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Silencing the Scapegoat: Analysis of the Coverage of Anti-Asian Violence by *The Columbus Dispatch*

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought the issue of anti-Asian violence into conversation. Across the United States there have been several cases of hate crime starting from the discriminating language public figures used to describe the coronavirus. This research sought to explore the coverage of *The Columbus Dispatch* on anti-Asian violence in Columbus city and Ohio. Discrimination and violence against Asian Americans is, however, not new. Since the 19th century, Asian immigrants to the U.S have been excluded and shaped as “the other” in the media through the “model minority” myth. Previous research has examined what aspects of human nature influence violence and the relation between the myth and racial discrimination. For this study, I examined *The Columbus Dispatch*’s coverage in relation to how news is socially constructed and the effect of “journalistic whiteout.” After looking into the newspaper database, I found out that there is almost no coverage on anti-Asian hate crime incidents in Ohio, and this gap of information is because of massive underreporting, state laws, lack of diversity in the newsroom, and maybe not enough public attention to violence against Asian Americans.

Even after the development of several Covid-19 vaccines, the pandemic has never fallen short of attention. From its beginning when the pandemic spread across the world and began to seriously disrupt people's lives and activities in the United States, various conservative political leaders and media personalities started to refer to it as the “China Virus.” The president of the United States, Donald Trump, not only repeatedly referred to the virus as the “Chinese flu” but also claimed that the virus had originated in a Chinese lab.¹ According to the *New York Times*, “after President Trump called Covid-19 the “Chinese virus” in March, the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council documented more than 650 incidents of discrimination directed against Asian-Americans in one week alone.² As the numerous cases of assault, discrimination, and harassment revealed, Asians and Asian Americans were collectively held responsible by a significant numbers of Americans for the coronavirus spread.

While the rhetoric against Asian Americans among top public officials is no longer as intense, given the defeat of President Trump at the polls, acts of discrimination and violence continue to rise across the country.³ There is no way we can deny the disturbing effect of this discourse. However, what is worth investigating here is not only the discourse itself but also how the media reported those anti-Asian violence incidents. As Hall puts it, “events are ‘made to mean’ by the media.”⁴ In other words, the information we receive from newspapers might not be

¹ Jack Brewster, “A Timeline Of The COVID-19 Wuhan Lab Origin Theory,” <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jackbrewster/2020/05/10/a-timeline-of-the-covid-19-wuhan-lab-origin-theory/?sh=451a191c5aba>

² Cathy Park Hong, “The Slur I Never Expected to Hear in 2020.” <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/12/magazine/asian-american-discrimination-coronavirus.html>

³ “NYC Woman Gets Half Dozen Stitches in Latest Attack Against Asian Americans: Family.” NBC New York. February 20, 2021. <https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/nyc-woman-gets-half-dozen-stitches-in-what-family-says-is-latest-attack-against-asian-americans/2894825/>.

⁴ Hall, Stuart. “The Social Production of News.” Essay. In *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order*, 53–77. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

as neutral as we thought. Moreover, different newspapers also have a variety of ways to report the same incident.

In this research, I will be focusing only on the *Columbus Dispatch's* coverage. The Columbus Dispatch is a daily newspaper that serves the city of Columbus. I will use Kenneth Burke's pentadic criticism to analyze the *Columbus Dispatch's* news pieces on the topic. This research sought to explore how the *Columbus Dispatch* reports the violence against Asian American in Columbus, Ohio and how this coverage reflects the consensus view of the society.

