

'Model Minority' Breaking the Silence: Anti-Asian Racism Community Hack Project Report



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Acknowledgements

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the following individuals and groups whose contributions were instrumental in the completion of this research report.

Prof. Uzo Iwobi CBE has had a profound impact on racial equality in Wales through her extensive career as a solicitor, academic, and equalities practitioner. As the founder and Chief Executive of Race Council Cymru, her work has significantly shaped our understanding of racial equality. We are deeply grateful for her unwavering support towards this project and invaluable wisdom she has shared.

It is hard to imagine this project without the support from dedicated members from the Chinese in Wales Association (CIWA). In particular, we thank CIWA's founder and CEO Ms Shirley Au-Yeung. Your commitment and advocacy for ethnic minority communities have immensely enriched our research and amplified underrepresented voices.

During the implementation of this research, we have sought advice from staff members from the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan team under the effective leadership of Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip Minister Jane Hutt CBE. We thank the Minister, Ms. Rajvi Glasbrook, Mr Riaz Hassan, Ms Uche Williams, Mr David Jones and others for your commitment to support ethnic minorities and researchers in promoting diversity and inclusion in Wales.

We are profoundly grateful to all the individuals who participated in this research. Your willingness to share your experiences and perspectives forms the foundation of this study. In particular, we would like to thank the Police Community Support Officers Kasia Hyett (SWP57747) and Mark Thomas (SWP53937), and Police Constable Kayleigh Beasley (SWP5624) for attending the event and contributing meaningfully to the discussion. Your support has been instrumental in enabling this work.

Finally, we extend our sincere thanks to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Swansea University for providing the funding that made this project possible.

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21st March 2025
Swansea, UK

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Executive Summary

This report summarises a workshop organised by Swansea University researchers in June 2023, aimed at engaging members of the East and Southeast Asian (ESEA) communities in South Wales in discussions about their experiences of racism. The workshop provided a space for participants to share personal accounts of discrimination, explore the social and structural factors that contribute to these incidents, and propose solutions. Participants also examined the Welsh Government's *Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan*, offering insights into its effectiveness in addressing racial inequalities and safeguarding the rights of ESEA communities.

Using a structured focus group methodology, the study involved 12 first- and second-generation immigrants from Mainland China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Thailand, and Burma. The participants, who included students, professionals, self-employed individuals, and retirees, were divided into four focus groups. Each session was co-facilitated by an academic researcher and a community police officer, following a structured discussion format covering four themes: *Breaking the Silence*; *Discuss and Define*; *Detect and Disrupt*; and *Wrapping Up and Taking Away*.

The workshop highlighted a range of racist experiences faced by ESEA individuals in South Wales. Many reported being coughed at in public, called derogatory names such as *'Chinese virus'*, or deliberately excluded in social settings during the COVID-19 lockdown periods. Microaggressions were also common, including differential treatment in public spaces, the mispronunciation of names in professional settings, and discrimination in healthcare. Digital racism emerged as another significant issue, with individuals encountering racist comments on social media, through emails, and within gaming environments. Participants identified racial stereotypes, often reinforced by media and online platforms, as key factors perpetuating these prejudices. Setting against the vision of building 'Wales as an anti-racist nation', this range of experiences indicates that, for the ESEA community, there is still a long road to travel to achieve this vision.

The discussion also revealed the damaging impact of the *'Model Minority'* stereotype, which, while portraying ESEA individuals as successful and resilient, simultaneously diminishes recognition of their struggles and reinforces racial biases. This stereotype can serve to minimise self-reporting of racism by ESEA individuals. Many participants felt constrained by cultural norms that discourage confrontation, with some avoiding reporting racist incidents due to reluctance, a belief that authorities would not take meaningful action, or cultural expectations that emphasise endurance over direct challenge. A gendered pattern also emerged, with Chinese women more likely to openly discuss or report racism than men, who often feared 'losing face' in sharing their personal experiences of racism. Additionally, participants reflected on the challenges of distinguishing between casual remarks, microaggressions, and hate crimes, further complicating their willingness to report incidents.

