-model-minority-myth-its-impact-on-well-being-and-mental-health>
- Daniller, A.** (2021). *Majorities of Americans see at least some discrimination against Black, Hispanic, and Asian people*. U.S. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/03/18/majorities-of-americans-see-at-least-some-discrimination-against-black-hispanic-and-asian-people-in-the-u-s/>
- De Leon, A.** (2020, April 8). *The long history of U.S. racism against Asian Americans from Yellow Peril to Model Minority to the Chinese Virus*. *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/the-long-history-of-us-racism-against-asian-americans-from-yellow-peril-to-model-minority-to-the-chinese-virus-135793>
- Đoàn, L. N., Takata, Y., Sakuma, K. K., & Irvin, V. L.** (2019). Trends in clinical research including Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Participants funded by the U.S. National Institutes of Health, 1992 to 2018. *JAMA network open*, 2(7), e197432. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2019.7432>
- Donaghue, E.** (2020, July 2). *2,120 Hate incidents against Asian Americans reported during Coronavirus pandemic*. *CBS News*. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/anti-asian-american-hate-incidents-up-racism/>
- Fang, J.** (2020, February 4). *The 2003 SARS outbreak fueled anti-Asian racism. Coronavirus doesn't have to*. *Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/02/04/2003-sars-outbreak-fueled-anti-asian-racism-this-pandemic-doesnt-have/>
- Findling, M., Blendon, R. J., Benson, J., & Koh, H.** (2022, April 12). *COVID-19 has driven racism and violence Against Asian Americans: Perspectives from 12 national polls*. *Health Affairs Forefront*. <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/forefront.20220411.655787>
- Goffman, E.** (1963). *Stigma: Notes on the management of a spoiled identity*. Simon and Schuster.
- Goldberg, D. S.** (September, 2020). *Structural stigma, legal epidemiology, and COVID-19: The ethical imperative to act upstream [Special Issue]*. *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal*. <https://kiej.georgetown.edu/structural-stigma-covid-19-special-issue/>. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/ken.2020.0018>
- Gover, A. R., Harper, S. B., & Langton, L.** (2020). *Anti-Asian hate crime during the COVID-19 pandemic: Exploring the reproduction of inequality*. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-020-09545-1>
- Hamit, D., & Zontur, E. C.** (2021, March 24). *COVID-19 outbreak similar to previous pandemics*. Anadolu Agency. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/economy/covid-19-outbreak-similar-to-previous-pandemics/1777389#>
- Hart, L., & Horton, R.** (2017). *Syndemics: Committing to a healthier future*. *The Lancet*, 389(10072), 888-889. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(17\)30599-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(17)30599-8)
- Horton, R.** (2020). *COVID-19 is not a pandemic*. *The Lancet*, 396(10255), 874. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)32000-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)32000-6)
- Huremovic, D.** (2019). *Psychiatry of Pandemics: A Mental Health Response to Infection Outbreak*. Springer. [https://books.google.com/books/about/Psychiatry\\_of\\_Pandemics.html?id=-ryYDwAAQBAJ](https://books.google.com/books/about/Psychiatry_of_Pandemics.html?id=-ryYDwAAQBAJ)
- Jeung, R., Yellow Horse, A., Popovic, T., & Linn, R.** (2021, February 28). *Stop AAPI Hate- national report: March 2020 - February 2021*. Stop AAPI Hate. <https://stopaapihate.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Stop-AAPI-Hate-Report-National-210316.pdf>