This research is important because of the following reasons. Firstly, newspapers are believed to be one of the most credible sources of information. People can easily access both print and online news. Therefore, how newspapers choose to or not to report an event can largely influence the public's view on it. Secondly, even though the *Columbus Dispatch* is just a local newspaper in Columbus, Ohio, the violence against Asian American is not confined to one city. Starting from a smaller newspaper will also allow room to better explore the dynamic of news story construction. Lastly, this research project is topical and relevant particularly in this historical moment. The decrease in Covid-19 cases does not ensure the end for this "public-shaming pandemic," as D.T. Max noted in *The New Yorker*.⁵

To understand the current upsurge in Anti-Asian violence, I turned to the theoretical work of scholars who have investigated various dimensions of violent scapegoating. Specifically, I drew on the work of literary theorist, René Girard and rhetorical theorist Kenneth Burke. These theorists argue that it is vital to look back at the relationship between it and human nature. We often relate rage and anger to violence. However, violence does not stem from just one aspect of emotion. Indeed, 'desire' is the deeper and contagious cause of violence. Humans are different

⁵ Max, D. T. "The Public-Shaming Pandemic." *The New Yorker*, 21 Sept. 2020, www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/09/28/the-public-shaming-pandemic.

from animals because we know how to imitate. We inhibit culture and desire through imitation.⁶ Therefore, Girard suggests that humans are always subjected to “intense desires” of “being” what other people have. These desires cause conflict and consequently, violent activity happens.⁷ If this violence continue to escalate, the society in conflict eventually destroys itself. To prevent such an outcome, members of the society select a scapegoat who is then sacrificed to resolve the cycle of violence.⁸

Another scholar who also contributes to theorizing scapegoating is Kenneth Burke. He developed a theory of scapegoating through a “period of nearly 30 years and in the context of different projects.”⁹ His theory agrees with Girard’s about how such violent acts of scapegoating are used to retain the social structure, or in Burke’s word, hierarchies. To be more specific, scapegoating is one rhetorical way to eliminate the created guilt affecting the society by choosing one person or a group of people to blame. This goat is determined based on its characteristics that are different from the majority.

In his own works, Burke analyzes Hitler’s rhetoric as an example of scapegoating phenomenon. He claims that *Mein Kampf* allows Hitler to unify his people by creating a “common enemy.”¹⁰ Even though Hitler’s work was published almost a hundred years ago, we can still find some connection between it and the Covid-19 situation today. Burke points out that Hitler makes use of some very obvious medicinal language: scapegoating the Jews works as the “medicine” for the “illness” of the nation¹¹. The Covid-19 pandemic also motivates people to

⁶ Fleming, Chris. “Mimesis and Violence - An Introduction to the Thought of René Girard.” *Australian Religion Studies Review* 15, no. 1 (2002): 58.

⁷ Fleming, “Mimesis and Violence - An Introduction to the Thought of René Girard,” 60.

⁸ Fleming, “Mimesis and Violence - An Introduction to the Thought of René Girard,” 61.

⁹ Jasinski, James. *Sourcebook on Rhetoric: Key Concepts in Contemporary Rhetorical Studies*. Rhetoric & Society. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2001.

¹⁰ Burke, Kenneth. “Rhetoric of Hitler’s ‘Battle.’” Essay. In *Philosophy of Literary Form*, Thirded., 191–220. Berkeley, California: University of California, 1974.

¹¹ Burke, “Rhetoric of Hitler’s ‘Battle,’” 199.

seek for a “medicine,” literally and metaphorically, and in this case, bigoted rhetoric against Asian American.

Nevertheless, it would not be enough to just look at the surge of the moment because such acts of discrimination have a long and ugly history in the United States. In the 19th century, public panic slurred Asians as the “Yellow Peril.” Other legislative and judicial actions followed such as the Chinese Exclusion Act and the Japanese Internment during World War II. This history is made more complicated by the contradictions embedded in discourse about Asians and Asian Americans in the United States. Asian Americans are often considered the “model minority,” a term that depicted them as successful, educated, and assimilated into the United States (but also implicitly constructing other racial minorities, particularly Black and Latinx, as “bad” minorities). This term was first introduced in the first issue of the *Amerasia Journal* and then gained “widespread attention thanks to stories and opinion pieces in mainstream media.”¹² This stereotype seems to be beneficial to Asian Americans by superficially raising their social status. From this myth, Asian Americans “enjoyed an excellent reputation” as being “intelligent, gifted in math and science, polite, hard working, family oriented, law abiding, and successfully entrepreneurial.”¹³ All these stereotypes of Asian American seem to support the American Dream: as long as you work hard, you can achieve that American dream. The myth creates positive images of Asian Americans and as Wu recollected from people telling him: “What could you have to complain about anyway?”¹⁴

