

# Anti-Asian Racism in Canada: The Story of the Numbers

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## ABSTRACT

This paper delves into the ongoing issue of anti-Asian racism in Canada, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite being a diverse country, Canada has a long-standing history of discrimination towards people of Asian heritage. The Covid-19 pandemic has only exacerbated this issue, with a significant increase in reported crimes and incidents of racism towards Asian or Asian-appearing individuals.

The paper focuses on identifying and interpreting the most relevant data from various sources on anti-Asian racism in Canada during the pandemic. The author aims to compare and contrast these data sets to understand the underlying trends and factors that contribute to anti-Asian racism in Canada. However, the author notes the challenges of relying on available data sets to inform the public and policymakers. Officially collected crime statistics and non-official online self-reporting data have their limitations in accurately reflecting the scope of anti-Asian racism in the country.

The paper concludes that accurate statistics are essential in combating anti-Asian racism in Canada. However, the lack of reliable data is concerning. The author emphasizes the importance of continuing the search for better ways to collect accurate statistics while being cautious in using existing data to avoid misleading the public and policymakers.

Overall, this paper highlights the urgent need for Canada to address the issue of anti-Asian racism, particularly in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is a call to action for policymakers, activists, and the public to work together towards creating a more inclusive and accepting society.

## Introduction

In a country like Canada, where multiculturalism is widely recognized as our strength, it is disappointing that racism is still an ongoing social issue. From the Government of Canada's Addressing Anti-Asian Racism webpage, "anti-Asian racism refers to historical and ongoing discrimination, negative stereotyping, and injustice experienced by peoples of Asian heritage, based on others' assumptions about their ethnicity and nationality."<sup>1</sup> Sadly, anti-Asian racism has a long history in Canada, from discriminatory voting laws, to exclusionary immigration policies and forced relocation and internment, its evolution fueled by factors such as the global political environment and news media.<sup>2</sup> Since the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020, the number of

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<sup>1</sup>Addressing anti-Asian racism. <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/asian-heritage-month/anti-asian-racism.html>

<sup>2</sup> Diamond Yao, "Anti-Asian Racism in Canada", published on November 18, 2021, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/anti-asian-racism-in-canada>

anti-Asian racism incidents has drastically increased in Canada, as racist incidents targeting Asian or Asian look populations reported all over the country.<sup>3</sup>

In this paper I will first identify the most relevant data from different sources about anti-Asian racism and try to interpret the data for understanding the trend of anti-Asian racism in Canada since the beginning of the Covid pandemic. I will then compare how these data sets are similar and different. Finally, I will try to discuss the reasons why these data sets may not be reliable in informing the general public and the policy makers and how they can be used properly.

## The Importance of Data

The first step in addressing anti-Asian racism is to have an accurate understanding of its scope, nature, and characteristics, which requires reliable and comprehensive data. Although many news articles provided this information to some extent during the pandemic, many questions still remain: Where are these incidences of hate crime happening? How fast are they increasing? Are different neighborhoods affected at different levels? Who is suffering the most? Who are the attackers? And most importantly, is the pandemic a trigger of the increase? To find answers to all these questions, and more importantly to inform policy makers and help with their decision making, we need to aggregate data from as many sources as possible in order to answer these questions.

## Understanding Government (Official) Data

The first data source that I discovered was Statistics Canada, the official statistics agency of the Canadian federal government. StatsCan is the national statistical office that “ensures Canadians have the key information on Canada’s economy, society and environment that they require to function effectively as citizens and decision makers”<sup>4</sup>. Within the comprehensive database on Statistics Canada’s official website, there are 4 data sets available that relate to hate crimes annually:<sup>5</sup>

1. Police-reported hate crime, by type of motivation, Canada (selected police services)
2. Police-reported hate crime, by most serious violation, Canada (selected police services)
3. Police-reported hate crime, number of incidents and rate per 100,000 population, Census Metropolitan Areas
4. Police-reported hate crime, by police service (archived)

All the StatsCan datasets are sourced from police reports and focus solely on the motivation, seriousness, and rate of hate crimes. In particular, I found the table titled “police-reported hate crime, by type of motivation, Canada” to be most relevant to my research on Anti-Asian hate. This report was released on August 2, 2022 and the data provided in the report covers the years from 2014 to 2021.