- Jones, C.** (2020, February 18). Coronavirus: Restaurants struggle amid fears of outbreak. *USA Today*. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2020/02/18/coronavirus-restaurants-suffer-wary-customers-stay-away/4753280002/>
- Kai, J.** (2021, June 18). *How Trump fueled Anti-Asian violence in America*. The Diplomat. <https://thediplomat.com/2021/06/how-trump-fueled-anti-asian-violence-in-america/>.
- Kamal, A.** (2014, October 15). Students reject the model minority myth. *USA Today*. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/college/2014/10/15/students-reject-the-model-minority-myth/37398051/>
- Kim, O.** (2021, September 1). *Addressing the Mental Health Needs of the AAPI Community*. Health Affairs Forefront. <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/forefront.20210827.800655>
- Knowles, H., & Bellware, K.** (2020, May 16). Fear sent her Chinatown restaurant spiraling: The challenges to reopening feel just impossible. *Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/05/16/asian-american-business-coronavirus/>
- Kraut, A. M.** (1994). *Silent Travelers: Germs, genes, and the immigrant menace*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Leavitt, J. W.** (1996). *Typhoid Mary: Captive to the public's health*. Beacon Press.
- Lee, Y. H., Liu, Z, Fatori, D. Bauermeister, J. R., Luh, R. A., Clark, C. R. Bauermeister, S., Brunoni, A. R., & Smoller, J. W.** (2022, July 27). Association of everyday discrimination with depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation during the COVID-19 pandemic in the All of Us research program. *JAMA Psychiatry*, 79(9): 898-906. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/fullarticle/2794428>. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2022.1973>
- Leung, C.** (2008). The yellow peril revisited: the impact of SARS on Chinese and Southeast Asian Communities. *Resources for Feminist Research*, 33(1-2), 135+. <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A195680111/AONE?u=aikentcl&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=72b9cfcfb>
- Mar, D., & Ong, P.** (2020). *COVID-19 Employment Disruptions to Asian Americans*. UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge; UCLA Asian American Studies Center; ONG and Associates. [https://www.aasc.ucla.edu/resources/policyreports/COVID19\\_Employment\\_CNK-AAASC\\_072020.pdf](https://www.aasc.ucla.edu/resources/policyreports/COVID19_Employment_CNK-AAASC_072020.pdf)
- McCarthy, M.** (n.d.) *Racism and xenophobia in the age of COVID-19: CSU faculty members share tips on how to be part of the solution*. The California State University News. <https://www2.calstate.edu/csu-system/news/Pages/racism-and-xenophobia-in-the-age-of-covid-19.aspx>
- Morning Consult.** (2021, March). *National Tracking Poll #2103152, March 24-30, 2021*. [https://assets.morningconsult.com/wp-uploads/2021/05/17132311/2103152\\_crosstabs\\_MC\\_FEATURES\\_ASIAN\\_EXPERIENCES\\_Asian\\_Adults\\_v1\\_LM.pdf](https://assets.morningconsult.com/wp-uploads/2021/05/17132311/2103152_crosstabs_MC_FEATURES_ASIAN_EXPERIENCES_Asian_Adults_v1_LM.pdf)
- Morning Consult.** (2021, June). *National Tracking Poll #210639, June 7-22, 2021*. <https://www.politico.com/f/?id=0000017c-27d8-dddc-a77e-27db16040000>
- Northwest Asian Weekly.** (2018, May 19). *Nielsen: Asian Americans outpace all other ethnic groups in growth spending power*. <https://nwasianweekly.com/2018/05/nielsen-asian-americans-outpace-all-other-ethnic-groups-in-growth-spending-power/>
- Office of New York State Attorney General Letitia James.** (2020, March 23). *AG James launches hotline to combat coronavirus hate crimes and xenophobic rhetoric*. <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/2020/ag-james-launches-hotline-combat-coronavirus-hate-crimes-and-xenophobic-rhetoric>
- O’Kane, C.** (2020, March 27). *Asian Americans speak out after a rise in hate crimes during coronavirus: “We are all human. We are all one.”* CBS News. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/coronavirus-asian-americans-report-racism-anti-asian-hate-after-trum-china-daniel-dae-kim-jeannie-mai-speak-out/>
- Rosenberg, C. E.** (1992). *Explaining epidemics*. Cambridge University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511666865.015>
- Rosenberg, C. E.** (2009). *The cholera years: The United States, 1832, 1849, and 1866*. University of Chicago Press.
- Ruiz, N. G., Edwards, K., & Lopez, M. H.** (2021). *One-third of Asian Americans fear threats, physical attacks, and most say violence against them is rising*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/04/21/one-third-of-asian-americans-fear-threats-physical-attacks-and-most-say-violence-against-them-is-rising/>
- Ryu, J.** (2020, December 17). *This is America: Stop gaslighting me with the Asian model minority myth*. *USA Today*. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2020/12/17/covid-19-era-shows-normalization-racism-against-asians/6515353002/>
- Singer, M., Bullied, N., Ostrach, B., & Mendenhall, E.** (2017). Syndemics and the biosocial conception of health. *The Lancet*, 389(10072), 941-950. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(17\)30003-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(17)30003-X)
- Smil, V.** (2012). *The influenza pandemics in global catastrophes and trends: The next fifty years*. MIT Press.
- Snowden, F.** (2019). *Epidemics and society*. Yale University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.12987/9780300249149>