However, the term “model minority” is problematic as it constructs an unrealistic representation of Asian Americans, emphasizes the division between “self and other,” and

¹² Nopper, Tamara. “Safe Asian Americans.” Asian American Writers' Workshop, May 7, 2021. <https://aaww.org/the-carceral-logic-of-the-model-minority-myth/>, 3.

¹³ Wu, Frank H. “The Model Minority: Asian American ‘Success’ as a Race Relations Failure.” Essay. In *Yellow: Race in America Beyond Black and White*, 39–77. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2002, 40.

¹⁴ Wu, “The Model Minority: Asian American ‘Success’ as a Race Relations Failure,” 40.

changes the focus of policy makers towards economical issues rather than social problems. Above all, using only one term to describe the whole Asian American is a “gross simplification.”¹⁵ As many Asians have pointed out, there are Asian Americans who are not good at math, who want to pursue artistic careers, and who are not successful. The list of examples above is true and often used to debunk that “model minority” myth. However, if anything, it still buys into the myth because it still portrays Asian Americans as “good.” Other researchers such as the sociologist Tamara Nopper has argued that we have to go further to point out that the model minority myth is constructed in part by defining crime as definitionally non-Asian.¹⁶ The ruling out of crime in the description of Asian Americans is purposefully created in order to associate Black people with the term “problem minority.” In other words, the myth functions to “racialize both violence and crime as Black.”¹⁷

In addition, the “model minority” myth emphasizes a sense of invisibility of whiteness and “to maintain white supremacy.”¹⁸ The word model refers to the racist comparison that African Americans should follow what Asian Americans did in order to achieve the American Dream instead of complaining. The narrative of this myth considers whiteness as a norm so Asian Americans are praised for their ability to “pass into whiteness” and “distance themselves from blackness.”¹⁹ Palumbo-Liu analyzes the figures of the “vigilante Korean” during the 1992 Los Angeles riots to examine the “white hegemonic identification.”²⁰ The photo shows a young male Korean wearing a T-shirt with a photograph of a black man holding a gun. The young Korean himself is also holding a gun to protect his property against “black and Latino looters and

¹⁵ Wu, “The Model Minority: Asian American ‘Success’ as a Race Relations Failure,” 49.

¹⁶ Nopper, “Safe Asian Americans,” 10.

¹⁷ Nopper, “Safe Asian Americans,” 12.

¹⁸ Nopper, “Safe Asian Americans,” 4.

¹⁹ Wu, “The Model Minority: Asian American ‘Success’ as a Race Relations Failure,” 66.

²⁰ Palumbo-Liu, David. 1994. “Los Angeles, Asians, and Perverse Ventriloquisms: On the Functions of Asian America in the Recent American Imaginary.” *Public Culture* 6 (2): 365-381.

burners.”²¹ In this picture, we can see a narrative with Asian and African Americans but without whites. Even without the appearance of whiteness, the white supremacist ideology still exists. Palumbo-Liu suggests that Asian has always “served as a powerful signifier,”²² whenever whites are not suitable. In short, the “model minority” myth is based not on Asian Americans' rights but on their function to allow the absence of whites during racial tension.