A key part of the workshop involved evaluating the *Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan* and its ambition to create an anti-racist Wales by 2030. While participants supported the

plan's objectives, they raised concerns about its implementation and proposed practical steps to ensure it delivers meaningful changes. We have distilled from these wide-ranging discussions a set of specific recommendations for the Welsh Government and Police; and these are to:

- **Strengthen policy implementation and oversight:** Establish a dedicated, well-resourced *Anti-Racism Department* within the Welsh Government to oversee policy execution, monitor progress, and maintain engagement with affected communities.
- **Improve reporting and response mechanisms:** Develop a centralised reporting system that ensures racist incidents are not only documented but followed up with concrete action. Increase collaboration with community organisations to build trust and encourage reporting.
- **Tackle racism through education:** Embed anti-racism education within the national curriculum to promote racial equality and cultural awareness from an early age.
- **Promote workplace equality:** Expand unconscious bias training in both the public and private sectors to eliminate systemic barriers and foster fair employment opportunities.
- **Foster inclusive communities:** Support initiatives that bring communities together to challenge racist ideologies and promote intercultural understanding, ensuring that ethnic minority voices remain central to policy development and implementation.
- **Enhance transparency and accountability:** Provide clear communication on how anti-racist policies will be implemented and assessed, ensuring transparency and public trust.
- **Strengthen data-driven and research-led approaches:** Invest in robust research and data analytics to track racism trends, assess the effectiveness of policies, identify gaps, and inform evidence-based policy interventions.

Beyond direct policy measures, participants stressed the urgent need to address racism in digital spaces. The increasing influence of global political and corporate actors on online discourse has created new challenges for Wales, with social media platforms, gaming environments, and digital communication channels becoming sites for racial abuse. This issue is particularly urgent in the current geopolitical climate, where Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs in the US encounter significant obstacles and major digital corporations, including Meta, to scale back their DEI efforts. Further research and policy interventions are urgently needed to tackle online discrimination and mitigate its long-term societal impacts.

The workshop provided valuable insights into how anti-Asian racism manifests in the UK, as well as the cultural and structural factors that shape community responses. While participants recognized and felt inspired by the *Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan's* commitments to meaningful change, they emphasised that achieving an anti-racist Wales by 2030 will require sustained commitment, proactive measures to dismantle structural inequalities, and urgent actions to address all forms of racism.

Introduction

The first case of COVID-19 (or SARS-CoV-2) was reported in Wuhan, China, at the end of 2019. In response to the spread of the disease, governments across the world have enacted wide-ranging restrictions on freedom of movement and economic activities, as well as diverting enormous financial and healthcare resources (Hale et al. 2021). In Wales, the First Lockdown started from March 23, 2020. Adopting a more cautious approach compared to England, Welsh government had implemented several phases of lockdowns to tackle rising cases, and the final lifting of restrictions ended January 28, 2022.

The COVID-19 pandemic and its related lockdown measures have unfortunately intensified existing racial biases and led to a surge in anti-Asian racism worldwide. From the earliest days of the outbreak, racialization of COVID-19 has become visible in a variety of tragic manifestations. For instance, the UK Metropolitan Police recorded 166 verbal, online and physical attacks against people described as having an 'Oriental' ethnicity by police officers in February to March 2020 compared to 66 such cases during the same period in 2019 (Financial Times 2020).

This report presents a summary of a workshop organized by a team of Swansea University researchers in June 2023, which aimed to engage members of the East and Southeast Asian (ESEA) communities in South Wales in a critical discussion on their experiences of racism. The workshop provided a platform for participants to share personal accounts of racial discrimination, reflect on the socio-cultural and structural factors contributing to such incidents, and propose potential solutions to address these challenges. Additionally, attendees were invited to offer insights and critiques on the Welsh Government's *Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan*, assessing its effectiveness in tackling racial inequalities and safeguarding the rights of ESEA communities. Through these discussions, the workshop sought to facilitate a deeper understanding of lived experiences while informing policy and community-driven initiatives to combat racism in Wales.

Literature review: Anti-Asian Racism, Policy Responses and Community Resilience

1, Anti-Asian Racism: A Distinctive Form of Racial Othering

In the UK, racial discrimination is explicitly prohibited under several legislative acts designed to promote equality and protect individuals from unfair treatment. The cornerstone of this legal framework is the *Equality Act 2010* (UK Parliament, 2025), which consolidates previous anti-discrimination laws into a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations. This Act identifies 'race' as a protected characteristic, encompassing colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins, thereby making it unlawful to discriminate against individuals

on these grounds in various contexts, including employment, education, and the provision of goods and services. Prior to this, the *Race Relations Act 1965*, 1968 and 1976 established the Commission for Racial Equality and introduced the concept of indirect discrimination. Additionally, the *Public Order Act 1986* (UK Parliament, 2025) addresses offences related to inciting racial hatred, making it a criminal offence to use threatening, abusive, or insulting words or behaviour intended or likely to stir up racial hatred. Collectively, these legislative measures establish a comprehensive legal framework that outlaws racial discrimination.