- Sohrabj, S.** (2021, February 3). President Biden Signs Memo Condemning Racism Against Asian Americans Amid COVID-19 Pandemic. *India West Newspaper Online*. [https://www.indiawest.com/news/global-indian/president-biden-signs-memo-condemning-racism-against-asian-americans-amid-covid-19-pandemic/article\\_6152f16c-65f0-11eb-a0ef-3b42bf59983f.htm](https://www.indiawest.com/news/global-indian/president-biden-signs-memo-condemning-racism-against-asian-americans-amid-covid-19-pandemic/article_6152f16c-65f0-11eb-a0ef-3b42bf59983f.htm)
- Thangaraj, S.** (2022). *The history of Asian American discrimination in public health*. Columbian College of Arts and Sciences. <https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/174731>
- Torres, N.** (1999). *The gospel of germs: Men, women, and the microbe in American life*. Harvard University Press.
- U.S. Department of Justice Hate.** (2022, May 5). *2020 FBI hate crime statistics*. <https://www.justice.gov/crs/highlights/2020-hate-crimes-statistics>.
- U.S. Departments of Justice and Education.** (2021). *Confronting COVID-19-Related Harassment in Schools: A Resource for Families*. Departments of Civil Rights. <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/ocr-factsheet-aapi-202105.pdf>
- Victor, G. St., & Ahmed, S.** (2019). The Importance of Culture in Managing Mental Health Response to Pandemics. In D. Huremović (Ed.), *Psychiatry of Pandemics: A Mental Health Response to Infection Outbreak* (pp. 55–64). Springer International Publishing. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-15346-5\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-15346-5_5)
- Walker, A.** (2020, October 26). Hopefully, our dream is not broken: Asian American businesses hit especially hard during pandemic. *CNN News*. <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/10/24/us/asian-americans-covid-racism-xenophobia-unemployment/index.html>
- White House Fact Sheet.** (2021, May 28). *Fact sheet: President Biden establishes the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders*. Briefing Room. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/05/28/fact-sheet-president-biden-establishes-the-white-house-initiative-on-asian-americans-native-hawaiians-and-pacific-islanders/>
- Yam, K.** (2021, April 28). New report finds 169 percent surge in anti-Asian hate crimes during the first quarter. *Yahoo News*. [https://news.yahoo.com/report-finds-169-percent-surge-234622243.html?fr=sycsrp\\_catcall](https://news.yahoo.com/report-finds-169-percent-surge-234622243.html?fr=sycsrp_catcall)
- Yancey-Bragg, N.** (2021, February 11). Stop killing us: Attacks on Asian Americans highlight rise in hate incidents amid COVID-19. *USA Today*. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2021/02/12/asian-hate-incidents-covid-19-lunar-new-year/4447037001/>
- Yellow Horse, A. J., Jeung, R., Lim, R., Tang, B., Lm, M., Higashiyama, L., Schweng, L., & Chen, M.** (2021, June 30). *Stop AAPI Hate-National Report: March 2020 to June 2021*. Stop AAPI Hate. <https://stopaapihate.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Stop-AAPI-Hate-Report-National-v2-210830.pdf>
- Zhou, S., Banawa, R., & Oh, H.** (2021). The mental health impact of COVID-19: Racial and ethnic discrimination against Asian American and Pacific Islanders. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 12. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsy.2021.708426>. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2021.708426>

#### TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Kaplan, MA. (2023). The Rise in Anti-Asian Racism and Xenophobia in the Time of COVID-19. *Journal of Hate Studies*, 18(1), 96–112. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33972/jhs.221>

**Published:** 26 April 2023

#### COPYRIGHT:

© 2023 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

*Journal of Hate Studies* is a peer-reviewed open access journal published by Gonzaga Library Publishing.