Moreover, the “model minority” myth is problematic in its creation. The core ideal of the myth is the comparison between Asian and African Americans to move the attention away from the society's structural problems and focus on blaming the cultural and ethnic values of racial groups.²³ This stereotype strategically transforms data suggesting social classes disparity into evidence strengthening the myth. For example, Asian Americans are believed to perform better on exams but the reason behind that is not genetic but rather they have educated parents with “modest income” to care about their performance at schools.²⁴ Similarly, the argument implying that Asian Americans’ median household income is higher than that of other racial groups overlooks the fact that Asian’s household sizes are often larger. In addition to that, companies have never been more favorable towards Asian Americans: “white Americans are paid more than Asian Americans who are equally qualified.”²⁵ Last but not least, the “model minority” myth unjustly compares two racial groups without considering their history in the United States.²⁶

The “model minority” narrative is not only problematic in its ignorant assumptions but also detrimental to Asian Americans’ daily lives and development. Most obviously, as mentioned

²¹ Palumbo-Liu, "Los Angeles, Asians, and Perverse Ventriloquisms: On the Functions of Asian America in the Recent American Imaginary" 368.

²² Palumbo-Liu, "Los Angeles, Asians, and Perverse Ventriloquisms: On the Functions of Asian America in the Recent American Imaginary" 375.

²³ Nopper, “Safe Asian Americans,” 5.

²⁴ Wu, “The Model Minority: Asian American ‘Success’ as a Race Relations Failure,” 57.

²⁵ Wu, “The Model Minority: Asian American ‘Success’ as a Race Relations Failure,” 50.

²⁶ Wu, “The Model Minority: Asian American ‘Success’ as a Race Relations Failure,” 66.

above, Girard suggests that violence can stem from imitation and desire. When that stereotype unfairly generalizes all Asians as successful and thriving in the U.S, it provokes “racial antipathy.”²⁷ Asians were portrayed as doing too well, so well that they were often charged with stealing jobs from white workers. Consequently, several attacks targeting Asian Americans happened. Those discriminations, due to the “model minority” myth “become compensation or retaliation.”²⁸ Moreover, Asian Americans not only suffer from verbal and physical attack but they also face rejection of their achievement. Instead of accepting the fact that Asians are intellectual because of their hard work, non-Asian Americans link those achievements as Asian’s inherent characteristic. Therefore, “Asian American cannot win by winning.”²⁹ The interpretation of the myth went so far to discredit Asian Americans from being artistic, creative, and having leadership ability. Yes, Asian Americans are hardworking but no matter how hard they work, the myth hinders them from being suitable for leadership roles.

It would be incomplete to look at Asian Americans history in the U.S without exploring their experiences amid the long period of anti-Asian discrimination in the United States. In her book *Minor Feelings: An Asian American reckoning*, Cathy Park Hong retells the life story of herself and her other Asian acquaintance. The main theme in her book is minor feelings. Park Hong adapts this notion from Sianne Ngai’s “ugly feelings.” The minor feelings are called minor because similar to the “ugly feelings,” those are not expressed openly in strong emotions but rather endured internally for a long period of time.³⁰ Examples of those minor feelings include “paranoia, shame, irritation, and melancholy,” and many other unnamed emotions.³¹ Those emotions are the result of the model minority myth when “American optimism is enforced upon

²⁷ Wu, “The Model Minority: Asian American ‘Success’ as a Race Relations Failure,” 60.

²⁸ Wu, “The Model Minority: Asian American ‘Success’ as a Race Relations Failure,” 70.

²⁹ Wu, “The Model Minority: Asian American ‘Success’ as a Race Relations Failure,” 68.

³⁰ Park Hong, Cathy. *Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning*. New York: One World, 2021, 47.

³¹ Park Hong, *Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning*, 46.

you.”³² The minor feelings, as they are too internal, are often overlooked. Moreover, Asians are associated with being silent: “Asians are so private about their own trauma.”³³ Hong’s book raises a question: Is it that researchers rarely try to look into Asian Americans’ minor feelings or is that Asians deny talking about their feelings?

