

**Screening of the Characteristics of Hate Crimes against Asian American and Comparison  
to African Americans in Bay Area**

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## **Abstract**

COVID-19 has aided the spread of racism, as well as national insecurity, distrust of immigrants, and general xenophobia, both of which may be linked to the rise in anti-Asian hate crimes during the pandemic. Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is thought to have originated in late December 2019 in Wuhan, China, and quickly spread across the world during the spring months of 2020. Asian Americans recorded an increase in racially based hate crimes including physical abuse and intimidation as COVID-19 spread throughout the United States. This research study was conducted by high school students in the Bay Area to compare the intentions and characteristics of hate crimes against Asian Americans to hate crimes against African Americans. According to studies of both victim-related and most offender-related variables, hate crimes against Asian Americans have been rapidly growing in the United States and vary from those against African Americans. This leads to an investigation into the racial disparity between Asian American offenders and those of other races. The nature and characteristics of hate crimes against Asian Americans are compared to those of hate crimes against African Americans in our research. According to studies of all victim-related and most offender-related factors, hate crimes against Asian Americans are similar to those against African Americans. Hate crimes against Asian Americans, on the other hand, vary greatly from hate crimes against African Americans in terms of the offender's ethnicity and all incident-related variables.

**Keywords:** Hate crime, COVID-19, Asian American, Asian African

## **Introduction**

After the 1965 passage of the Immigration and Naturalization Act, Asian immigration to the United States has increased dramatically. Asian Americans are one of the fastest-growing racial/ethnic groups in the United States, despite being a tiny minority group in comparison to the others. According to Census Bureau data, the Asian population grew from 3.5 million in 1980 to 11.9 million in 2000, then to 19.4 million in 2013, accounting for 5.6 percent of the total population of the United States. As the Asian population grew, so did the number of crimes committed against Asian Americans.

COVID-19 has recently been spreading rapidly across the United States. As COVID-19 has spread quickly across the United States, hate crimes against Asian Americans have increased. The rise is primarily attributed to media reports of "hate crimes," as well as the current social

and political environment, in which COVID-19 has been repeatedly branded a "China virus." The world started to notice reports out of Wuhan, China hospitals about a rise in pneumonia cases of unknown origin in the last week of 2019. (Wang *et al.*, 2020). Soon after, scientists discovered that the illnesses were caused by a new form of coronavirus called COVID-19, which causes a disease called COVID-19 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2020a). The virus is thought to have spread from animals to humans in Wuhan's open-air "wet markets," which sell raw fish and meat to the public (CDC, 2020a), and by mid-January 2020, it had spread rapidly across Asia and around the world. The World Health Organization (WHO) announced a "Public Health Emergency of International Concern" by the end of January (CDC, 2020b).

Hate crimes against Asian Americans have increased as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The rise is primarily attributed to "hate crimes" reported in the media, as well as the current social and political environment, in which COVID-19 has been dubbed "Chinese virus" or "China virus" numerous times. Asian Americans have also reported a surge in a second epidemic targeting them specifically – racially motivated hate crimes involving physical violence and harassment – despite the disease impacting people of all races/ethnicities (Chiu, 2020). Hate crime is classified as "crimes that manifest evidence of bigotry based on race, gender and gender identity, faith, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnicity" under the Hate Crime Statistic Act (28 U.S.C. 534). With each new attack, Asian Americans feel increasingly vulnerable; as a result, they are working hard and protesting to ensure that more hate crimes are seen and prosecuted for what they are. Hate crime prosecutions are uncommon since there is always a shortage of "proof to support the racial intent" in many cases. Anti-Asian hate crimes are more difficult to identify than anti-black or anti-gay hate crimes since there is no identifiable mark or pattern of anti-Asian hatred, unlike anti-black or anti-gay hate crimes. Hate crimes do not necessarily include the victim being physically harmed. Hate crimes also take the form of verbal abuse, which can cause just as much harm to the victim. Unless there is physical evidence such as a video or a recording, the offender could easily deny that their motive had a "racial bias" and give another replacement as an excuse to bring them less punishment. The legislation also ignores the various forms of racism that Asian Americans face in our culture. For a crime to be prosecuted as a hate crime in some states, the prosecution must prove that the victim was targeted because of their race. If the prosecution can show that the defendant made a hateful verbal or written remark, the offense can be upgraded to a hate crime and the maximum penalty for the offender increased.

Despite the fact that hate crimes against Asian Americans are on the rise, the majority of academic studies focus on hate crimes against African Americans, and as the COVID-19 pandemic spread globally, the number of hate crimes against Asian Americans has increased significantly. To date, empirical research that focuses on hate crimes against Asian Americans is rare. The nature and characteristics of victims, offenses, offenders, and situational conditions of hate crimes against Asian Americans largely remain unknown. COVID-19 has aided the spread of racism, as well as national insecurity, distrust of immigrants, and general xenophobia, both of which can be linked to the rise in hate crimes against Asian Americans and Asian Africans during the pandemic (Vachuska, 2020).