However, racist tropes, stereotypes and terms of abuse remain *culturally* accessible below the surface and beyond national borders. Anti-Asian racism has deep historical roots where Asian communities have long been racialized as both perpetual foreigners and threats to public health in the US (Lee E. , 2019; Shah, 2001). The COVID-19 pandemic revived these tropes, reminiscent of past stigmatization during outbreaks such as SARS in 2003 (Eichelberger, 2007). Scholars argue that such narratives could reinforce racial exclusion and justify discriminatory policies (Tchen & Yeats, 2014).

In recent years, digital media, and in particular, social media platforms have been used to spread discrimination against targeted minority groups globally (Banaji & Bhat, 2022; Matamoros-Fernandez & Farkas, 2021). Social media platforms have facilitated the rapid dissemination of racist discourses, conspiracy theories, and misinformation linking Asians, particularly Chinese individuals, to the origins of COVID-19 (Costello, et al., 2021; Farhart & Chen, 2022). Hashtags like #ChinaVirus and #KungFlu became symbols of digital scapegoating, further normalizing xenophobic rhetorics. In our study of digital memes including the 'Kung Flu Kid' and Corona-chan (Wu & Wall, 2021), we conclude that memes with lightly encoded racist messages can be employed by political elites and the effectiveness of using humour as a softening device (see Appendices for examples). Semiotically, such memes are built into the meaning-making process and connote a conspiracy-linked Chinese and ESEA ethnicity and identity. Relatedly, aggression and violence are justified when the memes conflate Chinese/Asian ethnicity. Indeed, studies highlight how online racism translates into offline violence, with increased reports of verbal and physical assaults against Asian communities (Lu, et al., 2024).

2, Institutional Responses and Policy Interventions

Governments around the world have responded variably to the surge in anti-Asian racism as government policies and jurisdictions are important to resident safety and their willingness to report hate crimes. In the US, the *COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act* (US Congress, 2021) was enacted in response to escalating racism violence, yet it is unclear if law enforcement-cantered approaches can sufficiently address structural racism. Meanwhile, while some states implemented protections and awareness campaigns, others failed to acknowledge or effectively address the issue, leaving jurisdictions largely 'to remain passive and/or do nothing to support, prevent, and/or protect residents who experience disparate violence and hate' (Lee & Arroyo, 2022, p. 1483).

In the UK, Government officials publicly denounced the rise in anti-Asian hate crimes. In October 2020, the UK Parliament held its first debate specifically addressing racism against Chinese, East Asian, and Southeast Asian communities, highlighting the urgency of the issue (UK Parliament, 2020). Although advocacy groups have pushed for stronger policy interventions, but systemic gaps remain.

In Wales, the Welsh Government has launched TV and social media *Hate Hurts Wales* campaign (Welsh Government, n.d.) in offering support to a victim of all forms of hate crime. The Welsh Government also unveiled the *Anti-racist Wales Action Plan* (the Plan thereafter) in June 2022. The Plan is a comprehensive strategy aimed at eradicating systemic and institutional racism by 2030 and was developed in collaboration with minority communities (Welsh Government, 2022). The plan outlines specific measures across various sectors, including education, health, housing, culture and heritage, and criminal justice, to address racial disparities and promote equity. A notable aspect of the plan is its emphasis on accountability and transparency; public bodies are required to demonstrate measurable progress in implementing anti-racist initiatives.

3, Resilience and Resistance from the 'Model Minority'

'Model Minority' as collective identity label has been attached to ethnic minority communities with Chinese, and other East Asian (such as Japanese, Korean) and sometimes other Southeast Asian heritages in the US. This term was firstly used by American press in the 1960s to laud the academic and economical success of such minority communities and their propensity of not causing 'problems'. Despite its seemingly positive connotation, the model minority stereotypes usually imply such community's lack of visibility and subordination in the society where the myth of the US as a colourblind post-racial society become a hegemonic discourse to silence Asian Americans and isolate them from standing in solidarity with other oppressed minority communities in striving for racial equality and social justice (Bascara, 2006)

During the COVID-19 and its subsequent waves of anti-Asian hate, Asian communities worldwide have mobilized against racism through grassroots activism, storytelling, and solidarity campaigns (Wang, 2024). Through an examination of the #StopAsianHate tweets from 2021 to 2022 on X/Twitter, our research (Sha, Micallef, & Wu, 2025) reveals that the #StopAsianHate movement has been instrumental in raising awareness, fostering community, and coalition-building. Our study also reveals that #StopAsianHate activists' self-positionings as lacking influential power and as being vulnerable in the movement. This is evident in the frequent use of keywords such as (white) supremacy and descriptions of Asians as passive recipients of actions. Such self-positionings expose the unequal power dynamics within the discourse, while indicating a growing self-reflecting collective awareness of the negative impacts of model minority stereotypes on Asian communities.