Park Hong emphasizes the silence of Asian Americans through the case of Cha, an Asian American author who was raped and killed but that part of her life was rarely mentioned anywhere. Cha was not the only Asian American suffering from violence and abuse but we can hardly find any reliable data on that because silence and “denial” are parts of Asian socialization that stop many Asian women from reporting.³⁴ Similarly, when we return back to the current situation during the Covid-19 pandemic, there is a trend of underreported harassment against Asian Americans. Other than inheriting the culture of being silent to seek for whites’ acceptance, there are also barriers creating this trend: language barriers, fear of law enforcement, lack of information regarding reporting crime.³⁵ The missing data of racial harassment can make it difficult to address racism and other social issues in the Asian American community.

While self-reported violence incidents can somewhat influence media coverage about the topic, the production of news is more complicated. News is not just purely the collection of random events but rather, all those events go through a complex process of “systematic sorting and selecting.”³⁶ This process is not simply about the news-worthiness of events. Rather, it greatly involves social and cultural identification. In simpler terms, what is happening in one event will be given names that are related to other events (identification) and the event will also be put within a framework of meaning (contextualization). For example, when a new dictator

³² Park Hong, *Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning*, 47.

³³ Park Hong, *Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning*, 95.

³⁴ Park Hong, *Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning*, 120.

³⁵ Strohlic, Nina. “America’s Long History of Scapegoating Its ASIAN CITIZENS.” *National Geographic*, May 3, 2021. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/article/asian-american-racism-covid>.

³⁶ Hall, “The Social Production of News,” 53.

rises into power, we learn that he is a dictator because that is the name the media gives to him in the context of other known dictators in the world. In order to create those meanings, the media follow the ideology that there is “only one perspective on events.”³⁷ However, in the world today, conflicts are inevitable. In order for the media to be successful, either economically or politically, they must establish and maintain the “consensual views of society.”³⁸ The process of defining events itself contributes to the maintenance of that established view. Nevertheless, the media is not the primary definer in this process. Indeed, they create the relationship allowing the powerful to be “accredited sources.”³⁹ By gaining credibility, the construction of news is the reproduction of “the existing structure of power in society’s institutional order.”⁴⁰ Consequently, while the media often claims to represent public opinion, it is actually forming public opinion with influence from actions and views of the powerful.

Cultural theorist Stuart Hall’s analysis of the process of news construction is very relevant to my analysis of the *Columbus Dispatch* because when we link this process to the conversation of hate crime and media, what constitutes hate crime are defined by the primary definers aka the powerful. Often, the term “hate crime” is used only when there is clear prejudiced racial motivations. However, the decision to judge those motivations is mostly controlled by the primary definers.

In addition to the influence of primary definers, the “overwhelming whiteness” of the newsroom also affects the creation of news.⁴¹ Professional journalism has long been a white dominated profession despite efforts to change hiring practices focusing more on racial diversity.

³⁷ Hall, “The Social Production of News,” 55.

³⁸ Hall, “The Social Production of News,” 56.

³⁹ Hall, “The Social Production of News,” 59.

⁴⁰ Hall, “The Social Production of News,” 58.

⁴¹ Alamo-Pastrana, Carlos, and William Hoynes. "8. Journalistic Whiteout: Whiteness and the Racialization of News." In *Racialized Media*, pp. 155-172. New York University Press, 2020, 155.

This problem is deeply rooted in the perception of “who could be a journalist.”⁴² In other words, we should rethink the ways journalism has been attached as a white profession. White journalists “are identified by their commitment to journalistic practice” while other non-white journalists “are defined by their racial identity.”⁴³ Clearly, other than associations with race-based names like Asian American Journalists Association, major news outlets and organizations focusing on specific journalistic areas are supposed to be where white journalists belong. This phenomenon “reproduce the profession’s own longstanding Whiteness” through attachment of news practice with whites.⁴⁴ Similarly, Park Hong also gives insight into the poetry industry where poems from writers of color are mostly analyzed in relation to their racial identity. Ocean Vuong, a Vietnamese poet, despite having written about his queer status, is predominantly referred to as an Asian writer writing about Asian-related topics.⁴⁵ This whiteout conceptualization of the news industry can hinder journalists of color from pursuing their interested fields and eventually negatively impact their personal developments.

