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ENG 1101/OL10

May 21, 2022

Genre Assignment, Op-Ed

  **Violation Occurs When There is Silence.**

It is not a recent phenomenon that hate crimes have been committed against Asians in the USA. This phenomenon was present when Chinatowns were first established in the 1800s. A common occurrence of racism by whites is microaggression toward Asian-Americans. Hate crime against Asians in America is not new. It's a long history of fetishizing Asian women which has directly led to sexual violence against Asian women. The military presence of the United States in Asian countries played a very large role in the Fetishization of Asian women. Women are devalued and objectified as sex objects as a result. These images are reinforced by Hollywood films depicting Asian women as sexual objects.

Asians have been facing hate crime, and COVID-19 made it worse. As the Coronavirus pandemic spreads across the United States and around the globe, so is an anti-Asian crime epidemic.

 Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders face racism in institutions like schools because of the biased history lessons taught in schools that are written by the white man for the white man. In the past, pandemics have also caused hate crimes to occur in the past. As a result of the Bubonic plague in San Francisco in 1900 and the SARS outbreak in 2002-2004, Asians have been discriminated against by Americans (Gover et al., 2020).

 The Coronavirus is believed to have come from Wuhan, China, in December 2019, hence Americans associated the virus with people of Asian descent. Some leaders like Donald Trump addressed the virus as a ‘Chinese Virus’ and refused to apologize, further promoting the stereotypes.

The peak of physical assault that has led to fear of Asian-American women is the Atlanta massage spas killings in March 2021, where eight people were killed, six of them of Asian descent. The shooting took place in 3 different spas in Atlanta, causing paranoia as Asian women cannot run their businesses or go to their daily jobs at peace. Even running errands in local stores has proved difficult as everyone sees you as a threat despite being vulnerable to the virus. As a result, this has made taking care of their families difficult. Furthermore, Asian mothers also have a hard time taking care of their children as they are seen as the source of the virus as schools discriminate against Asian kids. An Asian-American student in one school was sent out due to coughing after choking on the water while other kids stayed in class; the teacher claimed he had the virus even after coughing.

As an Asian-American woman, I have never been more aware of my race until the pandemic hit. I have experienced this anti-Asian hate crime separately. The first time was in the Elmhurst area a man walked past me on the sidewalk and leaned in and whispered in my ear, “massage-massage.” I was lucky enough to have my friends who stood up to me, and the man backed off. Being assaulted made me feel very vulnerable in an environment that I’ve always considered home. Was it not for my allies? I do not know what the attacker could have done to me. These verbal assaults are just a few examples of what is happening to Asian-Americans that will lead to psychological trauma in the long run.

  The COVID-19 pandemic has seen Asian-Americans live in fear, and women have suffered a great deal from this epidemic, fearing for their safety and that of their families. Federal data suggest victims of most violent hate crimes are men but according to a group called Stop AAPI Hate, in 2020 and 2021, more than two-thirds of the reports came from women.

Asides from this data, many cases go unreported.

Social media has played an enormous role in spreading awareness of this Anti-Asian hate crime with hashtags on Twitter like ‘WashTheHate’ and ‘HateIsAVirus.’ Videos have been posted of Americans discriminating against Asians verbally and physically. Verbal assaults on Asians saying things like "go back to your country, you are bringing Corona to us, stupid Chinese bastards" and even making slant eye gestures and making phonetic sounds like Ching Chong when addressing Asian-Americans have been posted on social media sites. I have used my social media platforms to enlighten my followers on the hate against Asian-Americans and actively participate in campaigns like the #StopAsianHate. It is my goal to encourage victims to stand together, do not hate crimes go unreported and face our common enemy, racism, together.

CITATION.

 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*, *45*(45). https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-020-09545-1