

## The Model Minority Myth, Anti-Asian Racism, and White Supremacy

The development of the model minority myth can be understood by exploring the construction of race as a tool to create racial hierarchies and, thereby, benefit European colonizers and slave traders, i.e. White people. When the Portuguese arrived in Africa in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, they encapsulated people with different skin colors, languages, and ethnicities into a single group of people, to whom the colonizers attributed negative qualities to justify slave trading. In this sense, slave trading could be seen as an act of liberation instead of profit maximization. The idea that the Black race was worthy of enslavement because they were inferior gave rise to more evolved theories regarding racial ranking.

In 1735, Carl Linnaeus postulated in his *Systema Naturae* that the White race stayed at the top of the racial ranking, followed by Yellow, Red, and Black in descending order. Although most scientists nowadays agree that race does not serve as a biological differentiator in humans, Linnaeus' theory has lived on for centuries, especially with the intensification of White Supremacy. The belief that White people are more civilized and intellectually superior perpetuates the model minority myth. Essentially, other non-White racial groups must strive to be like Asians—the model minority—who always work hard to excel intellectually and economically to assimilate into Whiteness.

Apart from benefiting White people but subtly harming other minority groups by expecting everyone to conform to the White standards, White Supremacy hurts people of other races in a more overt way. When the positions of those who benefit from this ideology in capitalist society start to be compromised, they inflict oppressions on non-White individuals. Anti-Asian racism is a paradigm of this reality. For White people who are marginalized under capitalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially those who immigrated from Europe, participation in anti-Asian violence was a means of reasserting their sense of belonging in the US. On October 24<sup>th</sup>, 1871, a mob of nearly 500 dragged Chinese residents in Los Angeles from their homes and hung 17 victims. On September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1885, White coalminers at Rock Springs, Wyoming murdered at least 28 Chinese miners, some of whom were scalped and castrated, before driving the rest of the Chinese workforce out of the camps. In the same year, hundreds of armed men violently expelled 800 to 900 Chinese residents from their neighborhoods in Tacoma, Washington.

During the early months of 2020, hate crimes against Asians and Asian Americans rose dramatically in light of COVID-19.” On March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021, a White man killed eight people in three Atlanta-area Asian-owned businesses. These senseless murders reflect the same motive as the one behind the history of violence against Asians and Asian Americans in the U.S. People whose securities are shaken by the mishandling of the virus found it easier to blame a minority than acknowledging that political and economic elites, who seek to maximize profits at the expenses of countless workers and Americans, are the real causes of their grievances.

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Information gathered from *How to be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi; “Race” in *Britannica* (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/race-human>); Viet Thanh Nguyen’s “Asian Americans Are Still Caught in the Trap of the ‘Model Minority’ Stereotype. And It Creates Inequality for All” in *Time* ([https://time.com/5859206/anti-asian-racism-america/?utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=editorial&utm\\_term=ideas\\_race&linkId=93468927&fbclid=IwAR1ffAY3IUS6qX8ctvP5mYvYZsBm5iDSeGKlWsdRFfCq\\_Vyq-vuzR\\_ziS7U](https://time.com/5859206/anti-asian-racism-america/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=editorial&utm_term=ideas_race&linkId=93468927&fbclid=IwAR1ffAY3IUS6qX8ctvP5mYvYZsBm5iDSeGKlWsdRFfCq_Vyq-vuzR_ziS7U)); Simeon Man’s “Anti-Asian violence and US imperialism” in *Sage Race & Class*, 2020, vol. 62(2), 24-33; “AAPIs Rising to Fight Dual Pandemics COVID-19 and Racism” in One Nation Commission (<https://www.onenationcommission.org/the-commission-report-ii>), and Derrick Bryson Taylor’s and Christine Hauser’s “What to Know About the Atlanta Spa Shootings” in *The New York Times* (<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/17/us/atlanta-spa-shootings.html>).