

The Editorial Note

The Animosity Toward Asian American and the Role of Academia



To mitigate hate crimes, the Institute of Eastern Europe and Central Asia (IEECA) held an international conference to identify the deep cause of the animosity in the United States, especially toward the Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) community. The conference provided an opportunity for scholars to express their concerns in this matter. Most importantly, discussions led us to think about the deep root of hatred from different dimensions, such as culture, history, and politics.

During the pandemic, Asian Americans suffer from the COVID-19 virus and the virus of hate. However, other reasons are more historical and subtle. For example, the long history of discrimination toward the Chinese still affects some peoples' views. China was the only country whose citizens had been excluded from immigrating to the US from 1882 to 1943. One of the driving forces of the Chinese

Exclusion Act was the allegation that Chinese people were responsible for spreading diseases, resulting in written/unwritten racial segregation.

The negative bias against Asian Americans has been amplified by the pandemic, with the help of some politicians. One of the hot topics nowadays is to investigate the origin of the virus. Folks may think that it is common to use the country of origin as the name of a virus, like the Spanish flu and Ebola virus, and argue why calling COVID-19 the Chinese virus is discrimination. That argument does not consider the historical background we just mentioned and deteriorates the perception of pan-ethnic Asian American identity. There is an increasing call for an investigation of the origin of the COVID-19 virus. To make sure the investigation is independent, scientific, and objective, and its purpose is for the prevention of another health disaster, the investigation should be limited within the boundary of science. The less involvement from politicians who are driven by animosity or other ulterior motives, the more independent and objective the investigation will be. Unfortunately, most of the calls for investigations are occurring among politicians rather than scientists, which does not help mitigate the hatred among racial groups.

Some of the fundamentals of hate crimes lie in cultural differences and a lack of mutual understanding. For example, the national culture of many Asian countries is built on a high level of collectivism, in which sacrificing individuals' interests for the benefits of a larger group is justified. This is an opposite view in Western cultures, where individualism is the primary value and a member's interest serves as a condition for the overall group's interest. This value deviation is part of why many Asian people have entirely different views from Western people about what happened and what is happening in the world. Failing to recognize and understand those cultural differences may serve as a potential root cause of xenophobia.

Tackling hate crime issues is not a sprint but a marathon, which involves people starting with small day-to-day actions. We need to educate our young people on the value of diversity; and learn and understand what happened in history, so they treat people who have different cultural values and skin colors with respect.

Ran Liu, Ph.D.
Associate Editor, Journal JEECAR
Assistant Professor of Marketing
Central Connecticut State University, USA

Conference Agenda can be reviewed on <https://www.ieeca.org/journal/index.php/JEECAR/ASIANAMERICANS>