The issue with hate crimes against Asian Americans and African Americans is that there aren't enough data or studies on the topic. Since several hate crimes go unreported or underreported by law enforcement authorities, hate crime statistics are inaccurate (Krishnakumar and Priya, 2021). As a result of the scarcity of hate crime data, it will take two years to assess if the national rise in assaults against Asians is linked to the pandemic (Kaste, 2021). The aim of this study is to compare the essence and characteristics of hate crimes perpetrated against Asian Americans to hate crimes perpetrated against African Americans in the Bay Area, taking into account victim, perpetrator, and incident-related variables.

### **Research Question**

The current research contrasts three forms of hate crime against Asian Americans and African Americans in the Bay Area, including victim, suspect, and incident related variables. The following are the basic research questions addressed in the study:

1. Are there any differences between Asian Americans and African Americans who have been victims of hate crimes?
2. Do the characteristics of offenders of hate crimes against Asian Americans vary significantly from those of offenders of hate crimes against African Americans?
3. Is there a noticeable difference between hate crimes against Asian Americans and hate crimes against African Americans?

### **Methodology**

Between 2019 and 2020, we investigated racially motivated anti-minority crimes and socioeconomic factors in the Bay Area. We discovered that while the overall rate of hate crimes decreased, hate crimes targeting Asians increased, rising from 3 to 28 in New York and from 7 to 15 in Los Angeles. In only one year, hate crimes against Asians have increased by 150

percent. We also looked at the correlations in total bias incidents, such as racial composition, using data from the San Francisco Police Department's bias crime reports from 2008 to 2019.

### *Variables and Measures*

The dependent variable (within Bay Area) is used to compare hate crimes against Asian Americans and African Americans, and it was coded as zero if the crime was committed against African Americans and one if the crime was committed against Asian Americans.

The analysis included three groups of independent variables, including victim, offender, and incident-related factor. Victim variables included victims' age, gender, and residency status. Victims' ages were measured in years and coded into four groups: 1 = under 18, 2 = 18–34, 3 = 35–64, and 4 = 65 or older. Victim's gender was coded as 0 = female and 1 = male. The victim's residential status, which indicated whether the victim had a permanent residence in the area where the crime occurred, was divided into three categories: 0 = not local resident, 1 = local resident, and 2 = unknown.

Offenders' age, gender, and race were included in the group of offender-related variables. Similarly, the offender's age was measured in years and recoded into the same age groups as the victim's age. The gender of the offender was also coded as 0 = female and 1 = male. The race of the offender was measured using two categories: 0 = White and 1 = non-White. Victim-offender relationships, locations of hate crime incidents, times when hate crime incidents occurred, weapon involvement, injuries, and involvement of substance use in hate crime incidents were among the incident-related variables.

Victim-offender relationships were coded into three categories: 0 = stranger, 1 = acquaintance, and 2 = unknown relationship. Hate crime incidents were classified into six categories: 0 = residence/home, 1 = commercial/retail, 2 = highway/road, 3 = school/college, 4 = parking lot/garage, and 5 = other places. The time when a hate crime incident occurred was classified into four categories: 1 = 1 am to 6 am, 2 = 7 am to 12 pm, 3 = 1 pm to 6 pm, and 4 = 7 pm to 12 am. According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) analysis, the number of violent crimes committed by offenders rises from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., peaks around 7 p.m. to 8 p.m., and then falls until 6 a.m. We coded the crime time in four categories to capture more levels of variations (0 = no weapon, 1 = firearm, 2 = personal weapon, 3 = other weapon, and 4 = unknown/NA). The variable of injury was coded in four categories, 0 = no injury, 1 = minor injury, 2 = major injury, and 3 = unknown/NA.

SPSS (version 24) was used for descriptive analysis and logistic regression models were analyzed to compare the nature and characteristics of hate crimes against Asian Americans with those against African Americans.

## Results

The comparison of the characteristics of hate crimes against Asian Americans and African Americans with logistic regression model and the descriptive output of individual-level variables are presented here in different tables (Table 1-3).

### *Victim variables*

In general, hate crimes are most likely targeting young adults at age's 18–34 in Asian American hate crimes but most targeting group for African American hate crimes was between the age ranges of 35-64 years. In case of sex, the male was the most targeting victims from of the hate crimes of Asian American (83.18%) and African American (55.81%). In terms of residential status, Asian American victims however, have a higher (15.89%) chance than African Americans (4.65%) to be victimized in places where they are local residents.