From the grassroots in Wales, Chinese in Wales Association (CIWA) has played a crucial role in tackling anti-Asian racism during and after COVID-19 by advocating for ethnic minority communities and strengthening relationships with Welsh Government and

local police service, ensuring that hate crimes are reported and addressed effectively. Their *Hate Crime Reporting* project (CIWA, n.d.) provides vital support for victims and raises awareness within the community. The weekly Police Engagement Day facilitates direct interaction between law enforcement agency and community member. Such advocacy efforts highlight the importance of community-led advocacy in combating racism and discrimination.

4, The Research and Police Gaps

The ESEA community continues to grapple with the Model Minority myth, which both obscures their struggles and reinforces racial stereotypes. Additionally, research reveals that Chinese men and women's activism remains closely tied to, and often constrained by, traditional cultural roles, shaping their modes of engagement and resistance (Wu & Wang, 2007). At the same time, in our increasingly digital lived experience, racism has become more pervasive in online spaces, further complicating efforts to combat discrimination. This report therefore seeks to explore these dimensions in depth, offering critical insights for the Welsh Government, Wales Police, Race Council Cymru, Chinese in Wales Association and other organizations and stakeholders. By shedding light on the particular forms of anti-Asian racism, this report aims to support ongoing collaborative efforts in developing targeted countermeasures and policies to foster a more inclusive and equitable society.

Methodology

Our study employed a focus group methodology to explore the experiences and perceptions of anti-Asian racism and community safety in Wales from the ESEA community members. As a qualitative research method, focus group is particularly useful for exploring sensitive topics, such as racism and discrimination in a group setting, fostering awareness, support and dialogue. The group dynamic can help participants feel more comfortable discussing difficult subjects, as they may find solidarity with others who share similar experiences. Additionally, focus groups offer culturally rich insights into the collective perceptions of racism and its impacts, enabling researchers to capture diverse viewpoints and identify common themes (Krueger & Casey, 2014; Liamputtong, 2011).

Recruiting participants for this research proved challenging, particularly within the ESEA community, despite private conversations in which individuals shared personal experiences of racism in both personal and professional settings. Several potential participants declined the first author's invitation to engage in the study. One community member asserted that there was 'no racism in Wales' and that such research would only 'stir up problems,' before adding this piece of advice: 'If your neighbour didn't like you, cook them a meal, and they will like you.' These responses reflect a broader reluctance among some community members to confront or publicly acknowledge racism, due to a lack of understanding of systemic racism, as well as cultural factors or fears of exacerbating perceived social tensions.

In the end, a total of 12 participants were recruited, all of whom were first-generation or second-generation immigrants from diverse backgrounds: five from Mainland China, one British born from a Hong Kong family, three from Malaysia, two from Thailand, and one from Burma. The participants also represented a range of professional backgrounds, including three students, five professionals, two self-employed individuals, and two retirees. We organised participants into four focus groups and each focus group discussion was co-facilitated by an academic researcher and a community police officer. We provided a structured yet open environment and guided the group discussion via four sections of discussion – *Breaking the Silence; Discuss and Define; Detect and Disrupt; Wrapping up and Taking Away*.

The academic researcher in each group guided discussions to ensure critical reflection and thematic coherence. Police Community Support Officers Kasia Hyett (SWP57747) and Mark Thomas (SWP53937), and Police Constable Kayleigh Beasley (SWP5624), participated in the discussions. Their engagement was instrumental in building trust, clarifying law enforcement procedures, addressing concerns related to hate crime reporting and community safety and also providing valuable insights into the challenges of policing racially motivated incidents. This collaborative approach not only enriched the discussions but also reinforced the importance of community-police partnership and trust-building in tackling racial discrimination.

Key Findings

1, Defining Anti-Asian Racism

As the participants started sharing their experiences, they collectively observed a significant degree of explicit and implicit racism targeted towards the Chinese and ESEA communities. An escalation of racist behaviour during Covid-19 was observed by participants and they discussed incidents of purposeful coughing and 'extra' social distancing that they understood as driven by their ethnic identity.

Participants poignantly described the tangible shift in public behaviour during the pandemic and a sense of vulnerability in public when strangers being likely to engage in racist behaviour was common.

