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Article Summary

In the article, “When ‘model minorities’ become ‘yellow peril’—Othering and the racialization of Asian Americans in the COVID-19 pandemic,” it analyzes the spread of Asian American hate and the “yellow peril”¹ stereotype that is still apparent in today’s society. The authors further delves into the problematic promotion of anti-Asian hate with the rise of COVID-19. The article specifically helps focus on the harmful contradicting stereotypes of “model minority” and “yellow peril,” which is what I want to research for my paper.

The article challenges prior scholars who believe that Asian Americans are fully assimilated into American society. They even go so far as to say that they are becoming “White.”² The authors disprove this point and argue Asians are rather seen as “forever foreigners,” and will never completely assimilate into the American mainstream. They touch upon the topics of the two contrasting stereotypes: “yellow peril” and the “model minority” to further solidify their thesis. By focusing the shift from “yellow peril” to “model minority” and back again shows the continuous xenophobia, racialization, and discriminative behaviors Asian Americans have to go through.³ Furthermore, the author discusses issues Asian Americans face in modern day, specifically with COVID-19.

The authors present their evidence by referencing to many studies as well as news articles. The article begins by showcasing the scholars who believe that some Asian Americans are successfully assimilating into the American mainstream. The evidence used to back up this argument were studies that measured the “socioeconomic status, spatial concentration, language assimilation, and intermarriage.”⁴ Li and Nicholson Jr. then present the opposing view: that Asian Americans are still perceived as “forever foreigners.”⁵ They reference many studies, news articles, and journals as evidence for the xenophobia and stereotypes Asian Americans face. News articles and words of US politicians are especially used to showcase the racialization of the pandemic.

¹ Yao Li, “When ‘model minorities’ become ‘yellow peril’—Othering and the racialization of Asian Americans in the COVID-19 pandemic,” Wiley Online Library, 16 January 2021, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.bu.edu/10.1111/soc4.12849>.

² Yao Li, “When ‘model minorities’ become ‘yellow peril’.”

³ Ibid.

⁴ Yao Li, “When ‘model minorities’ become ‘yellow peril’.”

⁵ Ibid.