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<sup>3</sup> For example, CBC news “Number of reported hate crimes set new record in 2020 as other crimes decreased: Statistics Canada” <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/statistics-canada-hate-crimes-1.6389976>.

<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada official website <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/start>.

<sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada official website [https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/type/data?subject\\_level=35%2C3503%2C350302](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/type/data?subject_level=35%2C3503%2C350302)

Geography	Canada, selected police services <sup>6, 7, 8</sup> (map)									
Type of motivation	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
	Number									
Total police-reported hate crime	..	..	1,295	1,362	1,409	2,073	1,817	1,951	2,646	3,360
Race or ethnicity	..	..	611	641	666	878	793	884	1,619	1,723
Religion	..	..	429	469	460	842	657	613	530	884
Sexual orientation	..	..	155	141	176	204	186	265	258	423
Language	..	..	12	18	13	23	14	25	37	35
Disability	..	..	10	8	11	10	9	3	8	15
Sex	..	..	22	12	24	32	54	56	49	62
Age	..	..	6	4	5	4	9	8	5	12
Other similar factor <sup>2</sup>	..	..	27	44	35	48	73	58	101	75
Unknown motivation	..	..	23	25	19	32	22	39	39	131

Screenshot from StatsCan “police-reported hate crime, by type of motivation, Canada” page.<sup>6</sup>

Hate crimes are defined in this data table as “...criminal offenses motivated by bias, prejudice, or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation or any other similar factor, such as profession or political beliefs.”<sup>7</sup> This set of annual data shows a steady yet small yearly increase (within 5%) of total police-reported hate crimes from 2014 to 2016, and then 50% increase from 2016 to 2017, which dropped in 2018 to be back to a more consistent level prior to 2017. There was a small increase in 2019 of about 7%, then followed again by a 40% increase from 2019 to 2020 and another 30% increase from 2020 to 2021. The recent uptick amongst the general upward trend is especially concerning to see.

There are several types of motivation identified in the police-reported hate crimes: race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, language, disability, sex, age, and others. The criteria that relate to anti-Asian racism the closest are race or ethnicity, and are cited as the number one motive behind hate crimes.

The yearly increase of race or ethnicity motivated crimes coincides with the yearly increase of total crimes to a large extent. However, the 2017 major increase of total number of hate crimes were from not only race or ethnicity, but also several other types of motivations. In fact, religion motivated crimes had more than 80% increase, while race or ethnicity had just over 30% increase. In comparison, in 2020 when there was another major increase in the total number of hate crimes, crimes motivated by most other types had a drop in reported crimes, including religions, except for those motivated by race or ethnicity, which had more than 80% increase from the year before.<sup>8</sup> In 2021, the number remained high for race or ethnicity motivated crimes.

However, one of the footnotes of this data table points out that “changes in reporting practices can have an effect on hate crime statistics”<sup>9</sup>. Thus, events such as the introduction of a hate awareness campaign can also influence the reported crimes.

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada. [Table 35-10-0066-01 Police-reported hate crime, by type of motivation, Canada \(selected police services\)](https://doi.org/10.25318/3510006601-eng) DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25318/3510006601-eng>

<sup>7</sup> Statistics Canada. [Table 35-10-0066-01 Police-reported hate crime, by type of motivation, Canada \(selected police services\)](https://doi.org/10.25318/3510006601-eng) DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25318/3510006601-eng>

<sup>8</sup> Language and disability both have had a high percentage increase, but because their base numbers are low and the percentage can easily change drastically by just a few reported crimes, I have left them out for analyzing the representative changes.