During the pandemic, I could feel people walking away from me on the road. On many occasions, I encountered young people yelling 'Chinese virus' at me.

[When] we were on the street, we were wearing masks during the pandemic time, when we were being shouted at, [by] the teenager, local people, like, you know, like, 'go back to your country', you know, those types of things.

During the COVID, once I went out for shopping. I just parked the car and got out of the car. A young girl on the pavement looked at me, and started pretending to

cough in front of me. She was deliberate. For such trivial issues, what can one do?

Furthermore, this virulent racism was not confined to physical spaces but spilled over into the digital realm. Several participants shared instances of receiving comments like 'Chinese virus,' 'you brought the virus to us,' and 'go back to where you belong' in online environments. One participant talked about the racial slurs he endured during online group gaming. The comments ranged from blaming him for spreading the virus to the UK, to derogatory remarks mocking his Chinese heritage.

The implicit forms of racism before and after the Covid-19 pandemic were observed by many participants, often associated with the negative reactions that speaking foreign languages could elicit in Wales:

We often hear the comments - the teacher will speak to the parents [...] Do you not speak English to your child? Do you speak Mandarin? Like, you know, almost like a question to them that you are doing something wrong!

Speaking different language can make other people feel uncomfortable, suspect I am talking bad things about them...I feel being restricted to use my mother tongue freely.

Issues of micro-aggression were reported by participants as well – issues such as being treated differently in a public space; Asian professionals' names were not pronounced or spelt out correctly at workplace; Asian medical doctors reported that some patients refused to be seen by non-white doctors. It is evident that most organizations - whether public institutions or commercial entities - respond promptly to complaints about microaggressions related to racial or ethnic discrimination.

I was waiting in queue in [a major supermarket] at the checkout, but I was ignored for a long while. Suddenly, the shop assistant directly invited the white man queuing behind me to come forward. It made me feel very uncomfortable, and I went to see the shop manager afterwards and complained about this. The shop manager apologized.

'Racial stereotypes' were reported by several participants as contributing factor to explicit and implicit racism they encountered. A participant asked, 'How dare they stereotype me without knowing me well enough?' with examples including the assumption that the person worked in a Chinese takeaway, that they were seeking a 'Green Card' or visa status, that they represented a threat to the opportunities and employment of others in the UK. She concluded that she 'felt frustrated [that] they think I am a threat to them'.

The source of racism, according to one participant, could come from media stereotyping and in particular social media stereotyping. As he said, 'the role of media is very important in influencing people's knowledge and belief'.

I felt that there is an issue with labelling Chinese maybe due to media reporting. Public tend to associate Chinese with certain concepts – such as manufacture factory for the world. 'Made in China' is also associated with poor quality. Also these days, young people tend to get information from social media such as TikTok. Some short videos tend to pigeonhole Chinese into certain categories – for example, bad Chinese landlords or Chinese scammers online, etc. There's truth in such statements as there are bad landlords or Chinese scammers. But we are not all like that.

2, Reporting Hate Crime

The law enforcement officer provided the legal definition of a hate crime to the group and described that more hate crimes have been reported in the last few years:

A hate crime is any criminal offense perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on an individual's identity. Over the years, I've seen absolutely loads of hate crimes. Practically what I would say from my experience is that more [incidents] were being recorded.

This triggered reflections among community members, as the ESEA community tends not to report hate crimes to the police for various reasons. During the lockdown, a grocery shop owner posted a message in a closed social media group, warning other shop owners to be aware of shoplifting behaviours targeting Chinese shops. However, when the first author invited him to the community hack event, he declined to attend. He stated that he could tolerate the shoplifting as long as it did not cause significant financial loss to his business. 'I'm busy in my shop and I can't afford to be away,' he said, 'What differences it'll make even if I report this to the police?!'

A female participant explained in detail the gender differences within the Chinese community and how these differences impact their behaviour when it comes to reporting hate crimes.

Chinese females are more willing to stand out where Chinese men wouldn't be bothered to [do so]. Our females are more outgoing. They like to talk and express [themselves]; while males want [others] to see that they are strong. Some of my male friends say 'Oh, I don't want any of my friends in China to know about that [i.e. being discriminated] because I feel like losing face. [...] I want to show [them] that I'm enjoying life, so I don't want anyone to know about my bad stories.