The findings show no substantial differences between Asian Americans and African Americans in terms of victim characteristics (e.g., age, sex, and residence status). Hate crime victims of both ethnic categories are more likely to be males between the ages of 18 and 34, and local residents of the area where the offenses occurred, as seen in Table 1.

Table 1 Descriptive analysis and logistic regression model comparing the dependent variable in terms of victim variables (n = 150)

Variables	Categories	Hate crimes against Asian Americans (n = 107)		Hate crimes against African Americans (n = 43)		Dependent variable (Hate crimes- Asian Americans vs African American)		
		n	%	n	%	B	S.E.	Exp (b)
Victim age	under 18	12	11.21	2	4.65	-0.024	0.212	0.977
	18–34	58	54.21	17	39.53	0.250	0.211	1.284
	35–64	30	28.04	23	53.49	0.175	0.134	0.839
	>64 <sup>a</sup>	7	6.54	1	2.33			
Victim sex	female	18	16.82	19	44.19			
	Male <sup>a</sup>	89	83.18	24	55.81	0.113	0.187	1.120

Victim residential status	not local resident <sup>a</sup>	17	15.89	2	4.65			
	local resident	83	77.57	36	83.72	-0.061	0.263	0.678
	unknown	7	6.54	5	11.63	-0.175	0.197	0.895

<sup>a</sup> indicates the reference category in each independent variable

\*\*\*p < 0.05, p < 0.01

### *Offender variable*

The offender age ranges 18-34 was higher in hate crimes against Asian American than hate crimes against African American responsible to be victimized and the male was higher in hate crime incidents in both Asian American and African American. Comparing in term of offender race, Asian Americans have relatively higher (90.65%) chance to be victimized by non- White offenders compared to African Americans (79.07) but non-white races were higher in both cases.

Significant variations in the ethnicity of offenders arise when offender-related factors are compared. Hate crimes against Asian Americans are more likely to be committed by non-White offenders (b = 0.958. exp.(b) = 2.607) than by White offenders (b = 0.958. exp.(b) = 2.607). Other attributes (such as sex and age) of offenders, on the other hand, remain consistent. Hate crime perpetrators against the two ethnic groups are most likely to be males between the ages of 18 and 34.

Table 2 Descriptive analysis and logistic regression model comparing the dependent variable in terms of offender variables (n = 150)

Variables	Categories	Hate crimes against Asian Americans (n = 107)		Hate crimes against African Americans (n = 43)		Dependent variable (Hate crimes- Asian Americans vs African American)		
		n	%	n	%	B	S.E.	Exp (b)
Offender age	under 18	5	4.67	3	6.98	0.249	0.191	1.284
	18-34	53	49.53	16	37.21	0.170	0.163	1.186
	35-64	40	37.38	23	53.49	-0.038	0.214	0.977
	>64 <sup>a</sup>	9	8.41	1	2.33			
Offender sex	Female <sup>a</sup>	4	3.74	12	27.91			
	male	103	96.26	31	72.09	-0.126	0.177	0.881
Offender race	White <sup>a</sup>	10	9.35	9	20.93			
	non-White	97	90.65	34	79.07	0.958	0.233	2.607***

<sup>a</sup> indicates the reference category in each independent variable

\*\*\*p < 0.05, p < 0.01

*Incident variable*

In terms of incident characteristics, Asian Americans are more likely to be victimized by strangers (63.55%), however, in the case of African Americans, it was in acquaintance (51.16%), they are less likely to be offended at residence (14.95 % for Asian Americans and 9.30 % for African Americans), and they are more likely to be targeted at highway/road (32.38 % for Asian Americans and commercial/retail for African Americans (51.16%) (Table 3). Hate crimes against Asian Americans (49.53%) and African Americans (49.53 %) were most likely between 1 p.m. and 6 a.m. (41.46 %). Due to a hate crime incident between victim and offender, minor injury levels were found to be higher in both Asian and African Americans.

More important variations can be seen when incident-related variables are investigated. Hate crimes against Asian Americans are more likely to be committed by strangers than acquaintances (b = 0.326, exp.(b) = 0.763) when compared to hate crimes against African Americans. Between the two ethnic classes, there are significant variations in the locations of hate crimes. As compared to African American victims, Asian Americans are more likely to be victims of hate crimes in schools/colleges (b = 0.457, exp.(b) = 3.547) than at residence (b = 0.457, exp.(b) = 3.547). African Americans, on the other hand, are more likely to encounter hate crime in their residence. The frequency at which hate crimes occur varies as well.