<sup>9</sup> Statistics Canada. [Table 35-10-0066-01 Police-reported hate crime, by type of motivation, Canada \(selected police services\)](https://doi.org/10.25318/3510006601-eng) DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25318/3510006601-eng>

Another relevant report from Statistics Canada is generated from general social survey results, where respondents provide information based on their individual experiences. This report was published in May 2022, and summarizes data collected from groups designated as visible minorities and selected sociodemographic characteristics, to compare their experiences of discrimination before and after the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>10</sup>

Selected sociodemographic characteristics		Total, 15 years and over							
Geography		Canada (map)							
Statistics <sup>3, 4, 5, 6, 7</sup>		Percentage of persons							
Reference period		2020							
Indicators	Experience(s) of discrimination, 5 years before COVID-19 pandemic <sup>8, 9</sup>	Experience(s) of discrimination based on ethnicity or culture, 5 years before COVID-19 pandemic <sup>8, 9</sup>	Experience(s) of discrimination based on race or colour, 5 years before COVID-19 pandemic <sup>8, 9</sup>	Discrimination at work or when applying for a job or a promotion, 5 years before COVID-19 pandemic <sup>8, 9</sup>	Experience(s) of discrimination since the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic <sup>8, 9</sup>	Experience(s) of discrimination based on ethnicity or culture, since the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic <sup>8, 9</sup>	Experience(s) of discrimination based on race or colour, since the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic <sup>8, 9</sup>	Discrimination at work or when applying for a job or promotion, since the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic <sup>8, 9</sup>	
Visible minority	Percent								
Total, by visible minority group <sup>10</sup>	35.2	10.7	11.8	43.2	15.9	5.0	6.3	24.9	
Total – Visible minority <sup>11</sup>	50.4	30.2	35.7	45.6	27.1	15.1	19.8	27.6	
South Asian <sup>12</sup>	47.4	33.5	35.0	52.1	22.5	14.0	16.4	31.4	
Chinese	54.3	28.4	37.1	31.2	39.3	24.4	27.5	15.4	
Black	57.6	26.9	49.6	55.3	27.6	9.3	25.5	39.7	
Filipino	51.7	29.5	38.9	41.1	31.6	16.3	22.8	31.1	
Arab	37.0	26.3	15.6	44.8	11.8	6.0	3.9	32.3 <sup>E</sup>	
Latin American	43.5	29.9	18.0	54.0	15.7	8.1	5.6	F	
Southeast Asian <sup>13</sup>	39.2	21.4	27.7	41.1 <sup>E</sup>	20.9	12.4	14.5	27.0 <sup>E</sup>	
Not a visible minority <sup>14</sup>	30.5	4.2	3.9	43.4	12.3	1.7	1.9	24.9	

“Experience(s) of discrimination, reason(s) and context(s) of discrimination, 5 years before and since the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic, by groups designated as visible minorities and selected sociodemographic characteristics, 2022”<sup>11</sup>

According to data from the 2020 General Social Survey on Social Identity as shown in the table above, racialized groups were more than twice as likely to report having experienced discrimination since the start of the pandemic compared with the rest of the population. When reading the social general survey together with the police reported crime data, it appears that in 2019 approximately one in five (22%) of criminal incidents

<sup>10</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 43-10-0061-01 Experience(s) of discrimination, reason(s) and context(s) of discrimination, 5 years before and since the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic, by groups designated as visible minorities and selected sociodemographic characteristics, 2020 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25318/4310006101-eng>

<sup>11</sup> Statistics Canada. Table 43-10-0061-01 Experience(s) of discrimination, reason(s) and context(s) of discrimination, 5 years before and since the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic, by groups designated as visible minorities and selected sociodemographic characteristics, 2020 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25318/4310006101-eng>

perceived to be motivated by hate were reported to the police.<sup>12</sup> Chinese respondents have the highest percentage to indicate experiencing discrimination after the beginning of the pandemic.

In a more detailed crime statistics report<sup>13</sup>, hate crime statistics are broken down further to provide an in depth view at the scope and nature of these reported crimes for 2019, 2020, and 2021. The number of crimes targeting east or southeast Asian, south Asian are also separately collected. It is this table that shows the most concerning increase of hate crimes targeting east or southeast Asian since the beginning of the pandemic, 293% from 2019 to 2020, and 16% from 2020 to 2021, based on an already increased number.<sup>14</sup>