Participants also expressed unease about confronting racism, as they find it difficult to determine where a 'joke' among friends or an ordinary quarrel crosses the line and becomes a racially motivated hate crime. One participant recalled several occasions when his son received racist slurs from his friends in school. He said, 'They are friends and get on well. Nevertheless, once there's conflict, this issue of my son "being Chinese" was picked up'.

*One of his friends used 'ch**k' in an email to him. We felt that this is not acceptable. We forwarded this email to the teacher and complained about this. The pupil who sent the email said that she was joking around and meant no offence. She later apologized. For such issues, I felt that we have to teach our son to be strong in school. He needs to learn to resist behaviour like this. However, if it's indeed just meant to be a joke among friends, that is OK.*

Another participant recalled a minor incident in her neighbourhood in which she did not feel comfortable to intervene:

*In our local park, once a Welsh man took his big Golden Retriever to the park where a group of Asian children were playing. One of the children said, 'your dog is so big and you shouldn't take it to the park where there are a lot of small children'. The man replied, 'F*** you! You shouldn't be in my country'. It's difficult to judge who started this although I think the man overreacted and shouldn't shout out these words to children.*

It was illuminating for many of the focus group attendees to learn that a hate crime can be reported not only by the victim but also by other people. In fact, most participants were not aware of this. This highlights the need for more educational initiatives to inform minority communities that hate crimes can be reported by witnesses as well, ensuring greater awareness and access to support.

3, Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan

During the session, participants were invited to review the *Anti-racist Wales Action Plan* and determine what gets right. Facilitated discussions focused on assessing the effectiveness of these policies and whether they accurately address the nuances of the racist experiences shared by the participants.

There was a general positive response on all points of desired changes proposed in the Plan. However, there are also shared concerns over the efficacy of the policies.

Some discussion raised questions about the effectiveness of the Plan. There was a sentiment that the goal of '*eliminating racism online and in the physical world*' might be too ambitious to achieve and, if pursued, could consume valuable resources and effort with limited impact. Participants felt that more actionable and realistic language was needed to address racism as a lived experience. As a result, there was a recommendation to replace the word '*eliminate*' with '*reduce*,' '*manage*,' or '*recognize*.' Additionally, two participants raised concerns about over-policing, highlighting the challenge of balancing efforts to combat racism while safeguarding press freedom.

Regarding the point: '*Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic people are aware of the complaints procedures when accessing public services and can do so in their required language without fear, barriers, or retribution*', discussions highlighted the need for a dedicated helpline for reporting abuse. Participants emphasized that a single, centralized helpline would be the most effective solution, allowing callers to be directed to the appropriate department rather than having to navigate multiple helplines for different issues.

There was a sense that *the culture and education components* as a positive opportunity to build connections were underdeveloped in the Plan. Culture and education were suggested as key areas of opportunity for organic and positive changes that could *'turn strangers into friends'* and *'create opportunities to integrate.'* It was felt that greater emphasis could be placed on fostering positive connections and insights, which, through increased shared understanding, could contribute to reducing divisions.

A series of pointed questions centered on the *clarity, transparency, and practical implementation* of the policies. The recurring theme in participants' notes was the query 'how'—*'How are they measured?'* This consistent line of questioning underscored a demand for more explicit and transparent communication from the government regarding how these policies would be practically implemented and how their impact would be measured. More transparency is needed regarding the detailed timelines and the assignment of responsibilities to all relevant stakeholders, NPOs, and NGOs. One participant conveyed concerns over the policies being reduced to tokenistic gestures where individuals might complete assigned tasks, such as online courses, without genuinely internalizing or understanding the issues at hand.

There is a shared belief that thoughtful and accountable implementation of the Plan that is responsive to *the community's needs and experiences.* *'Who will be the partners involved in implementing and enforce such an ambitious plan?'*, asked one participant. With regards to the partners there was a suggestion to involve ethnic minority organizations in the deployment and enforcing of this plan because these communities know their people well and it is crucial to hear their voices. *'Community organizations know their people better, please use their voices!'*

The role of *ethnic minority communities in the socialization and integration of new immigrants* was regarded as very important. One participant praised the role ethnic minority charities play in helping newcomers settle and integrate into the British society. He noted,

We as Chinese should reflect on our community's behaviour and make changes as well. For example, have we paid enough attention to local rules and regulations on foraging? I know that in London, some parks have put up signs in Mandarin Chinese warning people not to pick wild garlic.

His comment reveals the importance of self-reflection within communities and the role of ethnic communities in ensuring smooth integration of new immigrants, especially when it comes to helping them understand local customs and regulations.