Another problem with this “journalistic whiteout” is that we are seeing the world through the lens of the media, which mostly consists of white journalists. As Hall suggests, the media plays the main role in “making comprehensible⁴⁶” events, which mean that what we perceive has already been filtered. The world that we perceive from the news, the “public opinion” that is said to represent us, are just the view of a group in the population. This problem is hard to address because of the invisibility of whiteness. It is hard to point out what is already invisible. You can walk into a room and be amazed when they are all Asian but you might not react the same if they are all whites.⁴⁷ Even though the media is not openly racist and it claims to have objectivity when

⁴² Alamo-Pastrana, “8. Journalistic Whiteout: Whiteness and the Racialization of News,” 159.

⁴³ Alamo-Pastrana, “8. Journalistic Whiteout: Whiteness and the Racialization of News,” 163.

⁴⁴ Alamo-Pastrana, “8. Journalistic Whiteout: Whiteness and the Racialization of News,” 163.

⁴⁵ Park Hong, *Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning*, 80.

⁴⁶ Hall, “The Social Production of News,” 56.

⁴⁷ Park Hong, *Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning*.

delivering news, it only succeeds in making whiteness “invisible” as if there is no racial inequality.⁴⁸ This color blindness characteristic of the media poses challenge for the recognition of race as constitutive to violence and discrimination.

With a clear understanding of the history of Asian Americans and the process of news construction, I can start examining the *Columbus Dispatch*'s coverage on violence against Asian Americans in Columbus during the Covid-19 pandemic. For this study, I started by searching the most obvious term related to my topic, which is “violence against Asian Americans,” and I put a time filter on because I only want to examine articles during the Covid-19 pandemic, starting from 2020. Because having actual paper newspapers makes it harder to find information using keywords, I used the site Newsbank.com and chose the newspaper format in image so that I can see how those articles are located in accordance with other articles. I also wanted to focus mainly on news that actually reports incidents instead of opinion pieces. With this general keyword, there are only a total of 90 results for the search with a peak in March 2021. Initially, I expected to see way more articles from the search because violence against Asian Americans has risen in conversations recently. However, when I started looking into each result, I realized that the key word I used also includes the recent case of the Taliban taking over Afghanistan, a country in Asia, which means that there are actually less articles including the keyword. Also, in the result list, there are many opinion articles, which were not what I wanted.

Therefore, I changed the search keyword to a less general term: “Anti-Asian hate crime/violence.” This time, the results narrowed down to 21 items. Even though the *Columbus Dispatch* is the local newspaper of the city Columbus, among the 21 results, there is none covering anti-Asian violence happening in the city or in the state of Ohio. There are some articles in the National & World section, reporting about attacks in New York and other cities.

⁴⁸ Alamo-Pastrana, “8. Journalistic Whiteout: Whiteness and the Racialization of News,” 171.

Does this result mean that Columbus or Ohio is a safe paradise for Asian Americans without any racial violence?

I do not think so. While there were no articles about hate crime in Columbus, the *Columbus Dispatch* does not create a representation of Columbus as free of anti-Asian hate. There are two articles addressing the problem of “massive underreporting.”⁴⁹ However, the first one is talking about the situation in New York. It seems like in the *Columbus Dispatch*, the focus on violence against Asian Americans is predominantly in New York. It was not until August 5th 2021 that there was an article by Grace Deng, an Asian politics reporter working for the *Columbus Dispatch*, talking about a lack of data on anti-Asian violence in Ohio due to underreporting⁵⁰. This article, “Asian American underreporting hate” is located on the first page, taking the main and biggest column, and on the whole page 14. It is clear that this article is in the spotlight of the newspaper on August 5th. There is a shift of attention to anti-Asian hate in the *Columbus Dispatch* after months of not having enough focus on the issue.