Detailed motivation	2019		2020		2021	
	number	% change from previous year	number	% change from previous year	number	% change from previous year
<b>Race or ethnicity</b>	<b>884</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1,619</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>1,723</b>	<b>6</b>
Black	345	17	676	96	642	-5
East or Southeast Asian	67	12	263	293	305	16
South Asian	81	-4	135	67	164	21
Arab or West Asian	125	34	126	1	184	46
Indigenous (First Nations, Métis or Inuit)	29	-26	78	169	77	-1
White	48	14	85	77	53	-38
Other race or ethnicity <sup>1</sup>	150	-8	188	25	221	18
Race or ethnicity not specified	39	129	68	74	77	13

## Understanding Volunteer (Unofficial) Data

In comparison, there are several organizations in Canada that provide online self reporting of anti-Asian racism as a source of unofficial data: Project 1907, EliminateHate.org, and CovidRacism.ca. For example, Project 1907 is a non-profit organization entirely led by community volunteers, aiming "to elevate Asian voices that are underrepresented and undervalued in mainstream political, social and cultural discourse."<sup>15</sup> and its official webpage hosts a form for reporting anti-Asian racism incidents. It states that the data collected will be used "to develop strategies, design interventions, raise awareness, advocate for policies and improve outcomes for our communities"<sup>16</sup>. Meanwhile, EliminateHate.org is "the advocacy arm of the Vancouver Asian Film Festival" and its mission is to harness the power of arts, film and media to educate, empower, and eliminate racism against Asian Canadians.<sup>17</sup> On its website, there is an almost identical "Report an Incident" page as the one from Project 1907's website. Covidracism.ca is a joint project by several organizations to track and report anti-Asian racism and xenophobia in Canada, in response to addressing the growing anti-Asian racism that has intensified amidst Covid-19.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Greg Moreau, "Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2021" <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00013-eng.htm#correction-notice>

<sup>13</sup> Greg Moreau, "Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2021" <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00013-eng.htm#correction-notice>

<sup>14</sup> Copied from Greg Moreau, "Police-reported crime statistics in Canada, 2021" <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00013-eng.htm#correction-notice>

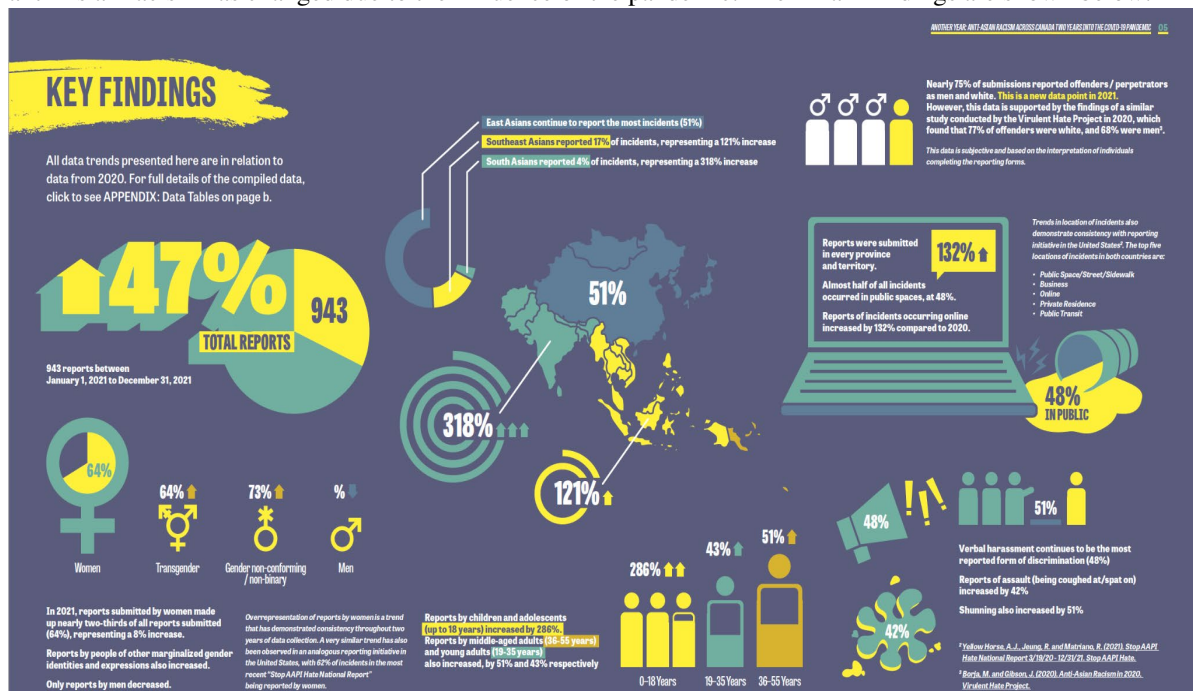
<sup>15</sup> from "About Us", online, Project 1907, <https://www.project1907.org/about>