Table 3 Descriptive analysis and logistic regression model comparing the dependent variable in terms of offender variables (n = 150)

Variables	Categories	Hate crimes against Asian Americans (n = 107)		Hate crimes against African Americans (n = 43)		Dependent variable (Hate crimes- Asian Americans vs African American)		
		n	%	n	%	B	S.E.	Exp (b)
Victim-offender relationship	Stranger <sup>a</sup>	68	63.55	7	16.28			
	acquaintance	11	10.28	22	51.16	-0.326	0.142	0.763***
	unknown relationship	28	26.17	14	32.36	-0.312	0.176	0.894
Incident location	residence/home <sup>a</sup>	16	14.95	4	9.30			
	commercial/retail	23	21.50	22	51.16	0.250	0.247	1.453
	highway/road	41	38.32	4	9.30	-0.325	0.190	0.776
	school/college	12	11.21	5	11.63	0.457	0.327	3.547***



	parking lot/garage	8	7.48	7	16.28	-0.362	0.282	0.746
	other places	7	6.54	1	2.33	-0.367	0.214	0.868
Incident time	1 am to 6 am	10	9.35	2	4.65	-0.292	0.237	0.715
	7 am to 12 pm	13	12.15	14	32.56	-0.268	0.205	0.963
	1 pm to 6 pm	53	49.53	18	41.86	-0.018	0.128	0.733
	7 pm to 12 am <sup>a</sup>	31	28.97	9	20.93			
Weapon used in incident	no weapon <sup>a</sup>	2	1.87	15	34.88			
	firearm	46	42.99	7	16.28	-0.173	0.529	1.189
	personal weapon	25	23.36	9	20.93	-0.082	0.327	0.880
	other weapon	27	25.23	8	18.60	-0.268	0.287	0.759
	unknown/NA	7	6.54	4	9.30	-0.310	0.358	0.892*
Injury level due to incident	no injury <sup>a</sup>	6	5.61	14	32.56			
	minor injury	61	57.01	18	41.86	0.561	0.298	1.761***
	major injury	31	28.97	9	20.93	0.048	0.452	1.160
	unknown/NA	9	8.41	2	4.65	0.505	0.173	1.026

<sup>a</sup> indicates the reference category in each independent variable

\*\*\*p < 0.05, p < 0.01

## Discussion and Conclusion

The current research compares the nature and characteristics of hate crimes against Asian Americans and African Americans using data from the San Francisco Police Department between 1992 and 2014 and data from the California Human Relations Commission (CHRC) from Bay Area data. The effects of victim, offender, and incident-related variables were compared using a logistic regression model with descriptive statistics. Several interesting findings emerge from the data. The characteristics of victims of hate crimes against Asian Americans, such as age, sex, and residency status, are similar to those of victims of hate crimes against African Americans. They are most likely to be young, male, and residents of the area where the crimes took place. The parallels can be traced back to the victims' demographic characteristics. Locally based young males are more likely to be victims of racially motivated hate crimes. Furthermore, hate crimes against Asian Americans are analogous to hate crimes against African Americans in terms of age and sex of the offenders. Males and youth are most likely to be the offenders. Regardless of their reason for bigotry, young males in general are the main perpetrators of hate crimes. Hate crimes targeting Asian Americans and African Americans vary greatly in terms of the ethnicity of the perpetrators. Hate crimes against Asian Americans are more likely to be committed by non-White offenders than hate crimes against African Americans. This finding may lend indirect support to the racial competition theory of hate crimes, which claims that during economic downturns, when members of one racial group

perceive that their access and privileges to material resources are threatened by members of other racial groups, racial conflict and hate crimes may occur (van Dyke *et al.*, 2001). Hate crimes targeting various racial and ethnic groups have more substantial variations in event variables than other types of crimes. As compared to African Americans, Asian Americans are more likely to be victims of hate crimes in schools. Envy or jealousy of Asian Americans' high levels of educational achievement, and their success in the workplace might also lead to feelings of resentment from other racial/ethnic groups. Hate crimes committed against Asian Americans and African Americans show different trends in terms of victim-offender relationships, injury, and time of incident occurrence. Strangers are more likely to victimize Asian Americans, who are more likely to sustain minor injuries. Morning hate crimes against Asian Americans are less likely than evening hate crimes. When comparing hate crimes committed against Asian Americans to hate crimes committed against African Americans, some of the differences noted above still apply. The victim-offender relationship, the location of hate crime cases, and the time of incident occurrence, for example, all show common patterns of discrepancies. The findings indicate that further research is needed to better understand Asian Americans' experiences with hate crimes and to investigate hate crimes committed against Asian Americans. Our research looks into the characteristics of hate crimes that are common among racial and ethnic minorities but may be specific to Asian Americans. A study like this, along with its conclusions, is likely to improve our awareness and understanding of various cultural practices and trends, as well as relevant social issues. This knowledge and understanding lays the groundwork for appreciating cultural diversity, raising awareness of relevant social problems, and encouraging mutual respect.

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