

Statement Condemning Anti-Asian Racism

March 18, 2021

The American Sociological Association is deeply concerned and outraged about the rise of attacks and discrimination against Asians and Asian Americans that began when COVID-19 was first being acknowledged as a dangerous pandemic. In spring 2020, we joined 50 professional scientific organizations in signing a letter to members of Congress saying: “Our societies have been concerned by news reports that individuals of Asian ancestry are increasingly subject to stigma, physical attack, or suspicion due to the potential origins of the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2. These actions are wrong and unacceptable for their racial overtones, their impact on societies and individuals, and run counter to the core values of the scientific community and the members we represent. As scientists, we know viruses respect no borders, and originate and evolve worldwide.”

Since then, the attacks against Asians and Asian Americans have escalated rapidly. On March 17, 2021, eight people were murdered by a 21-year old white man in Atlanta, Georgia, six of whom were Asian women. These murders came on the heels of rising anti-Asian sentiments accompanied by mental and visible violence, discrimination, and gendered racism in the U.S. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, Asian Americans have been targeted in more than 3,000 hate crimes nationwide. As sociologists, we have studied racism and its consequences for over a century. Our studies have taught us to recognize myriad forms of racism and its intersection with other forms of oppression. It is clear that the historic and contemporary discrimination and violence against Asians in America are deeply rooted in anti-Asian racism. Yet, anti-Asian racism is too frequently rendered invisible. We have heard from our Asian and Asian American colleagues, students, and community members about the virulent racism they experience daily. We stand in solidarity with the Asian and Asian American community.

Sociological knowledge informs that racism stems from deep structural and cultural roots. For it to be eliminated, those deep and varied roots must be recognized and addressed. As a social scientific organization, we call upon all Americans—especially our political, economic, and community leaders—to work diligently to address anti-Asian racism and immediately seek measures to eradicate it. We remind the nation that silence ends up enabling racism. We must speak out against this racism based on our scientific expertise and moral compass.

Thus, ASA stands in solidarity with the Asian and Asian American community and we send out a clarion call for justice and liberation that eliminates all forms of racism and intersectional violence, including that targeting those of Asian ancestry.