<sup>16</sup> Project 1907 Reporting page. <https://www.project1907.org/report>

<sup>17</sup> About us, <https://www.eliminatehate.org/about>

<sup>18</sup> The organizations involved in covidracism.ca are the Chinese Canadian National Council - Toronto Chapter, Chinese Canadian National Council Social Justice, Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic, and Civic Engagement Network - Society of Canada, see About, <https://www.covidracism.ca/about>

Project 1907 and EliminateHate.org seem to be using the same reporting system: Google forms in 10 different languages<sup>19</sup> for either victims or witnesses to report the incidents online, while CovidRacism.ca provides a single page self reporting form on their website in English. Based on data collected from all three organizations, the Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter published an annual report in 2021<sup>20</sup> to share the findings from the 2020 data, and then another annual report in 2022<sup>21</sup> for the data collected in 2021, providing detailed data and showing the changes of the climate of anti-Asian racism. These two reports have been widely cited by many sources, including mainstream news sites such as CBC<sup>22</sup>. It is worth noting that these reporting systems were created as a response to the pandemic, and thus only started collecting data from March 10, 2020. This means that in the first few months since the online reporting systems were created, there might not have been wide awareness of their existence, potentially causing their numbers to be lower than they should be. Although these factors may affect the accuracy of the data, the data is still largely indicative of how anti-Asian racism has changed due to the influence of the pandemic. Their main findings are shown below:<sup>23</sup>



Additionally, in the appendix of the 2022 report, there is a table with the key numbers that are comparable to those from Statistics Canada. Although these self reporting systems are meant to collect data of racism incidents targeting Asian (mostly east and southeast Asian), there are a small number of reported incidents targeting other minorities including biracial, black, indigenous, and Latin Americans.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>19</sup> There are 10 different links provided for the reporting forms in the different languages spoken in Asia.

<sup>20</sup> A Year of Racist Attacks: Anti-Asian Racism Across Canada One Year into the Covid Pandemic, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/193Cd1C8uq623VRIAzoO3ShfDTEutXQI2/view>

<sup>21</sup> Another Year: Anti-Asian Racism across Canada Two Years into the Covid-19 Pandemic <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1U2ki5j-h9y229pAwx-KkqjK0HmAlo9h9/view>

<sup>22</sup> Marina Wang, "Anti-Asian racism and misogyny: It's time to call it out", <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/road-ahead-first-person-anti-asian-hate-crimes-1.5968785>

<sup>23</sup> Another Year: Anti-Asian Racism across Canada Two Years into the Covid-19 Pandemic.

<sup>24</sup> Although the columns add up to in the first table on the top right, they do not do so in the two tables below. This is likely because some of the data was deemed unnecessary for presentation by the author.

ANOTHER YEAR, ANTI-ASIAN RACISM ACROSS CANADA TWO YEARS INTO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC | 5

## APPENDIX: Data Tables

### REPORTS

**Total Number of Reports**

YEAR	NUMBER OF REPORTS
2021	943
2020	643

**Type of Report**

TYPE OF REPORT	PERCENTAGE OF REPORTS (2021)	PERCENTAGE OF REPORTS (2020)	PERCENTAGE CHANGE FROM 2020 TO 2021
It happened to me	78%	54%	+44%
I witnessed this incident	15%	19%	-22%
Other	7%	7%	+8%
Uncategorized	N/A	20%	N/A

### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Reports by Gender**

GENDER	PERCENTAGE OF REPORTS (2021)	PERCENTAGE OF REPORTS (2020)	PERCENTAGE CHANGE FROM 2020 TO 2021
Women	64%	59%	+8%
Men	29%	36%	-18%
Gender non-conforming/non-binary	2%	1%	+7%
Prefer not to say	2%	1%	+146%
Transgender	1%	0%	+64%
Other	1%	2%	-35%

**Reports by Age**

Reports by age are based on data collected by Fight COVID Racism only. Due to different age categorizations in the reporting platforms, age data could not be merged. Fight COVID Racism's data was used due to its higher disaggregation in age categorization and higher number of responses.