Moreover, participants discussed *the importance of education*, emphasizing that racism needs to be addressed at an early stage through effective teaching, encouraging children and teenagers to treat everyone with respect, regardless of their racial background. A common theme that emerged in discussions on how anti-racism campaigns could be more effective was *the crucial role of collaboration among educational institutions, government, and communities.* Our participants believe that

involving communities in policy debates and education—by listening to people and hearing their voices—is a key element in achieving meaningful disruption. As one participant put it, *'Diversity in the panels that make decisions'* is essential.

4, Further Recommendations for Building an Anti-Racist Wales by 2030

Moving beyond critiques of existing structures, participants actively contributed to envisioning an anti-racist Wales by 2030.

They propose the establishment of a dedicated Anti-racism department, sufficiently resourced and financially supported, to sustain the Welsh government's efforts in dealing with matters of racism. They advocated for clear and efficient decision-making processes within this proposed department, alongside an improved reporting system that not only records incidents of racism but also takes actionable steps in response.

They call for expertise in supporting government in achieving the target of a racism-free Wales by 2030. One participant, drawing attention to the importance of research and data, suggested, *'The government should assess the current situation by doing more research and making clearer measures by implementing statistics.'*

They believe unconscious bias training at employment, especially in private sector, will help to remove barriers and create a truly inclusive workplace and achieving optimal business performance.

These suggestions collectively signal a desire for more proactive, focused, and responsive governmental intervention in tackling racism. The recommendations provided by participants highlight the potential benefits of adopting a data-informed, specialized, and accountable approach to anti-racism policymaking. These suggestions also indicate a perceived need for sustained policy on anti-racist initiatives within government structures, enhancing the potential effectiveness of current strategies in the future.

Conclusion

The Community Hack Project highlighted both explicit and implicit racism targeting Chinese and ESEA communities, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many shared experiences of being purposefully coughed at, subjected to racial slurs such as 'Chinese virus', or facing social avoidance. Additionally, participants reported experiencing microaggressions, including being treated differently in public spaces, mispronunciation and misspelling of their names at work, and discrimination in medical settings. This discrimination extended into digital spaces, with individuals encountering racist comments online, via emails, social media, and in gaming environments. Racial stereotypes, often perpetuated by media and social platforms, were cited as contributing factors to these experiences.

The discussion also explored the reporting of hate crimes. Many participants attribute the reasons of not reporting incidents due to cultural reasons, reluctance, or a belief

that authorities would not take meaningful action. A gendered difference in willingness to report hate crimes was also noted, with Chinese women being more likely to speak out than men, who feared losing face. Several participants also reflected on the difficulty of distinguishing between casual remarks, microaggressions, and outright hate crimes.

Regarding the Welsh Government's *Anti-racist Wales Action Plan*, participants generally supported the proposed changes but raised concerns about their practical implementation. They questioned the feasibility of eliminating racism entirely and emphasized the need for more tangible measures, such as a central reporting helpline and greater involvement of community organizations. Education was viewed as a key area for fostering collaboration, integration and reducing prejudice.

Moreover, participants made suggestions for building an anti-racist Wales by 2030. They proposed improved policies, including the establishment of a dedicated anti-racism department, better data collection informed by robust research, and stronger measures to ensure equal employment opportunities through more extensive unconscious bias training in the workplace. A data-driven research agenda and a more proactive, community-informed approach were seen as essential to effectively tackling racism in the years ahead.

Finally, we would like to highlight the challenges posed by the increasing incidents of racism in the borderless digital space, as evidenced by this and related studies. This issue is particularly urgent in the current geopolitical climate, where Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs in the U.S. face severe challenges. Policy shifts within the US government have also led major digital corporations, including Meta, to scale back their DEI efforts. In this borderless digital landscape, political and business elites exert significant influence over online discourse, with their actions and rhetoric shaping perspectives worldwide, including in Wales. There is an urgent need for further research and policy initiatives to address the growing impact of digital discrimination and racism, as well as to mitigate the risks they pose to future generations.

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Appendices: Anti-Asian Racism in the Digital Space

Figure 1. Kirk (2020) Tweet Originating 'China Virus' term.

← **Tweet**



Charlie Kirk ✓ @charliekirk11 · Mar 10, 2020

Now, more than ever, we need the wall

With China Virus spreading across the globe, the US stands a chance if we can control of our borders

President Trump is making it happen

I explain why this matters & SO MUCH MORE!