The article starts by mentioning how limited the data on anti-Asian violence was. Despite rising national reports on assaults, there was only one documented case in Columbus and seven in Ohio. This trend is reflected in the coverage of the *Columbus Dispatch*. The article then provides possible reasons for these underreported violence cases. The author agrees with Strohlic by explaining cultural and language barriers as well as immigrants' status hinder Asians from reporting hate incidents. She also adds on to that with the argument that hate crimes normally don't have “hard evidence” as hate crimes are not always physical, and that the

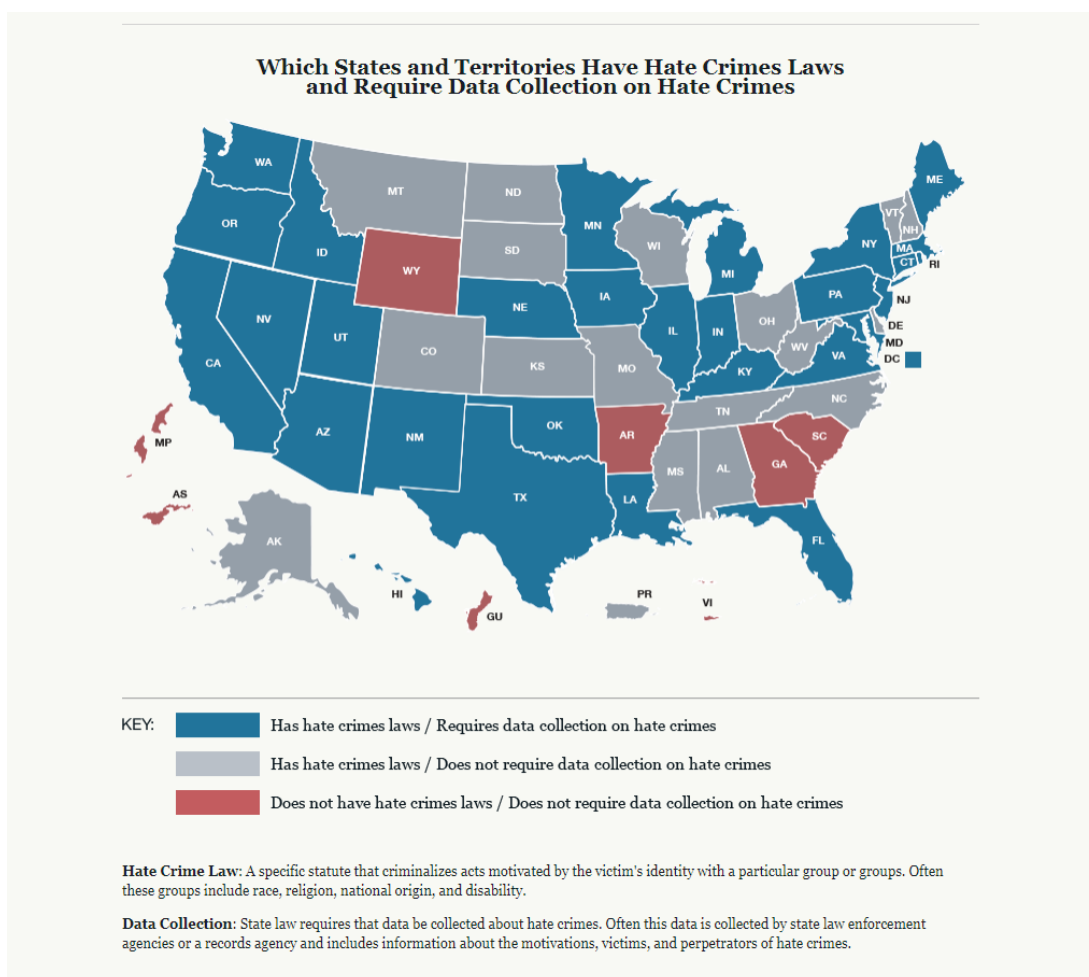
⁴⁹ *Columbus Dispatch, The (OH) (Columbus, Ohio)*, May 7, 2021: 4. NewsBank: America's News – Historical and Current.