AGE RANGE	PERCENTAGE OF REPORTS (2021)	PERCENTAGE OF REPORTS (2020)	PERCENTAGE CHANGE FROM 2020 TO 2021
Child/Adolescent (Under 18)	29%	8%	+286%
Young Adult (19-35)	49%	34%	+43%
Middle-Aged Adult (36-55)	16%	11%	+51%
Older Adult (55+)	6%	48%	-88%

**Reports by Race/Ethnicity of Targeted Individual/Victim**

**Reports by Asian groupings**

RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUP	PERCENTAGE OF REPORTS (2021)	PERCENTAGE OF REPORTS (2020)	PERCENTAGE CHANGE FROM 2020 TO 2021
East Asian	51%	79%	-35%
Southeast Asian	17%	8%	+121%
South Asian	4%	1%	+318%
West Asian	2%	0%	N/A
Central Asian	0%	0%	0%

In addition to Asian ethnicities, we also received several reports from Black, Indigenous, and other racialized individuals.

RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUP	PERCENTAGE OF REPORTS (2021)	PERCENTAGE OF REPORTS (2020)	PERCENTAGE CHANGE FROM 2020 TO 2021
Biracial	5%	2%	+137%
Black	3%	1%	+339%
Indigenous	2%	1%	+82%
Latin American	2%	0%	N/A
Prefer not to say	2%	1%	+42%
Other	2%	1%	+31%

## Comparing the Official StatsCan Data vs. the Unofficial Self-Reported Data

Both StatsCan and the organizations have provided very comprehensive data to tell the many aspects of the anti-Asian racism situation in Canada. Both data sources have been widely referred to. Yet, the scope and nature of anti-Asian racism revealed by these different data sets are quite different, leading to different perspectives on this issue. From the above numbers, it is clear that both StatsCan's official police reported crimes and self reporting data provided by the organizations are indicating a significant increase of anti-Asian racism incidents since the beginning of the covid pandemic. During both years of 2020 and 2021, the numbers from self reporting were nearly double those reported by police services around the country, and the rate of increase was also greater for self reported incidents, about triple of those from Stats Can.

Even Statistics Canada's own data has considered the gap between the official police reported crimes and the actual incidents, so the hate crimes statistics should be read together with the general social survey results. To understand the discrepancy between the two main data sources, I have identified several possible reasons: Statistics Canada hate crime data comes from official police reported crimes, while the self reporting data comes from online reporting. The criteria for reporting are different. The crime data can only be reported by the police services, while the self reporting data can be reported by the victims, witnesses, or third parties who might learn about the incidents or crimes from other sources such as news. For the year of 2020, the self reporting data covers only partially of the calendar year and has no comparison between before and after the start of the pandemic.

Although there are some overlaps and consistency between the two data sets, both are not entirely accurate. For the Statistics Canada data, the accuracy is mainly affected by the hesitancy and challenges of victims reporting crimes and the inconsistency of the hate crime definition across Canada. For the self reporting data, the accuracy is mainly affected by the awareness of those reporting systems and the misperception of what should be identified as racism incidents. Because of these drawbacks, both data sets fail to inform the real picture of how anti-Asian racism is in Canada and how it may relate to the pandemic. With no more accurate data available, we need to use these data with the following factors considered.