Subscribe—apple.co/3355T5b



From **Charlie Kirk** ✓

Figure 2. Story Board of the Kung Flu Kid meme (2020)

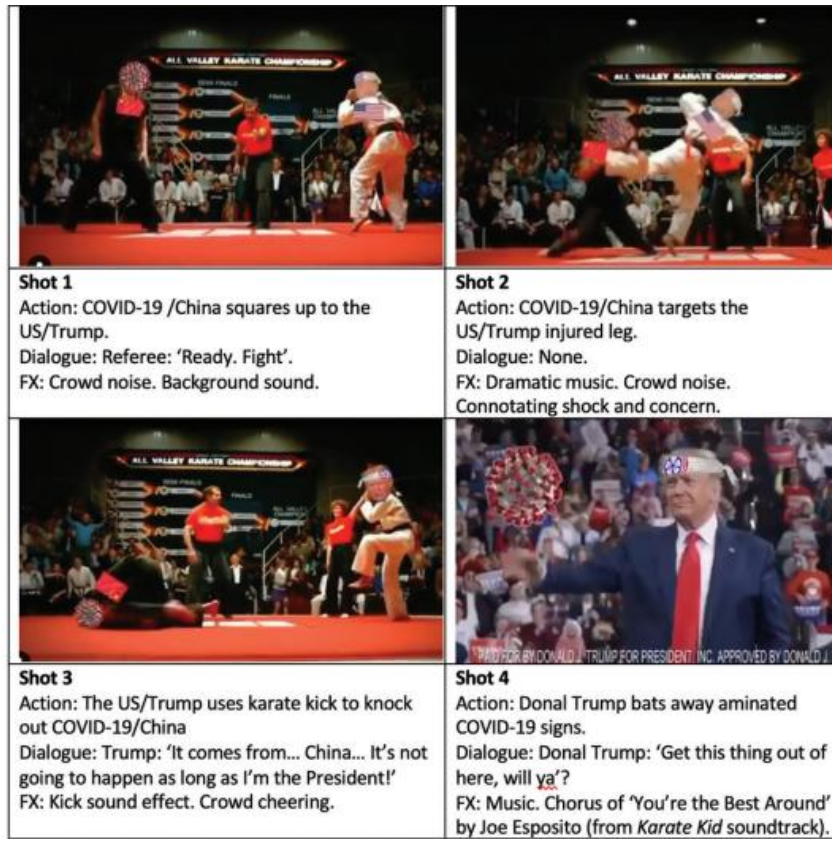


Figure 3 Corona-chan memes showing both racism and sexism

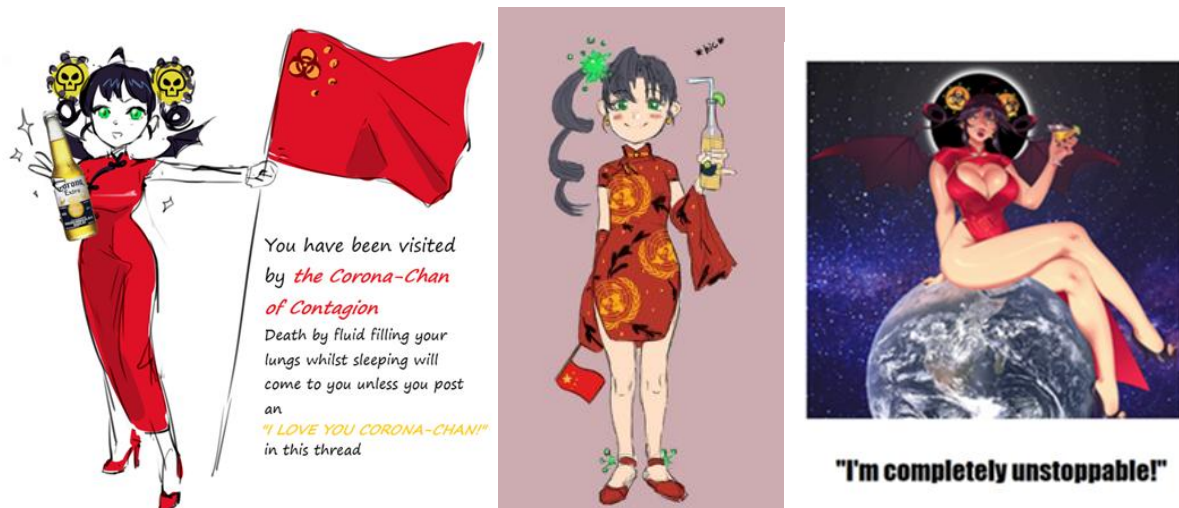


Figure 4. Corona-chan meme music video



Figure 5 Corona-chan cosplay images