<https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=image/v2%3A16656C71B76336E8%40AWNB-18250F1B47BC9719%402459342-18251A2CCF68FCA7%403-18251A2CCF68FCA7%40>.

⁵⁰ *Columbus Dispatch, The (OH) (Columbus, Ohio)*, August 5, 2021: 14. NewsBank: America's News – Historical and Current.

<https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=image/v2%3A16656C71B76336E8%40AWNB-1842B7209C13F5DC%402459432-1842C445D52F8555%4013-1842C445D52F8555%40>.

majority of the police force are not Asian.⁵¹ Moreover, the problem does not just stem from Asians not reporting incidents as there are also systematic problems: “Ohio doesn’t have a good way to track hate incidents” and police departments in many cities do not have a category for such assaults⁵².



United States Department of Justice

This photo is not included in the article but I find it relevant to what the author is trying to say. In this picture, Ohio is in the grey area, which means that Ohio state laws do not require data being collected about hate crime. This position makes it even harder to include anti-Asian assault incidents.

⁵¹ *Columbus Dispatch, The (OH) (Columbus, Ohio), August 5, 2021.*

⁵² *Columbus Dispatch, The (OH) (Columbus, Ohio), August 5, 2021.*

Deng also lists some potential solutions, including police training, new communication systems, and caring more about other people. This article is inclusive in explaining the current problem of “massive underreporting” that is also affecting the *Columbus Dispatch* coverage.

However, I still want to explore more about how the *Columbus Dispatch* investigates and reports those violence events as the only hate crime incident in Columbus was nowhere to be found using the searching tool. Therefore, I go to the *Columbus Dispatch* website to check out the newsroom directory to see if there is any department or reporter dedicated to anti-Asian issues only. The Newsroom Directory page starts with a statement of “Diversity & Inclusion” right on the top⁵³. The statement addresses that diversity is included in the *Columbus Dispatch* mission. However, as the analysis done on July 31st, 2020 showed, there are a predominantly 93.1% of white journalists in the newsroom.⁵⁴ This statistic reflects the mentioned above journalistic whiteout despite the statement of diversity. Among the only three Asian Americans reporters, two of them mostly report about immigrant and Asian Americans related news. There is also no investigative reporter working on anti-Asian hate crime so data for those events must have come from the police. In short, the *Columbus Dispatch* seems to not have a focus on violence against Asian Americans.

My research on the *Columbus Dispatch*, instead of finding out what is existing, is more about what is missing. It is clear that there is a lack of attention on anti-Asian hate crime related issues. This gap of information is because of massive underreporting, state laws, lack of diversity in the newsroom, and maybe not enough public attention to violence against Asian Americans. The long history of discrimination including the “model minority” myth did not end. It is a

⁵³ “Staff Directory.” *The Columbus Dispatch*. Accessed August 22, 2021. <https://www.dispatch.com/contact/staff/>.

⁵⁴ Miller, Alan. “Telling Stories about Columbus Requires a DIVERSE Newsroom. Here’s a Look at Our Staff.” *The Columbus Dispatch*. *The Columbus Dispatch*, December 18, 2020. <https://www.dispatch.com/story/news/2020/08/20/telling-stories-about-columbus-requires-diverse-newsroom-heres-quos-look-at-our-staff/113395016/>.

continuing story in the current daily life of Asian Americans especially during the current Covid-19 pandemic.

I hope that with the findings from my research, more attention will be shed on investigating and covering anti-Asian hate crime and racial violence in general. I believe that the only way to fight the “model minority” myth and racial violence is through knowledge and understanding.

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