## The Problem of Definition

In a 1995 report of hate crime in Canada, the central problem identified in the classification and recording of hate crimes was the lack of a uniform definition of hate crimes in Canada.<sup>25</sup> To this day, this problem does not seem to have been solved, as policing is generally a municipal or provincial responsibility. As a result, some police services provide a clear definition, others use generic guidelines provided to officers. For example, the Metropolitan Toronto Police Force defines a hate crime as “a criminal offense committed against a person or property that is based **solely** upon the victim's race, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender or disability”.<sup>26</sup> In the meantime, Halifax Police Department defines hate crime as “a criminal offense committed against a person or property, the motive for which is based in **whole or in part** upon the victim's race, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, disability or sexual orientation.”<sup>27</sup> This discrepancy, highlighted in bold, shows how incidents that may be classified as hate crimes in one part of Canada may fail to be categorized as such in a different area, resulting in potentially misleading data that may be overinclusive or underinclusive.

Distinctions like this, which appear to be minor on the surface, in reality muddied the waters and made it much harder to collect an aggregate set of data that properly represented the amount of hate crimes in each province. As suggested by the author, it is essential that the definition and criteria for determining the extent of hate crime be standardized, or else the usefulness of statistics in further analysis and program development would be limited.<sup>28</sup>

The inconsistent definitions also affect the accuracy of self reporting data. In this case, not only lack of a national uniform definition is a problem, but also lack of awareness and education that can mislead how the general public interpret racism.

## The Problem of Underreporting

It is widely acknowledged that bias crimes are severely underreported.<sup>29</sup> “Hate crimes are among the most under-reported forms of criminality.”<sup>30</sup> The common factors that are identified to contribute to the underreporting include cultural and language barriers, distrust of police, fear of additional victimization by the police, fear of deportation, and fear of public exposure.<sup>31</sup> All these factors are applicable to the victims of anti-Asian racism.

In Canada, hate crimes can generally be reported through the use of phone hotlines -- 911 for emergencies or urgent situations where there may be immediate harm, and the local police department's number for non-emergencies. Online options are also available in some police jurisdictions, and victims are encouraged to file a report as long as there is a legitimate basis behind the allegation. After detailing the type of the report, filling in necessary information such as location, value of goods stolen, and type of crime, the report would be forwarded to an office that analyzes the reports and takes action. Many hate crimes are reported in person. Despite the benefits of in-person interaction, limitations from the pandemic, accessibility from public transport, and other factors such as confusion and intimidation strongly limit the effectiveness of this method.

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<sup>25</sup> Julian V. Roberts, “Disproportionate Harm: Hate Crimes in Canada: An analysis of recent statistics”.

<sup>26</sup> Disproportionate Harm, p7.

<sup>27</sup> Disproportionate harm, p7.

<sup>28</sup> Disproportionate harm, p9.

<sup>29</sup> Jordan Blair Woods, “The Internet's Promise to Improve Bias-Crime Reporting: the case for including bias crimes on official crime-reporting websites”. P.87.

<sup>30</sup> Disproportionate harm. Page vi.

<sup>31</sup> Jordan, p. 87.



To combat this issue, online reporting has been proposed as a possible solution due to benefits including reducing the fear/mistrust of the police, overcoming the limits of the reach of police, and an increased amount of time for victims to provide an accurate recount of the incident without pressure to submit anything. This ensures that a larger portion of crimes that are committed are reported with increased ease of access and with reduced stigma than with in person, official reporting. However, this method is not without its caveats -- cases where the victim may feel discriminated against due to a protected criteria and reported the incident with little evidence that it was actually a hate motivated crime -- or fear of additional victimization by victims of serious hate crimes who don't believe that the police will take them seriously through an online report. Unfortunately, these all serve as reasons for why the adoption of online reporting has been slow.<sup>32</sup>

As for online self reporting systems like the ones provided by Project 1907, EliminateHate.org, and CovidRacism.ca, they seem to serve best as a supplement to the official police data. However, their accuracy can also be affected by underreporting factors. In addition to the common factors identified above, awareness of such systems may be the biggest barrier for victims to report in these systems.

## Conclusion

While I recognize the critical importance of accurate statistics as the first step in battling anti-Asian racism, I am disappointed that there is no such reliable data available in Canada. Both the officially collected crime statistics and the non-official online self-reporting data have their serious limitations in reflecting the actual scope of anti-Asian racism in this country. It will be important for our society to continue searching for better ways to collect accurate statistics. In the meantime, we need to be cautious in citing the existing data to avoid misleading the general public and the policy makers.

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<sup>32</sup> Make Hate Visible - Page 4-5

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